A Closer Look at Hate

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The study of hate crime is a fairly new area for academic research. The US Hate Crime Statistics Bill enacted in 1990 describes hate crimes as "crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity, including where appropriate the crimes of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, arson, and destruction, damage or vandalism of property" (Public Law: 101-275). With the Hate Crime Statistics Bill the FBI started to gather hate crime data at the national level and include it within the annual Uniform Crime Report; the UCR data is particularly valuable to researchers and is the focus of this paper. Because of the nature of hate crime and difficulties associated with the methods of data collection used by the FBI there are limitations associated with drawing conclusions from the UCR data. Nevertheless, the purpose of this paper is to use the extensive knowledge garnered from the 2000 census in conjunction with the UCR to learn more about relevant variables and their association with hate crime.

This paper looks at the existing research on hate crime data, confirming some findings while at the same time adding to the existing literature. Our econometric model identifies two noteworthy variables associated with hate crimes. Our model finds that per capita income and the percentage of African Americans in the population are statistically significant explanatory variables when describing the rate of hate crime. Most interestingly in our model are the signs on the coefficients for per capita income and the percentage of African Americans. The coefficient for the variable of per capita income is positive; thus implying that hate crime is positively associated with affluence. The coefficient for the variable; percentage of African Americans, is negative telling us that the greater the extent of African American minority status the higher the rate of hate crime. The paper then seeks to examine the implications of our econometric model and provide satisfactory sociological explanations for our findings. In conclusion the paper suggests some possibilities for the direction of future research that could perhaps shed light on the nature of hate crime.