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Structural Attributes Associated with the Prevalence of Hate Groups: A State-Level Analysis

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STRUCTURAL ATTRIBUTES ASSOCIATED WITH
THE PREVALENCE OF HATE GROUPS:
A STATE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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Department of Criminal Justice
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ABSTRACT

Structural Attributes Associated with the Prevalence of Hate Groups: A State-Level Analysis

by

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Dr. Jane Florence Gauthier, Thesis Committee Chair
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With the number of hate groups increasing 54 percent since 2000, it is important to understand what is triggering these groups to form in geographical areas. The current study examined whether structural characteristics predicted the number of hate groups within a state. Using hate group listings from the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report and U. S. Census data from 2000, this study explored a state's racial and ethnic heterogeneity, economic disadvantage, and regional location to explain hate group existence within that state. Employing correlations, Chi-Square analyses, multiple and logistic regressions, and a conjunctive analysis, this study found that a state's diversity does not predict the number of hate groups. Economic disadvantage moderately predicts the existence of hate groups, while a state's regional location strongly predicted the number of hate groups within that state. The conjunctive analysis, however, showed that these effects are highly contextual. Limitations and recommendations are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2008), the number of active organized hate groups is rising, reporting a 48 percent increase since 2000. In 2008 alone, the SPLC counted 888 hate groups and group chapters in the United States, of which 69 percent possessed White supremacist beliefs.¹ American history has been plagued with offenses motivated by bigotry and prejudice such as the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Perpetrators of hate violence in the past decade have mostly acted in informal groups (Levin & McDevitt, 1993; Watts, 2001), with only about five percent of hate crimes being perpetrated by organized hate groups (Levin, 2007; Levin & McDevitt, 2002). Although this percentage appears largely trivial, members and leaders of hate groups recruit, organize and advocate hate violence by teaching their beliefs to others who can then use them for discrimination, intimidation and aggression making hate groups more influential than the numbers indicate. Thus, a hate group's desire to form in neighborhoods across America is worth understanding. It is the purpose of this study to examine whether or not a state's racial, ethnic, and economic composition predicts the number of hate groups existing within a state.

¹ Of the 888 hate groups reported, the Ku Klux Klan had 155 chapters, Neo-Nazi's had 207, White Nationalists had 125, Racist Skinheads had 90, and Christian Identity had 36. This percentage excludes Neo Confederates and Black Separatists.

Organized Hate Groups

While abhorrence and discontent between different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups has existed for centuries (see Streissguth (2003) for a documented chronology), a leader and good recruits are required to be successful (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2004).

According to Blee (2004a), becoming a White racist activist involves more than adopting their definitions, it requires belief in the necessity of taking action on behalf of the White race. Members of hate groups rely on a person's actions to define race just as much as one's physical characteristics.

Schafer and Navarro (2003) explained the progression of hate groups through a seven-stage hate model beginning with haters coming together based on their shared belief to form a group. Once the group has defined itself with its own language and lifestyle consisting of, but not limited to symbols, rituals and clothing, they boost their status by disparaging their target; thus allowing for the group's environment to be saturated with hatred. Now that the group is in a state of odium, they taunt their target(s) with forms of character defamation such as slurs and insults, followed with attacks without weapons. The verbal abuse, Schafer and Navarro (2003) argue, transforms into physical abuse when members from the group purposely seek out their targets. Upon physical abuse, in which the group incorporates weapons into their attacks on targets to fulfill their sense of empowerment, the hate group reaches their ultimate goal of destroying their target. Again, the sense of empowerment enables the group to justify their worthiness. Essentially, the success of a hate group relies on a leader to guide the members to the group's ultimate goal of enmity (Anderson, Mangels, & Dyson, 2001; Woolf & Hulsizer, 2004).

The role of women in organized hate groups has evolved over time. Blee (2002) found women's roles fall into the categories of familial, social and operative. The domestic duty of creating a nurturing environment for the entire racist organization, in addition to their families, is "assigned." Within the organization, women have obligations to bear children with men from the group and teach them their racial and bigoted beliefs. Furthermore, acting as a "social facilitator" allows the group to link with outsiders with a minimized threat; thus acting as a recruiter. These two aforementioned roles can also tie in to a woman's operative role that includes making flyers, distributing propaganda, and promoting White supremacist bands. While there are gender differences within organized hate groups, clearly, the role of women is vital for the success of hate organizations in spreading their word.

Hate Group Types and Their Targets

The SPLC monitors hate groups and tracks their activity throughout the United States. Of the eight categories of hate groups, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is the oldest and most infamous of all organized hate groups. Formed shortly after the Civil War in 1865, the KKK started as one organization and has since split into numerous chapters nationwide. The KKK has historically targeted primarily African Americans; however, it has also been known to attack Jewish people and homosexuals (SPLC, 2008). Additionally, with the growing immigrant population, members of this organization have been targeting Hispanics and Asians.

Racist Skinheads originated in Germany in the 1960s. It was not until the 1980s when American Skinheads first appeared. Members of this group are highly political directing their enmity towards capitalists, communists, and Jewish people. According to

the SPLC (2008), this group is the most violent of all the organized hate group categories. In addition to Skinheads, the Neo-Nazis have an admiration for Hitler and Nazi Germany and hatred towards Jewish people. The symbol of the swastika identifies the members of this group and triggers feelings of fear and hatred as it is viewed as the oldest symbol of the White race (Dobratz & Shenks-Meile, 1997). The SPLC (2008) claim that Neo-Nazis believe they are fighting for the rights of White Americans by planning a revolution to return power to the White race.

Similarly, White Nationalists advocate a racial definition of White people and oppose multiculturalism (SPLC, 2008). Members of this group believe in defending the civil rights of White people. As opposed to using violence to send their message, White Nationalists quote data from social science research to make their argument.

The Christian Identity group came into mainstream America in the 1980s. Members of the Christian Identity believe that Whites are the true Israelites favored by God and that the Jews are descendents of Satan. Additionally, members believe that Christ will not return to earth until the Jewish people are completely wiped out of existence. The Christian Identity belief system provides its members with a religious basis for racial separatism (SPLC, 2008).

Not all organized hate groups are White supremacists. Black Separatists are strongly anti-White and anti-Semitic and are convinced that they cannot advance in a world dominated by the White race. These members also oppose integration and interracial marriage (SPLC, 2008). Similarly, Neo-Confederates believe in, not only having separate institutions, but secession from the entire Union. Neo-Confederate members celebrate the Confederate States of America, a government formed by eleven states

between 1861 and 1865, which gave more power to the states (SPLC, 2008). Members of this group believe minorities and immigrants are destroying the White culture of the South.

The hate groups that do not fall under any of the abovementioned classifications created by the SPLC are placed into the General Hate category. Included in the General Hate category are sub-categories of anti-gay, anti-immigrant, and holocaust denial groups, as well as racist music labels.

The categories of the abovementioned hate groups are the basis of the current study. While there are notable similarities and differences among these groups, it is the purpose of this study to examine the structural conditions of a state and whether or not these structural conditions predict the number of hate groups existing within that state. The following chapter discusses previous research conducted on hate groups reporting their specific findings and proposes a theoretical framework as a foundation for the current study's hypotheses.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Geography and Hate Groups

Organized hate groups set up headquarters throughout the country with numerous chapters branching off into the smallest of communities. The SPLC discovered hate groups existing in every state in the U.S. clustering in the Eastern and Southern regions of the country. The importance of examining geography and hate groups is maintained by Flint (2004) who suggests the “geo-historical context of a state, the scope of identities constructed by the actions of groups, the social construction of place and borders, and territoriality provides a geographical perspective of spatial contextualization (p.4).” Some of these concepts have been studied and their findings are discussed below.

Hate groups may exist more in the South than any other region because of its history of slavery. In addition, Jefferson and Pryor (1999) found that hate groups are more likely to be located in urban areas rather than rural areas, as well as Southern states of the former Confederacy where slavery was prominent and social change was resented. Conversely, Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997) argue that the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho) is predominantly White; therefore, White separatists are beginning to migrate to this area.

Certain communities may be more of a target than other communities for White supremacist activities. The Southern region is less likely to be in favor of cultural change as compared to other regions (Blumer, 1958). In the Southern region of the United States, Beck (2000) explored why certain communities were targeted for White supremacist rallies and demonstrations in the 1980s finding them more likely to occur in counties where the Asian population was high as opposed to counties where Hispanics increased their income. The author's finding suggests that hate groups are more threatened by the White race being infiltrated by non-Whites rather than their earnings being taken away from them. Clearly, geographical location may predict the existence of hate groups, but also racial and ethnic issues play a key role.

Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity

The United States' racial composition is rapidly changing (Frazier, Margai & Tettey-Fio, (2003). Early predictions on the United States population read that the White population was to represent 52 percent of the entire population by 2050 (U. S. Census, 2008). However, the U. S. Census Bureau (2008) reported the White population will represent less than half (46%) of the American population by 2042, eight years sooner than previously projected. While this estimate is premature based on future immigration policies and continuing cultural changes, according to the report, the diverse population is growing due to immigration and higher birth rates by minority residents, particularly Hispanics.

The more the White population and their resources are threatened by minorities, the higher the likelihood members of organized hate groups are to strike against said

minorities. According to Altman (2001), the choice of victims often depends on local conditions. For example, in Imperial Beach, CA, the KKK intimidated and terrorized Vietnamese immigrant anglers because they built a fishing fleet; thus, accusing the Vietnamese of taking away jobs from Whites. Further, Green, Strolovitch and Wong (1998) found a relationship between racially motivated crime and patterns of demographic change, specifically, that Blacks become safer as their numbers grow in historically non-White areas. Hate violence increased in areas where non-Whites moved into White communities and decreased in areas where non-Whites resided with other non-Whites.

Hate violence has also occurred against minorities by other minorities. According to Levin and McDevitt (2002), some Blacks regard Jews as representatives of White supremacy. The authors suggest the unequal wealth distribution between Jews and Blacks gives rise to interracial violence. Furthermore, the animosity deepens when members of different minority groups compete for the same jobs, live in the same neighborhoods and have their children attend the same schools. The ongoing tension and continuing competition for jobs and housing threatens the position of the other group, thus resulting in conflict.

Economic Disadvantage

Researchers have argued that the state of the American economy influences hate group and hate crime activity. One of the earliest studies conducted on hate crime activity and economic conditions by Hovland and Sears (1940) examined Black lynchings from 1882 to 1930 finding that as cotton prices and the economy took a turn for the worse,

Black lynchings increased. Building upon Hovland and Sears' (1940) study, Green, Glaser and Rich (1998) evaluated post-depression hate crimes and economic decline mainly finding no relationship linking unemployment to hate crimes. It is likely the inconsistencies between these two studies were due to the different time frames studied. At the time of Hovland and Sears' (1940) study, the economy was recovering from a depression while Green, Glaser and Rich (1998) examined data not only post Great Depression, but also post Civil Rights and Women's movements. In other words, the times were different socially and economically.

In examining the social and economic influences of hate groups, Olzak (1992) found that during periods of improved economic conditions, attacks occurred against African Americans, Asian Americans and European Americans when improving their standard of living. When comparing hate group proportions to population ratios, Peterson (2002) found that hate groups were more likely to form when unemployment rates are high for a state. Jefferson & Pryor (1999) used SPLC's hate group listings and U.S. Census data to examine where hate groups flourish finding a relationship between the existence of a hate group in an area and the area's property tax, educational attainment and resident population. Similarly, McVeigh (2004) found a county's racial and ethnic heterogeneity, income inequality, and population density was a significant predictor of racist organizing.

The Force of the Internet

Although the current study does not examine online hate groups, they are important to discuss since the Internet has provided organized hate groups with a strong advantage to spread their word of hatred to a wider audience. Not only are the messages hate groups

disperse via the Internet uncensored, but the United States Supreme Court has given the Internet full protection by the First Amendment (*Reno v. ACLU*, 1997). This freedom allows hate groups to provide propaganda, music, and computer games to anyone browsing on their sites.

According to the SPLC (2007), there were 566 active hate group websites in 2006. Previous research on Internet hate groups has examined how groups persuade visitors to enter their webpage (Borgeson & Valerie, 2004; Duffy, 2003; Lee & Leets, 2002; Weatherby & Scoggins, 2006). Groups are able to control their image on the Internet allowing sites to look respectable and professional; words can be chosen carefully to appear credible. For the young child using the Internet to assist in homework, a search engine can produce a surplus of results. For example, a middle school student researching Martin Luther King, Jr. for a paper can conduct a Google[®] search resulting in 12 million websites. Jackson (2006) found that the eighth listing on the first page of a Google[®] search results page of martinlutherking.org, is a hate site operated by a White supremacist. One wrong click can lead an adolescent to hateful rhetoric.

Other research on Internet hate groups has examined the type of content hate group websites provide to viewers (Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003; Levin, 2002; Schafer, 2002). These studies have found that Internet communication is fast, easy and inexpensive allowing members to share with visitors materials such as publications, multimedia downloads, and external links. The Internet also makes recruiting new members easier for White supremacist groups. Any individual with a computer can access hundreds of hate websites. A person who holds racist and prejudice beliefs is able to connect with others worldwide who share similar ideologies.

While organized hate groups exist in cyberspace and in communities across America, the reason(s) for them to exist is worth understanding. It is implausible to postulate a single criminological theory to explain hate group existence for there are several factors to take into account. Following is an examination of theoretical explanations as to why hate groups may form and who is joining them.

Theory

Micro-Level Theory

Researchers have argued (Blazak, 2001; Ezekiel, 2002) that individuals may experience anomie or strain, and are thus more susceptible to the influences of White supremacist recruitment. For instance, Blazak found youths who feel isolated, alienated, and threatened by status change are susceptible to recruitment by hate groups. Similarly, Ezekiel found many hate group members to have been isolated as adolescents—suffering from parental loss, lacking positive adult role models, and/or weakened sibling bonds. Other micro-level research has suggested symbolic interaction (Donelan, 2004) to explain why individuals join organized hate groups. For instance, a group's symbol(s) may suggest a plan of action, and as a result, the group behaves in a manner in reference to what they symbolize.

Opatow and McClelland (2007) maintain that hate is a derivative from one's history, including “proximate contextual factors and some unconscious or irrational beliefs that create the readiness to hate” (p. 75). Of the five components (antecedents, affect, cognitions, morals and norms, behavior) that frame their theory of hating, they argue that

when hate is limited to just one component, the act of hating remains sedentary; however, with all five represented, hate can be fatally destructive.

Scapegoating has emerged as a theme in hate group research. According to Allport (1958), people who scapegoat do not blame themselves for their misfortunes, but blame other people. Scapegoat theory (see Dollard et. al, 1939) of prejudice maintains that an individual who is highly prejudiced will have a certain amount of frustration and hostility that has not been reduced or acted out against the original object of aggression. Furthermore, the theory argues that this highly prejudiced individual succeeds in reducing his hostility by displacing it upon members of minority groups in the form of prejudiced behavior.

Steinberg, Brooks, and Remtulla (2003) argue that hate is a cognitive problem in which an offender sees himself as moralistic and righteous, thus blaming the enemy for his or her problems. Douglas, McGarty, Bliuc, and Lala (1995) argue that scapegoat victims are chosen based on the characteristics held which are different from those held by the majority of his or her peers. Scapegoating has also been found as a tactic for recruiting by organized hate groups (Roy, 2002). By placing blame on others, it is easy for White supremacist groups to reassure the person who feels powerless in the face of personal, social, or economic difficulties.

In addition to scapegoat theory, frustration-aggression hypothesis has been argued as an explanation for prejudice. Lindzey (1950) found individuals who were very prejudiced against minority groups became more frustrated than individuals who were low in minority group prejudice. Additionally, it was found that those high in minority group prejudice became more aggressive and more conforming to authority norms than

those low in minority group prejudice. These findings suggest that as the minority populace grows, it is likely that highly prejudiced persons who are part of the dominant majority with unreleased frustration will displace it on said minority group.

Macro-Level Theory

Early macro-level researchers have argued group position (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958) as an explanation of racial group prejudice. Blumer (1958) argues that racial prejudice is a defensive reaction to the challenge of group position, specifically, the feelings of superiority, that the subordinate race is inherently different, and the proprietary claim to privilege and advantage held by the dominant group towards the subordinate group. Blumer (1958) argues that it is not the subordinate group, as a whole, that the dominant group is concerned with, but rather the position the subordinate group holds compared with the dominant group.

Blau's (1977) macro-structural theory of social relations identifies forms of structural differentiation—the distribution of people among social positions in the form of heterogeneity, inequality, and status diversity that facilitate and sustain organized racism. The author suggests that hate groups should have difficulty sustaining themselves in communities where access to information can be used to reject the White supremacists' worldview. On one hand, hate groups may most likely form in communities characterized by economic inequality and economic transition. On the other hand, hate groups would have little resonance in communities where wealth is distributed equally and the economy is stable.

Drawing upon Blau's (1977) macro-sociological theory of social structure, McVeigh (2004) developed a theory of structured ignorance to explain the variation in the number

of hate groups arguing that access to relevant information on a collective social problem is largely determined by one's position within the social structure. It is argued that structural changes produce a collection of individuals who view organized racism as a reasonable response to the problems they face in their daily lives. While the author suggests that the interaction between organized hate group members and non-members is not sufficient to sway them from their beliefs, members are more likely to stay with the organization if the movement's ideology seems reasonable based on what they are able to observe from their position within the social structure.

Building on Blumer's (1958) implications, Blalock (1967) argues that while the minority group comes across as a serious competitor, the act of discrimination serves as a means of restricting such competition. The author proposes that intergroup competition is highly likely when there is competition over scarce economic resources such as land and occupations—especially when the weaker of the two groups originally possessed the object of competition. Furthermore, the author suggests high competition when rival groups have different cultural backgrounds. Blalock concludes that extreme violence is likely when the weaker group cannot be easily removed from the area or when the weaker group insists on retaliatory action; thus, further adding frustration and anxiety to the powerful group.

As a derivative from the conflict perspective (Turk, 1969; Quinney, 1977) minority threat hypothesis states that the majority group will respond with some form of social control when the size of the minority group increases. Under Blalock's (1967) theoretical assumptions, intergroup competition and conflict are highly likely when resources are

scarce. As the percentage of non-Whites increase, an economic and political threat forms to Whites (Blalock, 1967).

Many studies that have tested Blalock's (1967) minority group threat hypothesis examined lynchings in the South. For instance, Reed (1972) found support for this theory by creating a "lynching rate" and exploring this "rate" with both the proportion of the Black and the proportion of the White population in Mississippi counties from 1889-1930; specifically, lynchings increased in counties with populations 80 percent or higher Black. Similarly, Corzine, Creech, and Corzine (1983) conducted both a longitudinal and cross-sectional study of Black lynchings in Southern states finding that lynchings increase when Blacks make up a large proportion of the population. Although these studies have focused solely on Black lynchings in the South, these studies do show support for Blalock's minority group threat hypothesis. While the current study is not testing a specific criminological theory, it will be using Blalock's (1967) minority threat hypothesis as a framework to explain the number of hate groups within a state.

In sum, researchers have found that poor economic conditions are related to the organizing of hate groups (Hovland & Sears, 1940; McVeigh, 2004; Peterson, 2002) as well as demographic change (Altman, 2001; Beck, 2000). Furthermore, research has shown organized hate groups to be more active in non-White communities than in predominantly White communities (Green, Strolovich & Wong, 1998). Based on minority threat hypothesis, the current study will test the ability of a state's structural attributes to explain the existence of hate groups. Specifically, characteristics of the population (non-White, speak English as a second language, unemployed, live below poverty level) are used to predict the existence of organized hate groups.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

The current study examined whether there is a relationship between the structural characteristics of a state and its number of active hate groups.² It specifically addressed whether particular socio-economic factors distinguish between states that contain high numbers of hate groups and those that have a low number of these groups. Based on previous research and theory, the hypotheses of the current study proposed:

H¹: There will be a *positive association* between measures of racial and ethnic heterogeneity (i.e., percent of the population that is non-White, percent of the population with English as second language (ESL)) and the number of hate groups within a state.

H²: There will be a *positive association* between measures of economic disadvantage (i.e. percent of the population below poverty level, percent of the population unemployed) and hate groups within a state.

H³: States located in the South will have *more* hate groups than other regions.

These relationships were expected to be maintained even after controlling for the size of the state's population. The method of conjunctive analysis (see Miethe, Hart, & Regoeczi, 2008) was used to examine how the combination of these structural

² Throughout this study, any reference to "states" includes all 50 states and District of Columbia (N = 51).

characteristics influenced the likelihood of a state having a relatively “low” or “high” number of hate groups.

The structural elements of states examined in this study were based on U.S. Census measures of the socio-economic characteristics of states in the year 2000. The specific source of these data came from the U. S. Census Bureau's *American Fact Finder* and data tables from the American Community Survey.³ How the particular structural variables were defined, coded and categorized in this study are described below.

Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study was the number of hate groups that have been identified in a state between 2000 and 2007. This data was based on the annual counts of hate groups which were provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). These counts of active hate groups are reported in every spring issue of the SPLC's *Intelligence Report*. The SPLC (2008) defines organized hate groups to “have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics.”

In order for a hate group to be counted by the SPLC in a given year, a group must have been involved in some form of activity such as marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting, or criminal acts (SPLC, 2008). Further, annual counts are based on information obtained from hate group publications, citizen reports, law enforcement

³ According to the U.S. Census (2008), data for the American Community are collected from a sample of housing units and used to produce estimates of the actual figures that would have been obtained by interviewing the entire population using the same methodology. See: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>. The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey providing information to communities on their changing demographics such as age, race, income, and other important data. See: http://factfinder.census.gov/jsp/saff/SAFFInfo.jsp?_pageId=sp1_acs&_submenuId=

agencies, field sources, and news reports. The annual counts used in this study do not include hate group websites since the SPLC reports those numbers as separate data. While there may be more organized hate groups in existence than what is reported in the *Intelligence Report*, the SPLC data is the most comprehensive list of hate groups that is available in the United States.

In their publications, the SPLC specifically reports on the number and location of the following groups: Ku Klux Klan, Neo Nazi, White Nationalist, Racist Skinhead, Christian Identity, Black Separatist, Neo-Confederate, and General Hate. These groups have been found in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Some states have multiple types of hate groups, whereas other states may not have any active hate groups in operation over the course of a given year. The median number of hate groups identified in this study period was 74 and ranged from 3 to 401 specific groups across the states.

Independent and Control Variables

The primary independent variables in the current study were measures of a state's racial and ethnic heterogeneity, its economic disadvantage or marginality, and the region of the county in which it resides. The size of the state's population in the year 2000 served as a control variable.

The percent of the state's population that was non-White and the percent of the population in which English was the second language were two measures of the racial and ethnic heterogeneity within a state. These measures were highly correlated ($r = .65$; standardized alpha = .81) and were combined on the basis of their factor scores to create a composite index of racial and ethnic heterogeneity.

The percent of the state's population that was below poverty level and the percent of the population that was unemployed were two measures of the economic disadvantage within a state. These measures were highly correlated ($r = .69$; standardized alpha = .83) and were combined on the basis of their factor scores to create a composite index of economic disadvantage.

The regional location of a state was also used as a measurement to predict the number of hate groups within a state. The U.S. Census divides America into four regions: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. All states that fell into Northeast, Midwest and West were coded as 0 for “non-South,” while all states that fell into South were coded as 1 for “South.” Lastly, a state's population size served as a control variable and was measured by the number of individual residents in a state for the year 2000.

Recoding of Variables

For purposes of exploring the interrelationships among the structural characteristics of states and their prevalence of hate groups, all of the continuous variables in the current study were recoded into categorical variables. This recoding was done to explore bivariate associations among these category variables and to conduct a conjunctive analysis of the joint distribution of these structural attributes and their relationship to the prevalence of hate groups within these composite profiles.

Given that most of the continuous variables in this study were highly skewed, the appropriate measure of central tendency was the median. Accordingly, these continuous variables were split at the median to develop “low” and “high” dichotomous, categorical variables. For example, the categorical variable for the prevalence of hate groups defines states with less than 74 hate groups as “low hate” and states with more than 74

hate groups as “high hate”.⁴ Similarly, the composite measures of racial and ethnic heterogeneity and economic disadvantage were also divided at their medians to construct “low” and “high” categories for these variables. The state’s population size was also recoded at its median value. The coding and descriptive statistics for the original distribution of the continuous variables and their categorical counterparts are summarized in Table 1.

Analyses

Several types of analysis were conducted in this study to examine the relationship between a state’s structural characteristics and its prevalence of hate groups. First, basic bivariate relationships between the structural elements and the number of groups were examined for both the continuous and categorical coding of the variables. This analysis involved computation of correlation coefficients, contingency table analysis, and chi-square tests of statistical significance. Second, both multiple regression and logistic regression analyses were conducted on the continuous and categorical coding of the number of hate groups to assess the net impact of heterogeneity, economic disadvantage, and the Southern region after controlling for population size. Third, the method of conjunctive analysis was used to explore the unique and common combinations of structural attributes that are associated with “low” and “high” hate states. The results of these analyses are summarized next.

⁴ The language of “low” hate states and “high” hate states is used throughout this study primarily as a linguistic shortcut for saying “the number of hate groups within a state is lower than the median for all states” or “the number of hate groups within a state is higher than the median for all states,” respectively.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive Characteristics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this analysis. Descriptive statistics (i.e., means, medians, standard deviations, sample sizes) are provided for both the continuous and categorical coding of the variables. As shown in Panel A of Table 1, the average number of hate groups per state over the 2000 to 2007 time period was 118 and the median was 74 specific groups. For the items in the composite measure of racial and ethnic heterogeneity, the median for the percent non-White in a state was 21% and 8% for the percent of the state's population in which English was the second language. Of the measures of economic disadvantage, the median percent unemployed was about 5% and the median percent below poverty was about 11% across all states. Panel B of Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of all the variables in this study following categorical recoding.

Bivariate Analyses

Two types of bivariate analyses were conducted in this study. First, using the continuous coding of the variables, bivariate correlations were computed to assess the nature and magnitude of the association between the structural variables and the number

Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics for 2000 (N = 51)

	N	Median	\bar{x}	SD
Panel A – Original Coding:				
Number of Hate Groups Per State	51	74	118.3	110.2
Racial & Ethnic Heterogeneity	51	-.27	0.00	1.00
% Non-White	51	.21	.25	.16
% English as Second Language	51	.08	.12	.09
Economic Disadvantage	51	-.10	0.00	1.00
% Unemployed	51	.05	.05	.01
% Below Poverty Level	51	.11	.12	.03
Region				
Non-South	35	----	----	----
South	16	----	----	----
Population Size	51	3,876,975	5,365,554	6,004,000
Panel B – Categorical Coding:				
Hate Groups		74	----	----
0 = Low	25	----	----	----
1 = High	26	----	----	----
Racial & Ethnic Heterogeneity		-.27	----	----
0 = Low	26	----	----	----
1 = High	25	----	----	----
Economic Disadvantage		-.10	----	----
0 = Low	25	----	----	----
1 = High	26	----	----	----
Region				
0 = Non-South	35	----	----	----
1 = South	16	----	----	----
Population Size		3,876,975	----	----
0 = Low	26	----	----	----
1 = High	25	----	----	----

of hate groups within a state. Second, using the categorical coding of the variables, contingency table analysis and chi-square tests were used to evaluate these relationships between the categorical variables and whether a state had “low” or “high” numbers of hate groups.

As shown in Table 2, the number of hate groups in a state was significantly ($p < .05$) correlated with the racial and ethnic heterogeneity ($r = .31$), Southern region ($r = .50$), and total population size ($r = .77$). States with higher racial and ethnic heterogeneity, located in the South, and that have higher population size have more hate groups within their boundaries. Although higher economic disadvantage was associated with higher number of hate groups ($r = .27$), this bivariate correlation was only marginally significant ($p = .052$).

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients of Continuous Variables for 2000 (N = 51)

	Hate Group Sum	Heterogeneity	Disadvantage	Region	Population
Hate Group Sum	1.00				
Heterogeneity	.308*	1.00			
Disadvantage	.273**	.336*	1.00		
Region	.498*	-.037	.406*	1.00	
Population	.772*	.483*	.092	.078	1.00

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p = .052$

As shown in Table 3, the contingency table analysis indicates that there is a significant bivariate relationship ($p < .05$) between the economic disadvantage, Southern

region, and population size and the likelihood of being classified as a “low” or “high” hate state. States with high economic disadvantage were far more likely to have “high hate” (65%) than states with low economic disadvantage (36%). Similarly, states located in the South were far more likely to have “high hate” (81%) than states not located in the South (37%) and states with a “high” population size were far more likely to have “high hate” (88%) compared to states with a “low” population size (15%). Although states with “high” racial and ethnic heterogeneity had a higher risk of being “high hate” (51%) than states with “low” diversity (40%), these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 3

Bivariate Analysis of Categorical Variables for 2000 (N = 51)

	Low Hate		High Hate	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity				
0 = Low	15	(60.0)	10	(40.0)
1 = High	10	(38.5)	16	(51.0)
$\chi^2 = 2.37$				
Economic Disadvantage				
0 = Low	16	(64.0)	9	(36.0)
1 = High	9	(34.6)	17	(65.4)
$\chi^2 = 4.40^*$				
Region				
0 = Non-South	22	(62.9)	13	(37.1)
1 = South	3	(18.8)	13	(81.3)
$\chi^2 = 8.55^*$				
Population				
0 = Low	22	(84.6)	4	(15.4)
1 = High	3	(12.0)	22	(88.0)
$\chi^2 = 26.89^*$				

Note: * $p < .05$

Multiple Regression and Logistic Regression Analyses

Two different regression analyses were performed to assess the net impact of structural characteristics on the prevalence of hate groups within a state. First, a multiple regression analysis was conducted on the original, interval-level coding of the number of hate groups. Second, a logistic regression model was estimated on the dichotomous coding of all of the variables. These results are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

Regression Coefficients Predicting Prevalence of Hate Groups (N = 51)

	b	(S.E.)	Beta
Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity	-7.30	(9.29)	-.066
Economic Disadvantage	6.34	(8.89)	.058
Region	96.92*	(17.93)	.412
Population	1.41*	(0.00)	.766
Constant	12.40	(11.43)	----

$R^2 = .792$

Note: * $p < .05$

The multiple regression analysis reveals that a large proportion of the variation ($R^2 = .79$) in the number of hate groups in a state can be explained by the structural characteristics of that state. Even after controlling for all other variables, Southern states had significantly higher numbers of hate groups than non-Southern states. Increases in population size were also significantly related to the prevalence of hate groups within a

state. Neither of the indices of racial and ethnic heterogeneity and economic disadvantage had significant net effects on the number of hate groups ($p > .05$).

The results of the logistic regression of the categorical variables shown in Table 5 were somewhat different from those based on the multiple regression of the continuous dependent and independent variables. In particular, the logistic regression analysis revealed that none of the structural variables had a statistically significant net impact on the level of hate groups in a state.

Table 5

Logistic Regression (N = 51)

	β	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity	-0.380	1.029	.136	.712	.684
Economic Disadvantage	19.621	7402.073	.000	.998	3.322
Region	2.567	1.371	3.508	.061	13.027
Population	22.490	7402.073	.000	.998	5.849
Constant	-21.484	7402.073	.000	.998	.000

Note: $df = 1$

At the bivariate level, Southern states were about 13 times more likely to be classified as “high hate” states than other states, but these regional differences only were marginally significant ($p = .06$) when controlling for other variables were included. When compared to the results of the multiple regression for the continuous variables, these findings suggest that the specific coding of the particular variables may influence the

extent to which particular structural characteristics are said to have a significant net impact on either the number or level of hate groups in a state.

Conjunctive Analysis

The bivariate and multiple regression analyses conducted so far in this study examine the effects of particular structural variables when viewed one at a time. They have not examined whether the effect of any of these variables is contingent upon the nature of the other structural characteristics. To answer these questions about the joint or combined influence of particular variables, a conjunctive analysis was conducted to explore the unique and common characteristics that are associated with “low” and “high” hate states.

As described by Miethe et al (2008), the method of conjunctive analysis explores the joint distribution of all possible variables that are included in an analysis. In the current study, four dichotomous variables are used to measure the structural characteristics of states and the dependent variable is whether a state is classified as having either a “low” or “high” level of hate groups. Under a conjunctive analysis, a total of 16 possible structural contexts are possible by the joint distribution of these four dichotomous variables (i.e., 2 [racial and ethnic heterogeneity] x 2 [economic disadvantage] x 2 [region] x 2 [population size]). These 16 structure profiles are then examined to identify the nature and relative concentration of “low” and “high” levels of hate groups within them.

Table 6 illustrates the 13 distinct structural profiles observed in the current study, the number of states within each of these profiles, and the relative prevalence of having “high” levels of hate groups within them. These specific profiles are arranged according

to their level of concentration as “high” hate states. A value of 1.00 indicates that states within this specific profile always are classified as “high” hate states, whereas a value of 0.00 indicates that states within these particular profiles are never classified as “high” hate states. The profiles with values between 0.00 and 1.00 involve structural contexts in which the states within them are mixed in terms of their classification (e.g., some are “high” hate and some are “low” hate profiles).

According to Table 6, there are four distinct structural profiles (profiles #1 through #4) in which all of the states within them are classified as “high hate” states. There are another five structural profiles (profiles #9 through #13) in which all states within them are classified as “low hate” states. The remaining four structural profiles are considered “contradictions” because they contain both “low” and “high” hate states within each of these profiles. A summary of these distinct profiles and the particular structural attributes that underlie them is described below.

“High” Hate Profiles

As seen in Table 7, a total of 16 states are identified within the four structural profiles that are always linked to “high hate” states all of which contain the characteristic of “high” economic disadvantage. The majority of these profiles (3 out of 4) is “low” on racial and ethnic heterogeneity, located in the South, and has “high” population. Profile 4 contains all of the structural attributes hypothesized to influence the level of hate groups in a state (i.e., “high” diversity, “high” economic disadvantage, located in the South and “high” population) which are factors that always produce “high” hate states. Further, Profiles 2, 3 and 4 with the attributes of “high” disadvantage and Southern location always have relatively “high” numbers of hate groups.

Table 6

Conjunctive analysis ranked by hate group mean (N = 51)

Profile #	Heterogeneity	Disadvantage	Region	Population	n	Hate Group	States
1	0	1	0	1	5	1.00	AZ, CA, IL, NY, WA
2	0	1	1	0	3	1.00	MS, OK, SC
3	0	1	1	1	5	1.00	FL, GA, LA, NC, TX
4	1	1	1	1	3	1.00	AL, KY, TN
5	1	0	0	1	7	0.86	IN, MI, MN MO, OH, PA, WI
6	0	0	0	1	3	0.67	CO, NJ, MA
7	0	0	1	1	2	0.50	MD, VA
8	1	1	1	0	2	0.50	AR, WV
9	0	0	1	0	1	0.00	DE
10	0	0	0	0	3	0.00	CT, HI, RI
11	0	1	0	0	4	0.00	AK, DC, NM, NV
12	1	0	0	0	9	0.00	IA, KS, ME, ND, NE, NH, SD, VT, WY
13	1	1	0	0	4	0.00	ID, MT, OR, UT

Note: Heterogeneity, Disadvantage and Population (0=low; 1=high); Region (0=non-South; 1=South). Highlighted states are contradictions in which "high" hate states are mixed with "low" hate states.

Table 7

Conjunctive Analysis of “High” Hate Profiles (n = 16)

Profile#	Heterogeneity	Disadvantage	Region	Population	n	Hate Group	States
1	0	1	0	1	5	1.00	AZ, CA, IL, NY, WA
2	0	1	1	0	3	1.00	MS, OK, SC
3	0	1	1	1	5	1.00	FK, GA, LA, NC, TX
4	1	1	1	1	3	1.00	AL, KY, TN

Table 8

Conjunctive Analysis of “Low” Hate Profiles (n = 21)

Profile#	Heterogeneity	Disadvantage	Region	Population	n	Hate Group	States
9	0	0	1	0	1	0.00	DE
10	0	0	0	0	3	0.00	CT, HI, RI
11	0	1	0	0	4	0.00	AK, DC, NM, NV
12	1	0	0	0	9	0.00	IA, KS, ME, ND, NE, NH, SD, VT, WY
13	1	1	0	0	4	0.00	ID, MT, OR, UT

“Low” Hate Profiles

Illustrated in Table 8, a total of 21 states were found within five structural profiles that are always linked to “low hate,” with “low” population size a characteristic of all five of these “low hate” profiles. Profile 9 contains all “low” structural attributes (“low” heterogeneity, “low” economic disadvantage, non-South, and “low” population size) which are always linked to “low hate.” The majority of the “low” hate profiles (4 out of 5) were non-Southern states. Moreover, Profiles 9 and 10 contain both “low”

heterogeneity and “low” economic disadvantage which are always linked to “low” hate states.

Table 9

Conjunctive Analysis of “Contradictory” Hate Profiles (n = 14)

Profile#	Heterogeneity	Disadvantage	Region	Population	n	Hate Group	States
5	1	0	0	1	7	0.86	IN, MI, <i>MN</i> , MO, OH, PA, WI
6	0	0	0	1	3	0.67	CO, NJ, <i>MA</i>
7	0	0	1	1	2	0.50	<i>MD</i> , VA
8	1	1	1	0	2	0.50	AR, <i>WV</i>

Note: States italicized bold are “low” hate contradictions within identical structural profiles as “high” hate states.

“Contradictory” Profiles

Table 9 shows a total of 14 states which fell within four profiles that were inconsistent in terms of their relative prevalence of “high” or “low” hate. The majority of these profiles (3 out of 4) were characterized by “low” economic disadvantage and a “high” population size. One state within each of the four contradictory profiles emerged as “low hate” when intermingled with “high hate” states. What was so unique about these four states? Why was there variability in the outcomes when the same combinations of predictors were present? In order to answer these questions, a more in-depth analysis was warranted and involved examining the historical change of these individual states. Specifically, the change from 1980 to 2000 in population, racial and economic factors was examined for each of these states (see Table 10). These results are discussed below in order of profile number.

Table 10

Percent change of Independent Variables from 1980-2000 (N = 51)

	National	MN	MA	MD	WV
Non-White	9.2	8.4	11.4	12.7	----
English as Second Language	4.2	2.6	5.2	6.1	----
Below Poverty Level	2.1	0.1	2.0	1.8	----
Unemployed	-0.9	-1.6	-1.4	-0.6	----
Population Size	17.2	14.8	6.4	18.3	----

Note: ---- Missing data.

Profile #5: Minnesota. As was seen in Table 9, seven states in Profile 5 contain the structural attributes of “high” racial and ethnic heterogeneity, “low” disadvantage, not located in the South and a “high” population size with all but one state categorized as “high” hate. The state of Minnesota has the identical structural attributes of these “high” hate states, but is categorized as a “low” hate state. Table 10 shows that since 1980, there were marginal increases in the percent non-White, the percent ESL, the percent below poverty level, and population size; however, the unemployment level decreased slightly more than the national average.

According to the 2000 U. S. Census data, Minnesota ranked 21st in population size (4.9 million) with 10 percent of its populace non-White, 8 percent speaking ESL, 7 percent below poverty level, and slightly less than 4 percent unemployed. Historically, Minnesota has seen a dramatic increase in its urban growth, specifically in the capital-metro area of Minneapolis-St. Paul with its international airport becoming an important regional hub. Additionally, the Mall of America was erected in 1992 and is the nation’s

largest shopping center. Interestingly, with the exception of 1952, 1956, and 1972, Minnesota has voted Democratic in every presidential election since 1932 (Infoplease, 2009c). It is likely that due to its overall population rank in 2000 in relation to its diversity and marginality, this state fell under the “low” hate category.

Profile #6: Massachusetts. Illustrated in Table 9, three states contain the structural attributes of “low” racial and ethnic heterogeneity, “low” economic disadvantage, not located in the South, and a “high” population size with two categorized as “high” hate states. The state of Massachusetts has the identical structural attributes of these “high” hate states, but is categorized as a “low” hate state. Table 10 shows that since 1980, the percent of the state’s population non-White and ESL grew slightly higher than the national average. Economically, Massachusetts’ poverty level increased similarly to the national average, while its unemployment level decreased slightly more than the national average. Further, its overall population size increased far less than the overall national populace.

The history of Massachusetts goes back roughly 400 years to when the Pilgrims landed and settled in Plymouth. The state is rich with history from Puritanism to the Sacco-Vanzetti case. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Massachusetts saw a significant increase in its immigration of Portuguese, Italians, Poles, Slavs, Russian Jews, and Scandinavians with the Irish becoming the most influential. Interestingly, Massachusetts is the only one of the original 13 states that is still governed under its original constitution created in 1780, although was extensively amended by the constitutional convention of 1917–19 (Infoplease, 2009b). It is likely that this state was categorized as “low” hate because of its socially liberal reputation.

Profile #7: Maryland. The state of Maryland contained the structural attributes of “high” heterogeneity, “high” economic disadvantage, “Southern” location, and “low” population size. Table 10 shows that Maryland’s non-White population grew far higher than the national average, as did its ESL population and overall population size. This state’s poverty and unemployment levels decreased slightly less than the national average. In 2000, the state ranked 19 in its overall population size, of which, 36 percent were non-White.

Maryland is famous for its Mason-Dixon Line which is the northern border of the state along Pennsylvania. During the Civil War, Maryland was a slave state, but remained in the union. Citizens fought on both sides, which divided families. Maryland had significant suburban growth in the 1980s, particularly near the Washington D.C. area with the majority of residents working for the federal government (Infoplease, 2009a). It is likely this state was categorized as a “low” hate state because of its proximity to the nation’s capital. In other words, hate groups may not want to exist too close to federal law enforcement agencies and their crime-fighting subsidiaries.

Overall, the analyses of the structural characteristics, both continuous and categorical, of a state predicting the number of hate groups within that state have resulted in some interesting findings. The following section discusses the important findings of the current study as well as its limitations, with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Preliminary Findings

It was hypothesized that the higher the racial and ethnic heterogeneity, the higher the number of hate groups existing within a state. It was also hypothesized that the higher the economic disadvantage, the higher the number of hate groups exist within a state. Lastly, it was hypothesized that Southern states would have more hate groups than other regions of the country. Table 11 illustrates the preliminary findings of these variables under their continuous and categorical forms.

Table 11

Summary of Preliminary Findings

	Bivariate Correlation (continuous)	Chi Square (categorical)	Multiple Regression (continuous)	Logistic Regression (categorical)
Racial & Ethnic Heterogeneity	+	-	-	-
Economic Disadvantage	±	+	-	-
Region	+	+	+	-
Population	+	+	+	-

Note: ± (p=.052); + (p<.05); - (p>.05)

Under their continuous form, a correlation was found between racial and ethnic heterogeneity and the sum of hate groups. However, when diversity was divided at the median and categorized as either “low” or “high,” racial and ethnic heterogeneity was no longer significant. Further, in both regression models racial and ethnic heterogeneity are not significant predictors of levels of hate groups. These findings, therefore, showed only very limited support for the hypothesis and highlight that the method of coding of variables matters.

Economic disadvantage was marginally correlated with the sum of hate groups within a state. In addition, Chi-Square analysis showed a significant relationship between economic disadvantage and the categorical variable of hate groups. In contrast, after controlling for all variables in regression models, economic disadvantage was no longer significant. These findings provide mixed support for this study's hypothesis that economic disadvantage predicts the number of hate groups within a state.

Under the contingency table it was found that states located in the South were far more likely to have “high hate” compared to states not located in the South. Even after controlling for all other variables, Southern states still had significantly higher numbers of hate groups than non-Southern states. However, this was not true in the logistic regression, again showing that the coding of variables matters. With the exception of the logistic regression, these findings support this study's hypothesis that Southern states are more likely to have high numbers of hate groups.

Both in its continuous and categorical forms, the control variable of a state's population size was found to have a significant bivariate relationship with the number of hate groups showing that a state with a higher population size will have more hate groups

within their boundaries. Similar to the findings of region, the population size was a significant predictor in the linear regression, but not in the logistic regression suggesting that coding makes a difference. Overall, the control variable of population size received moderate support.

Conjunctive Analysis Findings

The variable of “high” economic disadvantage was strongly linked to “high” hate states, which is consistent with the hypothesis that economic disadvantage predicts hate groups existing within a state. All 16 states within the four “high” hate profiles contained “high” economic disadvantage. As far as the region variable, Southern states were moderately linked to “high” hate states. Eleven states within the four “high” hate profiles were located in the “South.” “High” population size was also moderately linked to “high” hate states with 13 states within the four “high” hate profiles. On the contrary, “low” racial and ethnic heterogeneity was a characteristic of “high” hate states, which is not consistent with the hypothesis that diversity predicts hate groups existing within a state.

The contradictions did not necessarily show exactly why they were intermingled. Looking at changes in diversity and economics over two decades show some change, but the change was minimal. In other words, structural changes occurring within these states since 1980 were low, particularly racial and ethnic heterogeneity. This suggests little to no threat towards the dominant group by the subordinate group and, as a result, low numbers of hate groups.

Conclusions

The most surprising finding in this study was that racial and ethnic heterogeneity did not predict the number of hate groups within a state. It is possible that when examining race and ethnicity separately, as opposed to a composite variable, different findings will emerge. Also surprising was when controlling for other variables, economic disadvantage was not a significant predictor of hate group existence. These findings were not consistent with previous research on hate groups and economics (Jefferson & Pryor, 1999; McVeigh, 2004). However, consistent with previous research (Jefferson & Pryor, 1999), the current study found that states in the South were more likely to have high levels of hate groups.

The interrelationships across these structural profiles under the conjunctive analysis were highly contextual. When looking at the structural characteristics in relation to organized hate groups (see Table 7), it was evident that only a few factors worked collectively to create “high” levels of hate. For instance, “high” economic disadvantage was more likely to be associated with “high” levels of hate groups, as well as states located in the Southern region. When using conjunctive analysis, however, caution must be used in making predictive assumptions (Miethe, Hart, & Regoeczi, 2008) especially given the small sample size in the current study (N = 51).

The states that emerged as contradictions were interesting, but nothing was consistent. Clearly, states with high populations and low economic disadvantage were more likely to have high numbers of hate groups, but when examining the specific structural changes over time the findings were highly contextual. Surprisingly, no

individual or combination of change variables was predictive of high levels of hate groups.

All variables in these analyses were recoded into “low” and “high” categories to explore bivariate associations among categorical variables and to conduct conjunctive analyses. Interestingly, this recoding made a difference in the results. Specifically, racial and ethnic heterogeneity had a significant association with hate groups when it was a continuous variable, but not when it was a categorical variable. Similarly, region and population were both significant predictors of hate groups in the linear regression models, but not the logistic regression models. It is likely that the results depend on coding because the variables are not linear. When they are split into two categories, it may be problematic. Three categories (low, medium, and high) may more accurately capture the nature of the variables. The conclusions, therefore, may differ depending on how the variables are coding.

Although this study did not test the minority group threat hypothesis, the findings showed only mixed support of the theory. First, racial and ethnic heterogeneity was found to be not significant, which would suggest that the dominant group is not threatened by racial and ethnic diversity. However, economic disadvantage was significantly associated with hate groups in the bivariate and conjunctive analyses. It, therefore, provides some support for the minority threat hypothesis, suggesting that when unemployment and poverty rates are high, the dominant group perceives a threat thus increasing the likelihood of hate group existence.

Limitations

This study was one attempt to explore the existence of hate groups geographically and structurally on the state level. This study makes no assumptions as to who members of these groups are, the actual numbers of people who embrace hate ideologies, or the depth of hatred held in these areas. This study examined state-level locations based on structural indicators of ethnic diversity and economic conditions where more ethnographic fieldwork is needed to specify these issues.

The data from the SPLC has many limitations. First, it gives geographical boundaries to hate groups when these groups exist across borders, and more importantly, in cyberspace; thus, hate activism in this study was not captured as a whole. Moreover, their annual listings contain only known chapters gathered from hate group publications, law enforcement agencies, as well as citizen and news reports. The prevalence of hate activity goes beyond formal organized hate groups; hence hate activity may take place in an informal group of youths. For instance, Levin and McDevitt (2002) argued that youths are more inspired by the presence of hate groups and attracted to their symbols, yet are not members. Furthermore, spaces of hate may be more locally-bound and functioning as small interpersonal networks (Futrell & Simi, 2004).

Another limitation of the data from the Southern Poverty Law Center was that they added a new type, White Nationalist, to their count listing starting in 2006. It is unclear whether or not this had any effect in the numbers reported in the *Intelligence Report*; however, the annual listing has continuously reported a 5% increase in active hate groups every year since 2004, before the new addition, which suggests that this addition of type has not negatively affected the annual outcome. This study also focused on hate groups

with enmity towards non-Whites. Group chapters of the Black Separatists were included in these data and combining these diverse groups may have confounded the results.

Again, this study focused solely on hate groups with established geographical chapters. It does not include hate groups on the Internet where one person creating a webpage is counted as an entire group. It is likely that there may be over-counting of hate groups on behalf of the SPLC. An exaggeration of the count could be political in nature in which the organization receives more resources and more attention from donors, politicians and organizations of support. While the annual listings provided by the SPLC are the most comprehensive hate group compilation, the lists clearly possess their own reliability and validity issues that could not be avoided.

The census data has its own limitations as well. According to American Community Survey (2008), data is collected on the population through self-reporting.¹ Questionnaires are mailed to independent samples of the population and while the Census Bureau's interviewers conduct many follow up procedures to attain the highest response rate possible, the annual estimates provided may be underestimated resulting in inaccurate estimates of racial and ethnic heterogeneity and economic disadvantage. Also, this study only examined a state's overall population size, as opposed to a state's population density, which may have influenced this study's results.

Another limitation of the census data is the manner in which it categorizes the region of South. The American Community Survey (2008) does not justify how or why each state is categorized into one of the four groupings of states into Northeast, South, Midwest and West. Interestingly, the states of Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia,

¹ See <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/AdvMeth/CollProc/CollProc1.htm> for complete details on U.S. Census Bureau's data collection and processing protocol.

Virginia, Kentucky, and the Carolinas fall under the “South” category. Also, Oklahoma and Texas, which most consider “West,” are considered “South.” This regional grouping may have also influenced this study’s results.

Future Research

For future research, examining a smaller unit of analysis such as county or city would create a larger sample size. In addition, racial and economic factors may represent more of a threat at a smaller unit of analysis than it does at the state level. For example, a large increase in the non-White population would be more apparent at a local level, and therefore may be perceived as more of a threat to the dominant group. On the contrary, some groups may be international, so looking at a larger unit of analysis would also be informative.

Looking at hate crimes instead of hate groups may yield different results. However, there are many problems with hate crime data as well. First, not all states collect hate crime data. Also, there is not a universal hate crime classification system that all states use. For instance, in 2006, it was reported that the state of Alabama acknowledged one (1) hate crime for the entire year compared to Massachusetts reporting 448 for the year.

It would also be interesting to incorporate the race of city or county officials as an independent variable. Including the race of political leaders would act as another measure of racial threat, as well as political threat. Lastly, an examination of the relationship between a state’s acceptance of diversity—gay marriage/civil union rights, immigrant workers rights—could represent yet another aspect of threat and, therefore, could make a significant contribution to the macro-level research on hate groups.

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