

# **Bias Crime and Minority Threat**

Ph.D Dissertation

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Abstract

Beginning in the 1980s, the term hate crime became part of the research canon of criminologists across the United States. Researchers have examined the characteristics of hate crime victims, offenders, and offenses. However, little is known about the context of hate crime, and more specifically about the ways that the changing demographics of the United States have contributed to hate crime. The dissertation examines the relationship between these demographic shifts and the trend in hate crime from 2000 to 2007 through the use of population averaged panel models. These models assess changes over time and across place in the number of hate crimes in a state as a function of changing demographic, economic, and political conditions.

The findings show that there is considerable variation in anti-Black, anti-Hispanic, and anti-Gay/Lesbian hate crime across states and over time. These differing trends can be explained by changing demographic patterns as well as the political mobilization and visibility of minority groups. However, the results also suggest that much of the trend in hate crime is explained by the reporting practices of the differing states. As such the results indicate a need for policies to strengthen the reporting practices of law enforcement organizations and encourage reporting by the victims of these types of crimes. Additionally, the results suggest that there is a growing need for better data for the further examination of these questions.