

# TEXAS VS MINNESOTA

The Texas criminal justice system historically focused on the need to punish the criminal, seeking retribution and revenge on the accused for the crime, as well as deterring crime in the first place through harsh sentences for crimes. This get-tough-on-crime approach reflects the traditionalist-individualist political culture of Texas that emphasizes the role and responsibility of the individual. Government is to enforce the laws and extract punishment, taking on the role of the individual protecting his or her property with a gun on the frontier.

Minnesota's history, including its settlement patterns, is quite different. Mostly settled by German and Scandinavian immigrants, Minnesota lacks the hard-core frontier experience idealized in Texas history. Instead, Scandinavians in Minnesota brought a more communitarian philosophy that focuses on promotion of the good society and public well-being consistent of moralistic political cultures. As a result, Minnesota's criminal justice system has long focused on rehabilitation—and in more recent decades, restorative justice. Minnesota attempts to work with the victims and criminals to minimize a return to a life of crime, or recidivism.

Do these orientations in Texas compared to Minnesota produce different outcomes? Evidence can be found to support both sides of the equation. However, many measures demonstrate that Minnesota's system is producing a very different set of results. Minnesota in most categories ranks below Texas, indicating a lower rate of crime. An exception is the juvenile arrest rate, where Minnesota is considerably higher than Texas.

## THINKING Critically

- ★ How do the statistics in the table provide evidence in favor of Minnesota's approach to criminal justice, including rehabilitation and restorative justice?
- ★ What other factors other than the type of criminal justice system might contribute to the lower rates of crime in Minnesota?
- ★ Why do you think Texas is lower in juvenile arrest rate than Minnesota?
- ★ To what extent do the differences between Minnesota and Texas reflect the broader political cultures of these two states?

## Rates of Crime and Crime Related Statistics, 2014

	Minnesota (Rate) (Rank in U.S.)	Texas (Rate) (Rank in U.S.)
Violent Crime	219.10 (42)	394.30 (15)
Violent Crime with Firearm	44.50 (34)	120.00 (14)
Robbery Rate	67.60 (34)	115.70 (12)
Juvenile Arrest Rate	3,973.10 (14)	2,289.40 (40)
Rape Rate	26.60 (27)	30.60 (19)
Property Crime Rate	2,297.50 (31)	3,019.4 (13)
Murder Rate	1.60 (48)	4.40 (23)
Motor Vehicle Theft Rate	153.30 (33)	254.30 (12)
Larceny Theft Rate	1,763.80 (29)	2,137.30 (16)
Aggravated Assault Rate	123.30 (45)	243.6 (21)

**Source:** "Crime Rate (State)." SAGE Stats using reported data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, <http://data.sagepub.com/sagestats/312>.