Sociology Senior Seminar Papers   Sociology

Fall 2019

Hiding Hate: A State-Analysis of the Relationship Between White Supremacy and Racially-Motivated Hate Crimes in the Trump Era

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Hiding Hate:

A State-Analysis of the Relationship Between White Supremacy and Racially-Motivated

Hate Crimes in the Trump Era*

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Word Count = 6362

ABSTRACT

Is support for Donald Trump correlated with hate? This state-analysis examines the relationship between Donald Trump's White supremacist rhetoric and rates of racially-motivated hate crimes. This study argues that Trump's rhetoric was connected to his votes and that those who voted for him agree with and adopted this rhetoric. Further, this study hypothesizes that the increase in support for White Supremacist rhetoric leads to an increase of racially-motivated hate crimes. Using the 2016 U.S. Presidential election results, the FBI's 2017 Annual Report of Hate Crime Statistics, and the 2017 American Community Survey ($N = 50$), this study proposes that the higher a state's percentage of votes for Trump in 2016, the higher a state's rate of racially motivated hate crimes per capita. The results of the data support the opposite—that is, higher levels of support for Trump correlate to lower levels of hate crime rates. This study ends by discussing the effects of reporting and underreporting on these data, and proposes that what this study found is not that Trump states have less racially-motivated hate crimes, but rather that Trump states are underreporting hate crimes overall.

Hiding Hate

The United States claims to strongly value freedom for all and to be the land of opportunity. Our 1st Amendment grants us freedom of speech, allowing us to express our beliefs freely and wholly. As a result, we have a message in our culture stating that we need to respect everyone's opinions, no matter the content of said opinions, as it is a fundamental right. But what if one's belief is that Whites are superior to all beings and that all other races should be subordinated or even eradicated? What if the idea is that homosexuality ought to be punishable by death? What if one's ideology is completely filled with hate for a group? Should we blindly respect their opinion for the sake of freedom? Is that truly freedom for all?

Since the campaign and election of Donald Trump, we have seen an increase in bigoted rhetoric and have come to see it as a normalized phenomenon. As a result, we have seen an increase in racial threat and racial animosity among his supporters, which studies show are strongly correlated to hate crimes (Cunningham 2018; Durso and Jacobs 2013; Klein and Allison 2018; Lyons 2008; McVeigh and Cunningham 2012; Perry and Blazak 2009; Powers and Socia 2019; Sweeny and Perliger 2018). Trump and his rhetoric are not so powerful that he converted open-minded and tolerant people into right-wing extremists—hate will not go away when Trump's presidency ends. Further, we cannot credit Trump for the invention of White Supremacy. Rather, Trump and his rhetoric have helped cultivate and develop this racial threat and animosity. His White supremacist rhetoric has renormalized the phenomena of blatant racism in the U.S. The racial threat and animosity that he brought about in people and normalized will prevail long after he leaves office. These phenomena should not be brushed off as mere differences of opinion, though, as this level of hate and fear leads to severe consequences (quite literally). I want to study the link between Trump and hate in the U.S. in order to show the reality of the tangible harm that words and ideologies can cause.

Trump and his rhetoric have caused an increase of people feeling comfortable being open about their hate. Trump inspires people like him to "tell it like it really is," therefore spreading and normalizing white supremacist and bigoted thought. I want to analyze how this relates to the rate of racially-motivated hate crimes in the U.S. Has the U.S. seen an increase in hate crimes since Trump started campaigning? If so, can this trend be generalized towards the nation, or does it vary by state? I hypothesize that the greater the percentage of votes a state had for Trump in the 2016 election, the greater the rate of racially-motivated hate crimes (RMHCs) per capita in a state.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilizes Group Threat Theory. Specifically, this study focuses on a subset of this theory, namely Racial Group Threat Theory, or simply, Racial Threat. Group Threat arises when the population of a minority group increases, and the dominant group feels their social position is threatened. More specifically, Racial Threat arises when the population of people of color (POC) increases, and as a result, White people feel as though their group position is threatened (Blumer 1958). With this theory in mind, I argue that Trump's widespread White Supremacist rhetoric inspired a rise in Racial Threat among his supporters and among White America. I hypothesize that this rise in Racial Threat has led to a correlation between support for Trump and racially-motivated hate crimes in the U.S. since the beginning of his campaign in 2015.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Has the increase in normalized White Supremacist rhetoric since the Trump campaign caused an increase in RMHCs in the U.S.? White supremacy and bigotry are not new phenomena, and hate crimes are not a recent development—the two have a long history.

Literature shows that hate crimes and bigotry are inextricably linked. Even when there is no pre-meditation for hate crimes, and when the crime is completely spontaneous, who the offender decides to kill is subject to their visible identities being what makes them a target (Messner, McHugh, and Felson 2004; Sweeney and Perliger 2018). In the case of racially-motivated hate crimes, White supremacy is integral to the motivation behind hate crimes. White supremacy and bigotry lead to racial threat and racial animosity, which can last decades. Studies have shown that regions with a history of White Supremacy, for example, regions with historically high KKK activity, are still affected by this activity today (McVeigh and Cunningham 2012). There are several themes rooted in history and intergroup relations that help us better understand hate crimes, and especially hate crimes as they occur in the modern context.

The Adversary Effect, Racial Animosity, and Racial Threat

The adversary effect, racial animosity, and racial threat are three phenomena that are very difficult to separate, and are further complicated by intergroup racial dynamics. The adversary effect is the phenomenon of a perpetrator of any form of crime using more severe or fatal techniques when attacking a victim based on how dangerous they perceive their victim to be. In other words, there is a positive relationship between the perceived danger or threat of the victim and the severity of the attack (Powers and Socia 2019). This effect is often found in incidents of hate crime, and largely affects the severity of attacks against People of Color (POC). Anti-Black hate groups promote the stereotype that Blacks are violent and criminals, and do so in order to recruit, and to establish as well as maintain group cohesion (Durso and Jacobs 2013). This, along with the way in which POC are portrayed in the media, instills an implicit bias in most people that POC are dangerous, and as a result, POC are more subject to being victims of severe hate crimes due to the adversary effect (Powers and Socia 2019).

While the adversary effect often impacts the severity of hate crimes, racial animosity and racial threat are often the primary motivators of hate crimes being perpetrated in the first place. Racial threat is a common phenomenon among Whites in the U.S.; Racial threat is the perceived occurrence of a large shift in power dynamics in society. Whites often feel as though the U.S. is being "taken over" by POC and immigrants, and that soon Whites will be subordinated. As a result, they feel threatened and feel the need to eliminate said threat. RMHCs are most likely to be committed by White offenders and are most likely to be targeted against racial minorities (Klein and Allison 2018). Further, while Whites account for the highest number of self-reported bias-crime victimizations, or while Whites most often claim to have been victims of a hate crime or hate incident, Blacks and Hispanics are at a higher risk for being victims of more violent attacks and racially motivated crimes perpetrated by Whites (Messner et al. 2004; Tessler et al. 2018).

While many hypothesize and hope that living in diverse areas would lead to increased understanding between groups due to exposure, studies show that diversification can lead to increased hostility and racial threat among Whites against POC (Craig and Richeson 2014; Lyons 2008; Perry and Blazak 2009; Piatkowska, Messner, and Hövermann 2019). This general animosity and threat is what stimulates the reactionary responses of perpetrators of RMHCs (McDevitt, Levin, and Bennet 2002); Whites who perceive a wave of minorities moving into White neighborhoods as a threat do so because they see it as having their territory being invaded and trespassed upon and their segregated boundaries crossed, thereby warranting a response (McDevitt et al. 2002; Perry and Blazak 2009). Whites can even feel racial threat if someone in their family marries someone who is Black, thereby leading to an increase in hate crimes (Piatkowska et al. 2019). Spontaneous hate crimes are more likely to happen when one's

environment diversifies abruptly; the crimes are hyper-reactionary (McDevitt et al. 2002; Sweeney and Perliger 2018). Contrary to the stereotype, hate crimes are not solely perpetrated by hate groups who have carefully planned their attack, but also by random people who are not affiliated with any specific hate group and spontaneously attack others.

An important and often overlooked note is that while racial animosity can cause racially motivated incidents (not necessarily hate crimes), the causal relationship can also be reversed. It is not just the extreme cases of hate groups that cause this racial animosity and intergroup hostility. Everyday manifestations of power dynamics via racially-motivated incidents can affect the way groups interact with each other, thereby affecting the attitudes towards each other (Blee 2007). Once this animosity has been established, the possibility of more serious incidents of racially motivated hate crimes increases.

The Subtlety of Hate

When we hear the word hate crime, we often picture the lynching of a Black man, the excessively vulgar stabbing of a POC, or some other extreme action taken against another person. While these are absolutely examples of hate crimes and forms of hate crimes that still occur in the U.S. today, hate crimes are often not as extreme as they once were. Hate in the U.S. appears to have gone away, but it simply has transformed. This misconception has caused many issues in the world of hate crimes and attaining justice for victims. Further, it has made it more difficult to parse out what constitutes hate in the first place.

A common phenomenon in the U.S. is hate speech. Hate speech in the modern context is not as explicit as it was in the 1960s. Hate speech has not gone away, but has rather become subtler and more hidden, and because of its lack of explicitness, is not understood to be hate speech. Yet, it is this rhetoric that is found on areas of the internet and in the media that help

mobilize hate groups and form identity (Alvarez-Benjumea and Winter 2018; Josey 2010).

Further, uncensored hate speech in online settings allows for people to "feed off of" each other

and make them more likely to contribute to hate speech (Alvarez-Benjumea and Winter 2018;

Blee and Creasap 2010). It is argued that Donald Trump and his rhetoric are highly correlated to

the rise of hate groups and hate speech. For example, Trump's anti-muslim rhetoric and travel

ban appear to be connected with a rise of anti-muslim hate groups; approximately 30 groups

existed in 2015, and the number shot up to 101 in 2016. (Cunningham 2018). We also saw this

during the Obama era. The increase in hostile and racially-charged political rhetoric during the

Obama era lead to perceived threat among right-wingers, suggesting an increase in hate crimes

and hate groups (Hicks and Hicks 2014). This phenomenon has a similar relationship in the

opposite direction; an increase in Black populations and violent (racially-motivated crime rates)

leads to an increase in Republican representation in state legislatures (Jacobs and Tope 2008). In

conjunction, these two relationships create a cycle; an increase in Black population and hate

crimes leads to an increase in Republican representation, while an increase in right-wing rhetoric

and voiced racial threat via an increase in Republican representation leads to an increase in hate

crimes and groups.

Despite the compelling evidence showing a relationship between normalized racially

charged speech and hate groups, we still call this hate speech "racially-charged" rather than

hateful. Because the severity of hate speech and hate crimes in the U.S. was once hyper-visible

and explicit, many wrongfully are under the impression that this hate is no longer an issue. Not

only does this effect the way we perceive hate speech, but it also affects how seriously various

hate crimes are taken. The more severe incidents are more likely to enter the criminal justice

system, while the subtler versions are underreported and rarely make it to trial. I argue that rather

than there being a lack of evidence, there is a lack of "severe enough" evidence, leading to

underreporting of hate crimes and an overall feel of a lack of hate in the U.S.

Underreporting

Much of the issue with gathering hate crime statistics is a result of the flimsy definition of

what ought to be categorized as a hate crime in the U.S. (Blee 2005; Cronan et al. 2007; Dixon

and Ray 2007; Nolan et al. 2015). This is only exacerbated by the FBI and federal government

"suggesting" a hate crime definition rather than enforcing one. The discrepancy between the

federal definition of hate crime and the state level definition causes further issues and

inconsistencies of levels of reporting between states and even within states (Cronin et al. 2007;

Nolan et al. 2015). This lack of rigor allows room for subjectivity, affecting interpretation of

crimes as a whole as well as the specific evidence within each crime, and also allows room for

ideology to play a part.

A large cause of the problem with reporting and further police action is caused by the

difficulty of obtaining evidence of bias motivation (Lantz, Gladfelter, and Ruback 2019; Nolan

et al. 2004). With no universalized definition of what constitutes a hate crime, there is no

systematized way of analyzing pieces of evidence. Further, motive for (hate) crimes is more

difficult to establish or argue for in hate crimes due to the allowed freedom to define hate crimes.

Because of the freedom allowed in defining hate crimes, there is much room left for

ideology. Counties with high rates of Republican voting are less likely to report hate crimes than

those with higher levels of Democratic voting (McVeigh, Welch, and Bjarnason 2003).

Specifically, for Republican districts and areas, there tends to be an adoption of a "color-blind"

approach to interpreting the motivation behind a crime and whether or not it "counts" as a hate

crime. Conservatism and fundamentalism cause law enforcement districts to be less likely to

incriminate Whites who commit crimes against racial minorities (Blee 2005; King 2008;

McVeigh et al. 2003).

To sum up, literature has shown the interconnectedness of racially-motivated hate crimes

and White supremacist ideology. This ideology affects not only the motivation behind hate

crimes, but also the rates at which these crimes are reported and the methods used to report them.

The literature shows that hate does not have to be particularly extreme or vulgar in order to

inspire hate in others. Simply put, hate is hate. Today, hate has become subtler and less blatant,

which often gives the false impression that hate among groups is no longer an issue. This subtler

version of hate is no less dangerous than the more obvious forms, though, as the literature

suggests this hate is just as capable of increasing racial threat and animosity as the more blatant

forms of hate. This increase in racial threat, regardless of its source, poses the risk of increased

hate crimes that are committed, as it is one of the primary motivations behind racially-motivated

hate crimes.

METHODS

In order to test the literature and my hypotheses, I will be using three data sets: the FBI's

Annual Reports of Hate Crime Statistics (HCS) for 2017; the U.S. Census Bureau's American

Community Survey (ACS) from 2017; and the 2016 Presidential Election results. For each data

set, my unit of analysis will be U.S. states. The HCS's reports provide the numbers of bias-

motivated crimes in the nation, with subsets that include the specific motivation (anti-Black,

anti-gay, etc.), state, race of offender, and more. The rate of hate crimes reported in the HCS

wholly relies on the amount that each states police agencies report (or underreport), so the data is

imperfect. For 2017, the HCS had a response rate of 94 percent.[1] The state of Hawaii did not

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[1] For further information on how the data was collected, go to https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/resource-

pages/about-hate-crime.

provide a report for hate crimes in 2017, so the state of Hawaii has been excluded from this

study. For the purposes of this study, I am only going to be looking at the rate of RMHCs.

The ACS is an annual survey sent to about 3.5 million randomly selected households in

the U.S. The ACS allows the U.S. Census Bureau to gather data about the nation and its people

during years when the decennial Census is not being sent out. This data set includes populations

in states and in the nation, as well as subsets of the population that show the racial distribution of

each state. The ACS received a 92 percent response rate.[2] I will also be using the number of

votes for Trump in the 2016 election results to gauge the level of Trump support by state. The

sample includes everyone who voted in the 2016 presidential election.

For my dependent variable, I want to study the rate of hate crimes in every state. To do

so, I will use the HCS to see the number of RMHCs reported in each state. I will divide this

number by the total population of each state provided by the ACS's data in order to get the rate

of RMHCs in each state. Finally, I will multiply this number by 1,000 in order to attain the rate

of RMHCs per capita in a given state.

For my independent variable, I want to gauge each state's level of support for Donald

Trump in order to gauge the level of White supremacy and racial animosity. I decided to use the

2016 Presidential Election results *for the popular vote* to look at the percentage of votes for

Trump in each state. I did not include the electoral college votes as the electoral college is an

extremely flawed system that does not accurately represent the beliefs of voters. However, using

the popular vote is still an imperfect measure of support, as many who voted for Trump regret

doing so and do not continue to support him. Further, not everyone voted in the election, so there

could be more Trump supporters than the data shows. Nonetheless, I decided to use this data in

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[2] For further information on how the data was collected, go to https://www.census.gov/programs-

surveys/acs/methodology.html.

order to rid of as much bias among the data as possible. Using the election results, I was

provided the percentage of popular votes for Trump within each state.

For my control variable, I will be using the ACS. Many Trump supporting states are

mostly made up of White people. As a result, Trump supporting states may have fewer racially-

motivated hate crimes simply because there are not enough racial minorities to be targeted within

the state. As a result, I will be controlling for the racial distribution within each state. To do so, I

will use the percentage of Whites within each state to indicate how racially diverse (or not) a

state is.

FINDINGS

For my independent variable, percentage of votes for Trump, Figure 1 shows that about

33 percent of states had 40 to 49.99 percent votes for Trump in the 2016 election. The smallest

percentage of votes for Trump was in Washington D.C., with 4.1 percent votes for Trump, and

the largest percentage of votes was in Wyoming, with 70.10 percent votes for Trump. Table 1

shows that the average percentage of votes for Trump in a state was 49.40 percent, with a

standard deviation of 11.66 percent, indicating that two-thirds of states had between 38 and 61

percent of votes for Trump.

For my dependent variable, hate crimes per capita in each state, the numbers shown in

Table 1 and Figure 2 represent the number of hate crimes that occur for every 1000 people in the

state. Figure 2 shows that the largest percentage of rate of hate crimes per capita is 0-0.49. This

means that about 37 percent of states have 0-0.49 hate crimes per every 1000 people. Table 1

shows that the average rate of hate crimes per capita is 1.56. There is a standard deviation of

2.36, indicating that two-thirds of states have hate crime rates per capita ranging from 0 to 3.92.

Figure 2 shows that there is a strong left-skew in the rate of hate crimes.

For my control variable, percentage of Whites per state, Figure 3 shows a right skew, indicating that more states have larger percentages of Whites. The largest percentage of Whites in state fall between 80 percent and 89 percent. Table 1 shows that the average percentage of Whites in state is 76.75, with a standard deviation of 11.71. This indicates that two-thirds of states have between 65 and 88 percentages of Whites.

Table 2 shows a statistically significant, moderate to strong negative correlation ($r = -.560$) between the percentage of votes for Trump and the hate crime rate per capita. This means that as a state's percentage of votes for Trump in the 2016 election increases, the state's hate crime rate per capita decreases. Table 2 also shows a statistically significant, weak to moderate negative correlation ($r = -.267$) between the percentage of Whites in a state and the hate crime rate per capita. This indicates that as a state's percentage of Whites increases, the hate crime rate per capita decreases. Finally, Table 2 shows a statistically significant positive moderate correlation ($r = .444$) between percentage of votes for Trump and a state's percentage of Whites. This means that as a state's percentage of Whites increases, a state's percentage of votes for Trump in 2016 increases.

As indicated in Table 3, the R^2 is .314, indicating that 31 percent of the variance in hate crime rates per capita can be explained by a state's percentage of votes for Trump and a state's percentage of Whites. The F value in Table 3 shows that the regression equation is significant at the .001 level. Additionally, votes for Trump was significant at the .001 level, indicating that there is a .01 percent chance that the results would have occurred by chance alone. While the percentage of the state that is White was statistically significant at the bivariate level, it is no longer statistically significant in the regression equation. Table 3 indicates an unstandardized coefficient, b, of -0.111 for votes for Trump, meaning that for every one percent increase in a

state's percentage of votes for Trump, the state's hate crime rate per capita decreases by 0.111.

The standardized coefficient, *ß,* for votes for Trump was -.550. Because a state's percentage of

Whites was not significant, a state's percentage of votes for Trump is the only predictor of a

state's hate crime rate per capita in this regression equation.

In sum, the results of the data do not support my hypothesis. Instead, the data supports

the opposite of my hypothesis. Rather than an increase in votes for Trump causing an increase in

hate crime rates per capita, an increase in votes causes a *decrease* in hate crime rates per capita.

DISCUSSION

As shown, the data did not support my hypothesis. Rather, the results support the

opposite of my hypothesis, showing that higher levels of Trump support in a state lead to lower

levels of hate crimes in that state. Further, Group Threat Theory, or specifically Racial Threat,

was not supported by the results of this study, as the rise in racial threat brought about by Trump

did not lead to increased racially-motivated hate crime rates in Trump-supporting states, but

rather led to decreased rates. Further, the racial composition of a state was not statistically

significant, therefore providing further lack of support for Racial Group Threat Theory.

However, rather than going against all of the literature that cites a correlation between White

supremacy and hate crimes, this study may still support the literature, despite my hypothesis not

being supported. It is crucial to keep in mind the data that I am using, as the data itself may be

the cause of why the results came out the way that they did.

This study used the FBI's hate crime statistics, which relies wholly on each state, and the

police departments within each state, to report to the FBI the rates of hate crimes. Furthermore,

while the FBI has their own definition of hate crime, this definition is not enforced. Instead, each

state is allowed to have their own definition of hate crime. What's more, Arkansas, Georgia,

South Carolina, and Wyoming do not even have hate crime laws. All of this to say, I argue that what this study has shown is not that states with higher levels of Trump support are correlated with lower rates of hate crimes. Rather, the data shows that states with higher levels of Trump support are correlated with lower *reported* rates of hate crimes. This means that the study may indicate that Trump support is correlated with underreporting—strongly correlated with underreporting, I might emphasize.

Because the data relies on reported rates of hate crimes, rather than the rates of hate crimes that can be proven to truly exist, the data may show a correlation between Trump support, which I argue is synonymous with White supremacy, and underreporting hate crimes. The literature indicates that conservative states underreport hate crimes (Blee 2005; King 2008; McVeigh et al. 2003; McVeigh, Welch, and Bjarnason 2003). Further, the literature indicates that conservativism and Trump's hate speech are both correlated with increased hate, be it in the form of racial animosity/threat, alt-right ideology, hate speech, and more (Alvarez-Benjumea and Winter 2018; Blee and Creasap 2010; Cunningham 2018; Hicks and Hicks 2014; Jacobs and Tope 2008). Finally, the literature indicates that racial animosity/threat, hate speech, alt-right ideology, and more, are all correlated with the occurrence of hate crimes as well as with underreporting (Craig and Richeson 2014; Cunningham 2018; Durso and Jacobs 2013; Klein and Allison 2018; Lyons 2008; McDevitt et al. 2002; Messner et al. 2004; Perry and Blazak 2009; Piatkowska et al. 2019; Powers and Socia 2019; Sweeny and Perliger 2018; Tessler et al. 2018). The logic, then, is that conservatism and specifically Trump support lead to racial threat/animosity, alt-right ideology, hate speech, etc., which simultaneously may have led to increased hate crimes in states as well as underreporting of these very hate crimes in Trump states.

It is also noteworthy that a state's percentage of Whites is not a significant factor in hate crime rates. The logic behind this variable was that while predominately White racial distributions lead to increased racial animosity, there still has to be enough people of color around for White's to express their hate towards or against. That is, predominately White areas tend to have increased levels of racism and racial animosity, and would intuitively therefore have increased hate crime rates. However, in order to have increased hate crime rates, for racially motivated hate crimes at least, the areas need to have racial minorities to target. As a result, this study controls for a state's distribution of Whites in order to ensure that the low hate crime rates were not deceptive. However, a state's percentage of Whites was not statistically significant, while a state's support for Trump was. This indicates that there is something unique about supporting Donald Trump that leads to underreporting of hate crimes. Again, the logic is that the reasoning behind underreporting hate crimes is that there is increased levels of racial animosity and hate. So, one can argue that there is something unique about Trump and state's that have strong support for him that is connected to increased hate, and increased underreporting—It is not just White people being racist.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to answer whether or not an increase in White supremacist rhetoric since Trump's campaign and presidential term led to an increase in racial threat, thereby leading to increased rates of racially-motivated hate crimes. Given the confines of this study, however, I tested whether or not Trump support was correlated with higher rates of racially-motivated hate crimes. To do so, this study performed a state analysis with the operationalization of Trump support as a state's percentage of votes for Trump in the 2016 presidential election. Using Racial Group Threat to frame the study, the hypothesis was that as a state's percentage of votes for

Trump increases, a state's rate of racially-motivated hate crimes per capita increases. The regression analysis supported the opposite of this hypothesis, indicating that as a state's percentage of votes for Trump increases, the states hate crime rate per capita decreases. Further, the results did not support Racial Group Threat, as the racial composition of a state was insignificant, and the rise in racial threat brought about by Trump was correlated with decreased hate crime rates, providing evidence against Racial Group Threat theory. However, connecting the results to the literature, this study argues that the data instead supports that as Trump support increases, underreporting of hate crimes increases.

A limitation of this study is the lack of control variables that were used. While the data indicates a significant and negative relationship between Trump support and hate crime rates per capita, this correlation could potentially be explained by other factors that were unable to be held constant. For example, controlling for conservatism could help distinguish between the racial threat that exists among conservatives and the racial threat that exists within Trump support specifically. Future studies should use county-level data in order to have more freedom to use multiple control variables. Future studies should also distinguish between pre-Trump and post-Trump hate crime rates by conducting a time analysis; this would allow for comparing rates before and after his campaign started as well as to track the trend of hate crime rates throughout the Trump-era. Using county-level data for this time analysis would allow for greater freedom in the use of variables and therefore for a more holistic regression analysis.

Another limitation is the data used for hate crimes in this study; the FBI's annual reports of hate crime statistics do not enforce a definition upon states and therefore states have room to report hate crimes with their own definition and criteria. Firstly, not enforcing a hate crime definition among states means each state is reporting crimes with different criteria, which does

not allow for one to compare the hate crime rates between states. To put it colloquially, the data

does not allow us to compare apples to apples, but rather to compare apples to oranges to

bananas and so on. Secondly, not enforcing a definition of hate crime upon states allows each

state to allow ideology to influence the definition chosen, thereby allowing room for bias. While

the data itself could explain the outcome of the results, there is no way to support that the data is

biased and inaccurate. As a result, future studies should find an unbiased and soundly collected

data set in order to answer the question of whether or not Trump support is correlated with less

racial violence, or rather with underreporting. We need to answer whether or not we are giving

White supremacists and bigots the power to hide their racism and racial violence by not

enforcing a federal definition of hate crime and thereby allowing room for underreporting.

        While enforcing a federal definition of hate crime is an imperfect solution, it is

nonetheless an important starting point to addressing the issue of underreporting. Enforcing a

definition of hate crime upon states does not necessarily mean that states will truly adopt the

definition. There will always be room for interpretation of definitions and some level of

subjectivity (i.e. in one person's opinion the motive was clearly racist, to another the motive had

nothing to do with race). Enforcing a definition does not guarantee accurate reporting; it simply

means that it will be more difficult to underreport and get away with it. However, as stated,

enforcing a federal definition is a crucial first step, as making the ability to underreport more

difficult, even if it is only slightly more difficult, is a step in the right direction.

        The results of the study leave us in a difficult state. One could accept the results of the

data at face value and accept that there is evidence for Trump support being correlated to lower

hate crime rates. However, there is a seemingly endless amount of literature and non-academic

sources that would lead one to believe that the opposite is the case Craig and Richeson 2014;

Cunningham 2018; Durso and Jacobs 2013; Klein and Allison 2018; Lyons 2008; McDevitt et al. 2002; Messner et al. 2004; Perry and Blazak 2009; Piatkowska et al. 2019; Powers and Socia 2019; Sweeny and Perliger 2018; Tessler et al. 2018). As a result, it is imperative that the FBI enforces their definition of hate crimes. Even if the federal definition is an imperfect one, it could at least help us understand how each state's hate crime rates compare to other state's when the same method of data collection is used. Further, the federal definition can help make the issue of underreporting more difficult to accomplish. Otherwise, we as a country are allowing states the opportunity to hide their racism, to hide the racial injustice that is so pervasive throughout the U.S. Allowing each state to decide their own definition of hate crime allows states to let ideology influence the perceived importance of and care put into collecting these data.

It is a harsh reality that racial inequality is not an important issue to many Americans—racial injustice simply does not matter to many. To some, there is a motivation to *maintain* racial inequality. Those who desire to maintain inequality could be the very people who are reporting the statistics to the FBI, thereby leaving everyone under the impression that the racial climate is peaceful and that hate is the exception, rather than the norm. There is a motivation to hide racism in the U.S. and to support the claim that those who argue racial inequality exists are delusional. To let states determine their own definition of hate crimes is to enable states to hide and ignore the deaths of POC in the U.S. To let states determine their own definition of hate crimes is to enable hiding racial inequality in the U.S. and enable the silencing of those who try and address racial inequality in the U.S. People of color are dying. So long as we do not address the issue of underreporting, we are letting them.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Variables ($N = 50$)

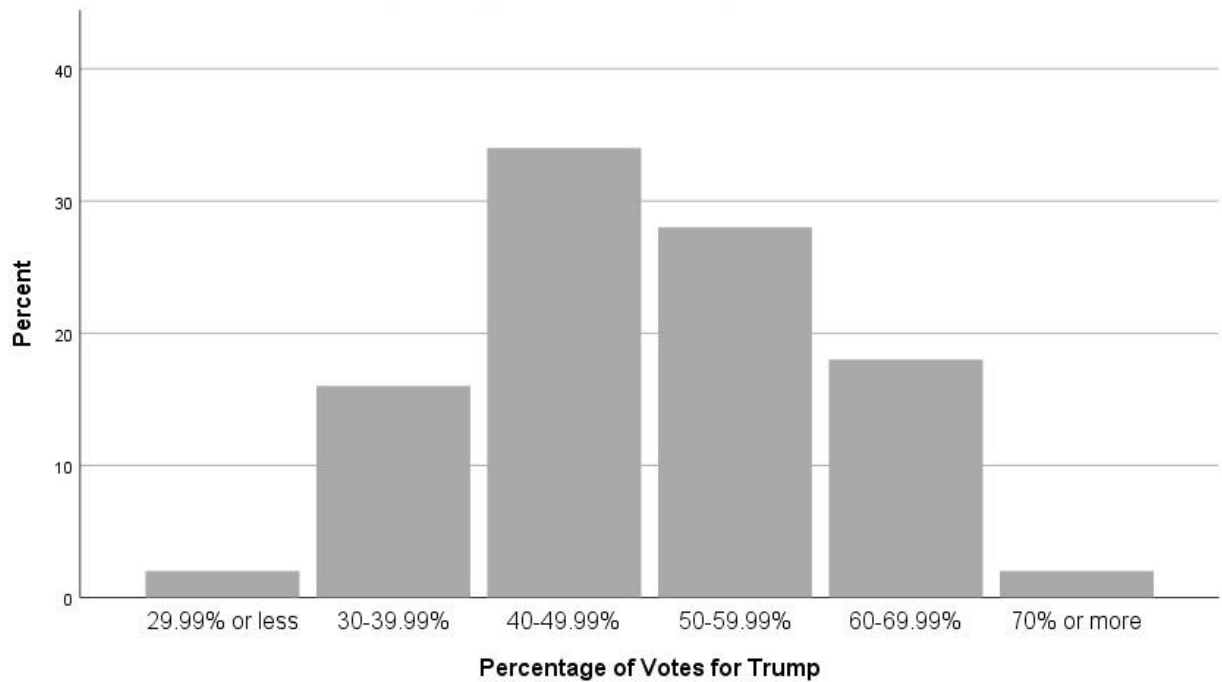| Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Percent of Votes for Trump	49.40	11.658
Number of Hate Crimes Per Capita	1.56	2.356
Percent of Whites	76.75	11.710

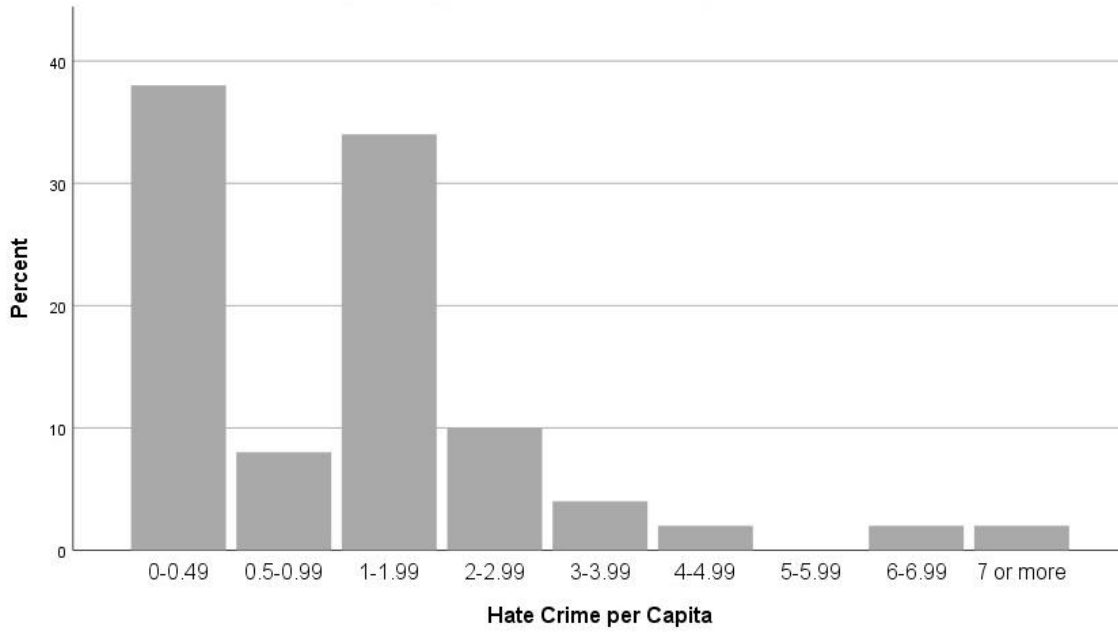Figure 1. Bar Chart of Percentage of Votes for Trump
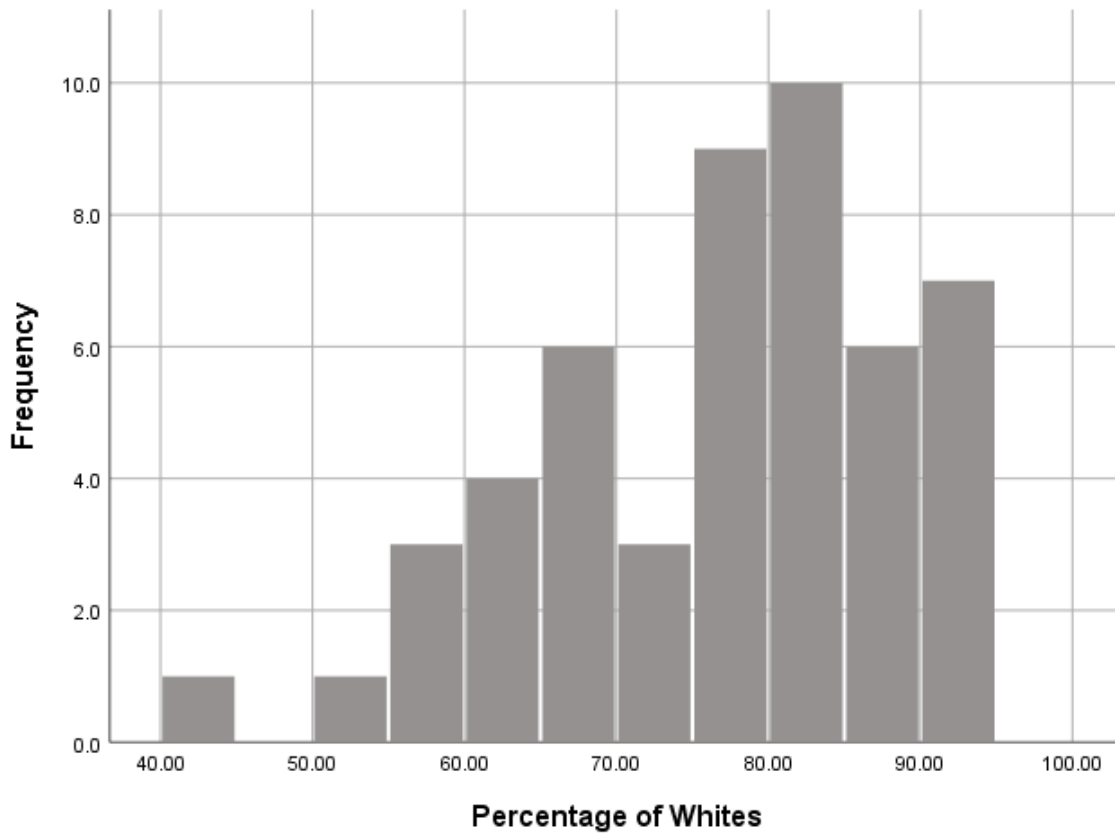
Figure 2. Bar Chart of Hate Crimes per Capita

Figure 3. Histogram of Percentage of Whites

Table 2. Correlations (*r*) Between Hate Crime Rate per Capita and Two Other Variables (listwise deletion, two-tailed test, *N* = 50)

Variable	Percentage of Votes for Trump	Percentage of Whites in State
Hate Crime Rate per Capita	-.560***	-.267*
Percentage of Votes for Trump		.444**

*p < .10, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 3. Regression of Hate Crime Per Capita on All Variables

Variable	*b*	*β*
Percent Votes for Trump	-.111	-.550*
Percent Whites in State	-.005	-.023
Constant	7.402	

R^2 = .314; $F(2,47)$ = 10.753, *p* < .001
*p < .001