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Perceptions of Hate Crimes: The Importance of Victim Characteristics

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Perceptions of Hate Crimes: The Importance of Victim Characteristics

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Abstract

Hate crimes in the United States are a growing problem that communities and affected individuals are struggling to address. Little research has been conducted regarding victim and crime characteristics' (specifically, the SES of victim and level of bias clearly present in the incident) effects on objective evaluation. This study contains three segments, each building off the last and incorporating additional manipulations to assess non-victim interpretation of possible hate crime events. Across all phases, participants were randomly presented with a fake news story depicting a possible hate crime, in which the victim's socioeconomic status, race, character, and presence of a racial slur were manipulated. Likert items and qualitative questions were then asked. A significant main effect for SES was supported in Study 1, but was not found in Studies 2 and 3. However, significant main effects for race motivation were found, in which presence of a racial slur led participants to believe the event was more race motivated than when the slur was absent. Other hypotheses were not supported in Studies 2 and 3. Manipulation of victim character had no effect. Qualitative responses offer useful insight into participants' expectations about hate crime schemas and offer a new perspective on how the general public views hate incidents and can be considered for social interventions and use by law enforcement.

Perceptions of Hate Crimes:

The Importance of Victim Characteristics in Assessing Ambiguous Incidents

If the most recent news is any indication of the current social climate, it supports the

well-established finding that hate crimes are on the rise and increasingly present challenges to

affected groups and law enforcement. In the legal sense, a hate crime is any criminal offense

motivated wholly or partially by the offender's prejudice towards the victim's race, ethnicity,

religion, sexuality, or other protected class and intended to cause psychological and/or physical

harm to the individual and symbolically their larger group. They are a pressing issue relevant to

intergroup relations, sociology, criminology, and general psychology (Johnson & Byers, 2003;

Lyons, 2008). Current motivations for hate crimes are generally well understood, with most

scholars in agreement that the predominant motivating factors, aside from bias, are frustration

(Ryan & Leeson, 2011), perceived threat to dominant status or threat of changing norms (Green,

McFalls, & Smith, 2001) in reaction to out-group stereotypes (Berk, Boyd, & Hamner, 1992),

because minorities make easier targets (McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002; Perry, 2001), or even

for thrill (McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002). Though there may be a variety of reasons why

someone would commit a hate crime, the only factor required to be present to meet the current

legal definition is that it must be bias-motivated (18 U.S. Code § 249).

The Southern Poverty Law Center (2015) estimates that nearly 200,000 hate incidents

occur each year in the U.S., yet only a fraction of these (less than 10,000) are reported to the

Federal Bureau of Investigation, which releases an annual report describing the number and

nature of hate incidents across the country (FBI, 2012). Though the various motivations for hate

crimes currently postulated by sociologists and psychologists are generally accepted as reasons

for the motivation of bias crimes (e.g., perceived threat to social dominance, economic threat,

desire to strengthen in-group identity by targeting out-group, instilling sense of fear in out-group members), a bigger mystery is why they are underreported to the extent they are, and what reasonable solutions exist to solve this problem.

The FBI's current reporting system is non-mandatory, which means that jurisdictions can choose to disclose hate crimes recorded (if at all) or not. Hate crimes that remain unreported or are underreported hamper community response to these incidents and continue to foster a climate of fear for the broader social groups of affected victims, serve to further negative stereotypes about victimized groups, and reinforce that bias crime is acceptable because it continues to occur with little to no consequence or response by authorities. Hate crimes are underreported for a variety of reasons, perhaps most notably (and particularly troubling) because what types of incidents are granted status as hate crimes varies across jurisdictions, and definitively determining whether bias was a motivating factor is a difficult task. Due to the nuanced nature of denoting an incident as bias-motivated or not, incidents that may well be hate crimes (i.e., perpetrator chose victim because of bias, whether it was apparent or not) are mistakenly classified as a non-bias incident. Similarly, a crime that legally qualifies as a hate crime may not be treated as such by the public or the police if the incident does not fit the expected schema of hate crime (e.g., it not physically harmful, does not affect a group the community considers a minority or protected; Berk, Boyd, & Hamner, 1992; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Lyons, 2008; Ray & Smith, 2001). Community perception of what constitutes hate, as well as what actions are severe enough to denote a criminal label, partially drive not only who is viewed as being more victimized, but whom (or what group) is granted protected status under the legal system (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Johnson & Byers, 2003). Though federal hate crime statutes remain in effect nationwide, local jurisdictions often use their own discretion based on

local norms to determine what types of incidents and against what group of people/person denote a hate crime (Jenness & Grattet, 2005; Martin, 1995). Previous research suggests that people's perceptions of what constitutes hate affects whether an incident is perceived as criminal or a hate crime (as opposed to aggressive expression of free speech, even if it is clear that criminal intent motivated by bias is present; Lyons, 2008). Though federal laws clearly outline what characteristics denote a bias crime and who is protected under anti-bias laws, individual jurisdictions often liberally interpret and modify those laws according to the perception of hate within their community and the individuals (and their larger group) these incidents affect most (Johnson & Byers, 2003). Additionally, not all states acknowledge certain groups as protected classes despite federal laws, especially regarding age, sexual orientation, disability, and gender (Shively & Mulford, 2007). That each state operates under different hate crime laws, and within each state different jurisdictions may define the boundaries of hate crimes to their own specifications, adds to the problem of why incidents are underreported—they simply are not being recorded as hate incidents, if at all. Essentially, they are lost in a multitude of other crime reports or are ignored due to social norms within a jurisdiction. This is a serious problem (for instance, it is estimated that approximately 170,000 number of hate crimes go unreported each year in the UK; Christmann & Rogerson, 2017; and approximately 230,000 in the US; SPLC, 2015)—victims of hate are not being responded to appropriately, potentially due to subjective interpretation of their victimization on the behalf of law enforcement or other community members. The current study seeks to identify variables within an incident that affect perception of an incident as a bias crime and, if so, the severity of the event and appropriate action given the details provided.

One of the factors that local police may use to determine whether an incident is a hate crime, and central to this study, is perceived severity (Craig & Waldo, 1996; Nolan & Akiyama, 1999; Wickes, Pickering, Mason, & Maher, 2016). If the incident is physically severe it may be more likely to be reported or seriously investigated by authorities and perceived as more serious by non-victims, and bias incidents that are more psychologically traumatizing than physical may remain unreported or uninvestigated (Iganski & Lagou, 2015; Saucier et al., 2010). This may tie in to people's (both citizen and law enforcement) norms about what a hate crime is and what the nature of the act must be to denote it as a bias offense. It is also not unreasonable to infer that psychological trauma may be less obvious than physical trauma, especially if the incident remains unreported. This may affect how a particular report is handled, and whether regular criminal or hate charges are pursued. Again, *perception* of an incident is being conflated with the *actual* severity of the incident—psychological trauma can be just as damaging (and perhaps more enduring) than physical trauma (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). It is paramount to note that the definition of "severe" is also flexible and interpreted differently across jurisdictions. "Severe" may mean physically harmed in one community, but may mean verbally taunted in another. Effectively, the threshold for determining severity relies on social norms rather than clear-cut investigative and legal procedure, furthering the issue of underreporting and lack of action in prosecuting incidents that should be treated as hate crimes.

One of the more common and discouraging reasons that hate crimes are not reported, and the focus of the current study, is because of a lack of perceived severity—both on behalf of the victim(s) and law enforcement (Meyer, 2010). It is known that victims of hate crimes report more psychological trauma than victims of similar crimes that were not bias motivated (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999) and that hate crimes tend to "hurt more" than other non-bias-motivated

crimes (Iganski, 2001; Iganski & Lagou, 2015; Sullaway, 2004). That is, the victim(s) of hate

crime may not only be physically harmed (or their property harmed) by the perpetrators' actions,

but the psychological damage of knowing they were targeted for personal attributes and other

members of their group may be in harm's way leaves additional damage and creates tension and

unease within the self and community. However, despite the knowledge that hate crimes tend to

leave more psychological damage and affect the community climate (particularly the larger

social community of the affected individual(s)) than non-bias crimes of a similar nature, the

extent to which they are perceived as a serious issue is more limited than is ideal, both on the

behalf of law enforcement and victims. Many hate crime victims who were not physically

injured may perceive their experience as "not severe enough" to warrant reporting it to

authorities (e.g., they may rationalize that if they were left physically unharmed then their

experience does not matter), or may be embarrassed to admit they were the victim of a hate

crime (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Meyer, 2010). Victims of hate crimes may be hesitant to

report their experiences because they do not want to be labeled as a victim, blame themselves for

what happened, or do not perceive their experience as severe enough to warrant a hate crime

investigation (e.g., they may downplay their experience by thinking "at least I wasn't killed or

seriously injured;" Lyons, 2008; Meyer, 2010). Some research also shows that the *type* of hate

crimes experienced differ by social groups, with high-status individuals experiencing crimes that

are more psychologically severe, while lower-status individuals experience more physically

severe crimes (Meyer, 2010). (It should be noted that Meyer's finding could potentially be due to

the confounding issue of location, such that in lower SES environments violent crime rates may

be generally higher than in higher SES areas, but nonetheless these incidents negatively affect

the individual, their group, and the broader community when handled without compassion and

full legal inquiry.) Nonetheless, generally, studies looking at victim experience and status, such as Meyer's, are focused on the victim's personal recollection of the hate crime and his or her personal interpretation of severity, rather than rely on more objective or "outsider" interpretation. It is possible that non-victims (e.g., policemen, bystanders, someone reading about the incident in a newspaper) may interpret the severity and nature of possible hate crime event differently than the victim. Due to the lack of non-victim perception of incident severity in this area of literature, the current study aims to test the effect that the victim's SES plays on interpretation of the severity of their experience by outsiders. It is possible that there is a class prejudice due to existing stereotypes about both low and high SES individuals and neighborhoods that could lead an interpreter to believe that the incident is a hate crime or not, thus it is a critical element to include in this study. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that even amongst in-group members, there is a negative mindset towards low SES others (Kuntsman, Plant, & Deska, 2016), which suggests that interpretation of a possible hate crime event could be affected by in-group class-based bias. Furthermore, it has been documented that police interactions tend to vary based on the victim's SES (Cattaneo, 2010), which could also affect how a hate crime is handled, particularly in a jurisdiction in which what constitutes hate is determined by social norms rather than strict legal standards.

To date, research examining hate crime perception has mainly focused on perceivers' racial attitudes (Saucier et al., 2010), offender sentencing as a result of victim experience (Iganski & Lagou, 2015), vulnerability and perceived "value" of victim (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012), intersectional differences between victims (Meyer, 2010), and culpability of victim and victim blame (Rayburn, Mendoza, & Davison, 2003). Perceived severity and overall interpretation of the incident as distinct outcomes are often of secondary focus in these studies in

spite of the fact that the issue of severity itself is a critical piece of the puzzle of understanding hate crime interpretation and in planning future action in order to achieve the goal of minimizing the extent to which hate crimes are underreported and under-investigated. In order to better understand what elements of an incident and/or victim contribute to the public's assessment of severity, it is necessary to manipulate these facets themselves and consider contextual factors that contribute to the perception of the incident and victim's experience, rather than rely on secondary measures of incident characteristics.

The experimental hate crime literature is relatively new, and research specifically manipulating the factors that contribute to bias crime and its perception are few and far between. To the best of my knowledge, no study has examined the specific role that victim socioeconomic status plays when a non-victim is interpreting a possible hate crime, especially using experimental methods. Given previous research suggesting high SES victims rate their own experiences as being more severe than low SES victims, we postulate that non-victim interpreters may mirror this effect, thus including victim SES as a manipulation seems prudent to test whether this pattern is true across individuals or is victim-specific.

 Based on the shortage of this type of research in the current hate crime literature, this study aims to fill the gaps and include incident and victim characteristics that are often only a focus in a secondary manner. Thus, the current study focuses on perceived severity as a primary outcome of interpreting a bias incident while manipulating key variables postulated to be related to perceived severity. Given previous forays into this issue and current issues, the key variables manipulated are victim SES, presence of racial bias, race, and mention of positive personal character.

The current study aims to focus on perceived severity as a primary outcome of interpreting a bias incident while manipulating victim socioeconomic status (SES) and presence of racial bias to understand the relationship between these two key factors affecting perception, reporting, and action against hate crime. Presence of bias and SES have been made orthogonal in order to test whether racial stereotypes regarding SES alone elicit responses that a hate crime is present in spite of absence of bias, or whether a high SES might offset participants' reactions to the described incident. The addition of character as a manipulation became a concern after conducting initial surveys and will be discussed at length below.

Given that the literature to this point has focused mostly on structural predictors of hate crimes, the overarching goal of this study is to test interpersonal perception of hate crimes to get closer to determining why it is that some crimes are reported to be hate crimes and others are not. Specifically, the aim is to gauge whether perceptions of severity, victim blame, level of present bias, and typicality of the incident are contributing factors to the extent that an incident is perceived as severe and might be reported to the police and handled using appropriate, federal guidelines. In contrast to most of what has currently been focused on in the experimental hate crime literature, of main interest in this study are the reactions of perceivers who are non-victims and non-law enforcement. Given that this study aims to seek an understanding of the aspects of social climate and personal attributions that may contribute to classifying an incident as a hate crime or not, attaining responses from the perspective of a third-party interpreter is of interest.

The main hypotheses are:

H_1: High SES victims' experiences will be rated as more severe than low SES victims' experiences across all conditions.

H_2: Perceived severity will be highest for both low and high SES victims in the "bias present" condition, and lowest for "bias absent" condition (i.e., when the victim is Black and bias is present perceived severity will be higher than when he is Black and bias is absent, which will be higher than when he is White and bias is absent).

H_3: Participants will agree the incident is a hate crime more when bias is clearly present than when it is ambiguous.

Supplementary hypotheses proposed with the addition of manipulations in further study phases will be discussed in the relevant section(s).

Pilot Study and Study 1

To test the main hypothesis that reported information affects how a potential hate crime incident is labeled and interpreted—specifically whether victim SES and presence of bias affect opinion of the incident and victim—a pilot study was conducted to see if evidence of this effect could be found before further proceeding with additional participants or adding additional manipulations. The pilot study was also conducted with the goal of ensuring the survey system was working properly and that no technological issues were present that would prevent the conditions being randomly assigned, etc. Study 1was an extension of the pilot study.

Method

Procedure. The study was available to University of Connecticut undergraduates in introductory psychology courses via an online experimental participation pool. Participation was voluntary but partial course credit was offered as an incentive to participate. In order to prevent potential demand or recruitment biases, the experiment was advertised as being about interpreting news and journalistic stories. After giving informed consent, participants were

presented with one of the randomly assigned vignettes, followed by the Likert-scale items,

attitude scales, free-response, and post-experimental information. The experiment took no more

than 30 minutes to complete. Participants were given credit towards a course assignment for their

time and debriefed.

Design and stimuli. Study 1 utilized a 2 × 3 SES by Race/Bias condition factorial design.

The assault victim was described as low or high in socio-economic status. The race conditions

included the assault victim being White (when the victim was White a racial epithet was not

present), the assault victim being Black with no indication of racial bias (epithet absent) by the

assailants, or the assault victim being Black with racial bias (epithet present) expressed by the

assailants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions. Vignette examples

are shown below, with the high SES and bias conditions italicized.

White Victim Conditions
AW is a White man in his 40s who [is employed as a dishwasher in New York City/*is an executive at a large corporation headquartered in New York City*]. He lives in [low-income housing in a rough neighborhood/ *a neighborhood that is predominantly upper-middle class*], and is perceived as a good person by those in his community, often volunteering and donating to local charities. While AW walked through Central Park, a group of young men, all of whom are White, approached and severely beat him. They threatened to kill his family if he told anyone what happened.

Black Victim Conditions
AW is an African American man in his 40s who [is employed as a dishwasher in New York City/*is an executive at a large corporation headquartered in New York City*]. He lives in [low-income housing in a rough neighborhood/ *a neighborhood that is predominantly upper-middle class*], and is perceived as a good person by those in his community, often volunteering and donating to local charities. While AW walked through Central Park, a group of young men, all of whom are White, approached and severely beat him. [*They also yelled derogatory racial slurs at him and threatened to "come after more of his people" if he told anyone what happened.*]

Dependent measures. *Likert-scale items*. Likert items asking about AW's fault for being attacked, perceived severity of the incident, and other questions about the incident and possible motivations were presented. All questions were on a five-point scale with the endpoints labeled *not at all* or *extremely*. These items were generated specifically for this study. A complete list of dependent measures can be found in Appendix B, though items of particular importance to the hypotheses include:

- o How likely is it that AW was psychologically traumatized by the incident?

- o Do you think AW is a typical member of his community?

- o Do you think what happened to AW frequently occurs to other people (i.e., same location, same incident)?

- o To what extent do you think the perpetrators of the incident involving AW deserve a harsh criminal punishment?

- o Overall, how severe do you think the incident that happened to AW is?

It was carefully designed so that the words "hate," "bias" or "hate crime" did not appear until a point during the study at which the participant would have already formed an opinion about the nature of the event.

Attitudes. Scales adapted from the American National Election Studies (ANES, 2012) asking about participants' personal and their community's (i.e., hometown or current city) attitudes towards several groups (Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, rich, poor, LGBT). The items consisted of a sliding bar from 0 – 100, where 0 indicates a completely negative attitude and 100 indicates a completely positive attitude; participant were asked to use the scale to evaluate their personal attitudes towards a target group and then their community's attitude towards the target group. These scales were included as a means to gauge participants' overall

attitudes towards out-group members to test whether warmth towards a particular group may moderate responses to particular Likert items.

Knowledge about Hate Crimes. Questions were presented with questions assessing their knowledge about who may be perpetrators of hate crimes (e.g., women, men, anyone, only non-minorities, etc.), who may be victims of hate crimes, and whether psychologically-damaging crimes fall under the same statutes as physically-damaging ones. A four-item Likert scale was used (*definitely true – definitely false*). These items were generated specifically for this study, and included questions such as, "Members of minority groups can commit hate crimes," "Crimes that are only psychologically damaging (i.e., no physical harm occurred) cannot be considered hate crimes," and "Only members of a minority group can be victims of a hate crime." These items were not included as a reference to the particular vignette that served as the experimental manipulation, but rather as a means of establishing a general sense of how familiar University of Connecticut undergraduates are with concepts related to hate and hate crime.

Categorization of incident and follow-up free response. After completing all other questions, the question "Was AW a victim of a hate crime?" (*yes, no, unsure, prefer not to answer*) was presented. Participants were then asked to complete a free-response item: "Do you believe what happened to AW should be considered a hate crime? Why or why not? Please explain in a few sentences. This question is based on your opinion and there is no right or wrong answer." Though several of the Likert items could effectively reveal the participant's reaction to the incident, a qualitative response was deemed necessary to capture the thought process behind the categorization of the incident as a hate crime or not, as well as to reveal possible attributions about the event that were not captured in the scale items.

Demographic description. Participants were asked their age, race, gender, SES, state of residence, and the first three digits of their zip code as standard demographic information.

Post-experimental Information. Participants were given the option to view post-experimental information with links to internet resources (e.g., Southern Poverty Law Center cite) explaining what a hate crime is, who is most affected, why hate crimes are a problem, and what to do if you or someone they know has been a victim of a hate crime. Viewing this document was not mandatory, but thought to be of benefit to less-informed participants.

Results and Discussion

Fifty-five responses were collected across the pilot study and Study 1. Because the University of Connecticut's participant pool served as the sampling source, it is unsurprising that the mean age was 19.13, ($SD = 1.54$), 78.2% ($n = 43$) of respondents were female, 50.9% ($n = 28$) were White, and 30.9% ($n = 17$) Asian.

Of primary interest, a tabulation of the key dependent variable "Do you think AW's experience constitutes a hate crime?" was calculated. See Table 1 for full counts. Across all conditions, 38 participants said yes, six said no, and 11 said they were unsure. In conditions where AW was Black and the racial slur was present, no participants said unsure (which suggests that the manipulation did, in fact, work), though one did say no (when AW was also low SES—it is possible this participant attributed the attack to circumstantial factors due to the nature of AW's lower income neighborhood). When bias was absent (i.e., the racial slur was not said but AW was described as Black), regardless of SES, zero participants answered no, only yes (11) or unsure (7). Recall that AW was always Black in the bias ambiguous vignettes, which implies that when AW is not White, participants are already thinking that it may be a racially-motivated crime or are conservative about definitively saying that it was not a racially-motivated crime

when AW is not White. Essentially, these numbers show that racial bias effects are difficult to capture when the manipulation is not exceedingly clear regarding the type and intention of incident.

To test the effect of the manipulations on several Likert items of interest to the main hypotheses, several ANOVAs were conducted. As a proxy for general severity, the dependent variable "mean harm" was created by taking the mean of the variables "physical trauma" (How likely is it that AW was physically traumatized by the incident?) "psych trauma" (How likely is it that AW was psychologically traumatized by the incident?) and "severity" (Overall, how severe do you think the incident that happened to AW is?). These items were strongly correlated; physical trauma and psychological trauma $r(55) = .503$, $p < .001$; physical trauma and severity $r(55) = .318$, $p = .018$; and psychological trauma and severity $r(55) = .433$, $p = .001$.

A univariate ANOVA was conducted with mean harm as the outcome, and significant main effects were found for victim SES $F(1, 54) = 4.95$, $p = .031$ and race/bias $F(1, 54) = 5.04$, $p = .01$. Participants reported AW experiencing more harm when he was depicted as low SES ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .531$) than high SES ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .564$; see Figure 1). In the conditions when AW was White (no bias present), mean harm was equal to when AW was Black and the racial slur was not mentioned ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .586$) though when AW was Black and the racial slur was present, mean harm was significantly ($p < .05$) higher ($M = 4.78$, $SD = .319$; see Figure 2). These results do not support the initial hypothesis that the experiences of high SES victims will be seen as more severe than low SES victims. Rather, they show that low SES victims receive more sympathy than higher SES victims. This could potentially be due to sympathy, as participants may believe that a lower SES person has more obstacles in life and may not have the resources (both financial and social) to seek medical and/or psychological services after the incident. It

could also possibly be explained by stereotypes about low SES areas, including higher crime rates, with participants assuming that perhaps similar incidents have happened to him or others in his community before, and this incident will have a compounding effect. Despite not finding a significant effect of SES on victim harm in the expected direction, the race/bias main effect is consistent with the hypothesis that White victims' experiences will not be rated as severely as Black victims' experiences, especially when bias is present. That the mean difference between Black + no racial slur and Black + racial slur is small suggests that AW's race alone primes participants to believe that the incident may be a hate crime, or may be more severe in part because of the possibility that it could be racially motivated. Again, this finding suggests that race alone in the context of a criminal assault is enough to evoke reactions that suggest the incident may be hate-motivated. This effect could be due to demand (e.g., the participants recognize the descriptions of the perpetrators and victim as fitting a hate crime schema and should "know" to answer that AW was a victim, regardless of the specific facts presented).

To further test the extent to which participants believed the victim's race to be a factor in the crime, a univariate ANOVA was conducted for the Likert item "race motivation" (To what extent do you think AW's race motivated the incident?). There was a significant main effect only for race/bias $F(1, 54) = 18.82$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 3). Predictably, when AW was White, participants thought his attack was less motivated by his race ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.51$) than when AW was Black. When AW was Black, his race was reliably more salient ($p = .046$) in determining motivation when bias was present ($M = 4.83$, $SD = .514$) than when bias was ambiguous ($M = 4.0$, $SD = .594$).

In addition to exploring severity and race motivation, we were interested in participants' reactions to the gravity of the incident. To examine it, the dependent variable "seriousness" was

created by taking the mean of the variables "punishment" (To what extent do you think the

perpetrators of the incident involving AW deserve a harsh criminal punishment?) and

"investigate" (How vigorously should the police seriously investigate this incident if it were

reported?). These items strongly correlated; $r(55) = .490$, $p < .001$. A univariate ANOVA was

then conducted with seriousness as the outcome; a main effect trending towards significance

emerged only for race/bias $F(1, 54) = 2.97$, $p = .06$ (see Figure 4). When AW was White,

participants thought his crime should be punished/investigated less seriously ($M = 4.24$, $SD =$

.714) than when AW was Black—when the racial slur was present, the seriousness with which

the crime should be handled was higher ($M = 4.75$, $SD = .521$) than when the slur was absent

from the manipulation ($M = 4.5$, $SD = .618$). Though not statistically significant, this effect is

unsurprising. Like previous tests, these results show confirm that it is difficult to capture true

bias effects—when the victim is Black, it is likely that the participants are already assuming the

incident is hate-motivated.

Free-Response

        After giving their response to whether they believed AW's incident should be considered

a hate crime, participants were asked to briefly explain their answer. When AW was Black, in

both bias present and bias ambiguous conditions, participants said things such as, "Yes it should

because the racial slurs clearly means that race has to be a factor," and "I personally feel like

what happened to him was a hate crime. There was absolutely no other reason he should have

been beaten." However, other participants were more cautious given the lack of information

provided in the vignettes, for example, one wrote: "With the details given in the article, there is

not enough sufficient evidence as to why AW was attacked. Deciding whether or not it was a

hate crime, with this level of information, would all just be speculation...it is easy to perceive

that it was a hate crime, but there is no solid evidence that was presented in this article. Crime involving more than one race cannot automatically be deemed as a hate crime." When AW was White, his race was not specifically mentioned as a motivation for the attack, though some participants had other reasons for possibly viewing it as a hate crime, such as "No, because both the victim and the perpetrator were White and it did not specify if either were LGBT," implying they may believe it is a bias crime but anti-sexuality-motivated, and "I do not think what happened to AW should be considered a hate crime because there are no factors that would contribute to it being a hate crime. The group of young men who beat him up were of the same race so it wasn't a racial crime. The only thing I could think of would be if they came after him because they knew he was wealthy." These responses again suggest that Black race alone—aside from other manipulations— is salient enough to make participants think this is a bias crime. This is potentially problematic because not all minority victims are victims of a hate crime, and not all victims of hate crimes are visible minorities. Though these responses show a sense of empathy and concern for AW, it portrays the real-world difficulty law enforcement and communities face of accurately identifying hate crimes based on victim and incident characteristics alone. Without knowing the true underlying intent of the perpetrator, physical and presumed psychological characteristics may not be accurate proxies for establishing bias and/or intent.

To more fully explore the qualitative responses, content coding was conducted by tabulating word count for keywords such as "hate," "crime," "race," "motivation," etc. and considering the context in which they were used. Of particular note, "crime" was mentioned 41 times, "hate" was mentioned 41 times, and "race" was mentioned 29 times. To put these terms in context, some of the statements indicative of participants' responses to the free-response item include, "It should be considered a crime—however, due to [everyone being White] it probably

would not be considered a hate crime," "No, because he was probably jumped for his money,"
"Yes because…[the perpetrators specifically made reference to his race," "Yes it should because
of the…racial slurs," and "I'm not sure because I can't see anything that [would] directly cause
the hatred." Of course, these responses come from participants in different conditions and their
reasons for deeming AW's incident a hate crime or not vary depending on the facts presented
between experimental conditions. However, it is clear that participants attuned to the fact that
racial slurs were said, as well as noticed AW's race, even when racial slurs were not present.
This, again, suggests that participants suspect the incident for any Black victim may be racially-
motivated even when racial slurs are not explicitly mentioned. Though not definitive in
explaining the effect of the manipulations or the cognitive processes underlying participants'
responses, the qualitative data offer insight into what characteristics participants deem relevant to
motive and seriousness of the incident, thus offering perspectives on what, specifically, are
important aspects of hate crime to consider for public reporting, discussion, and prosecution.

Study 2

Study 2 was conducted with the same goals in mind as Study 1, namely, to test the
hypothesis that victim characteristics and selected reported information affect interpretation of a
possible hate crime and judgments of the severity and seriousness of the incident. Due to a
discovery of a potential confound in the experimental design (discussed below), changes were
made to the vignettes.

Method

Procedure. The procedure for Study 2 was identical to that of Study 1.

Design and Stimuli. During analyses of the Study 1 data, a confound in the manipulation
was discovered—in addition to describing AW's physical assault and the racial slurs in the bias

condition, the attackers mentioned threatening to come after AW's family if he told anyone what happened in the White victim condition. Because this threat adds another level of violence to the study and implies that the attackers may personally know AW and extends the possible harm of the altercation, it was removed from the affected manipulations for Study 2. The stimuli, dependent measures, and post-experimental information otherwise remained the same as in Study 1. The hypotheses for Study 2 remain the same as the previous study despite the changes in manipulations. The removal of one line not central to the study's main hypotheses was not expected to change responses markedly.

Results and Discussion

Sixty participants were recruited for Study 2. After dropping cases due to non-response (i.e., selected "prefer not to answer" for more than half of survey items), 59 responses were included in analyses. The mean age was 18.81 ($SD = .945$), 81.4% ($n = 48$) of participants were female, and 62.7% ($n = 37$) were White.

As with Study 1, a tabulation of participants' responses to "Do you think AW's experience constitutes a hate crime?" was conducted. See Table 2 for a detailed breakdown of responses. Similar to results of Study 1, when AW was White, participants mostly said the incident was not a hate crime ($n = 11$), 3 said yes, and 5 were unsure. When AW was Black, more participants said yes ($n = 32$) than no (1) or unsure (7). When AW was Black and a racial slur was present, participants answered yes ($n = 20$) and unsure ($n = 1$); nobody responded no. When AW was Black and a racial slur was not present, more participants were unsure ($n = 6$), and one person said no. The larger spread of responses regarding the interpretation of the White AW's attack as a hate crime could possibly be due to the fact that the line "[the attackers] threatened to kill his family if [AW] told anyone what happened" was removed from the

manipulations—perhaps this information added an additional level of bias that obscured any potential ambiguity about the situation, with its removal resulting in participants being less certain about the nature and/or motive of the incident.

The same coding for race/bias, mean harm, and seriousness conducted in Study 1 was repeated for Study 2 since the study design and the primary dependent variables of interest remained the same. As in Study 1, the inter-item correlation for the items composing mean harm was strong. Physical trauma and psychological trauma were strongly positively correlated $r(59) = .439, p < .01$; severity and physical trauma $r(59) = .258, p < .05$, and severity and psychological trauma $r(59) = .574, p < .01$. The variables composing "seriousness" (punishment and need to investigate) were very highly correlated—$r(59) = .879, p < .01$.

Univariate ANOVAs conducted with mean harm and seriousness as separate outcomes revealed no significant main effects nor interactions. Like the responses to the categorical item regarding whether the incident should be a hate crime, it is possible that the changes to the vignettes are driving the null effect. In Study 1, SES and race/bas were significant main effects for mean harm (though the former not in the direction initially hypothesized), and only a trending main effect for seriousness was found for race/bias. The results of this test in this phase of the study were not trending, nor were they indicative of any general pattern. Again, it cannot be said with certainty that the change in the manipulation is accountable for the change in findings, but it is possible that without the additional level of implied severity, participants are not as sensitive to the manipulation and are less certain if the incident is hate-motivated or more due to circumstantial events (e.g., bad neighborhood, wrong place and time, etc.).

A univariate ANOVA for race motivation showed a significant main effect for race/bias only $F(1, 58) = 34.88, p < .001$. Participants rated the incident as less likely to be racially

motivated when AW was White ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.20$) than when AW was Black. When AW

was Black, it was only marginally higher (and not statistically significant) when the racial slur

was present ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .845$) than when the slur was absent ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .976$; see

Figure 5). Again, this suggests that regardless of the presence of bias, when the victim is Black,

participants are already in the mindset that race could be a factor in the crime. This effect mirrors

the findings of Study 1.

Free Response. Qualitative responses in this phase of the study were very similar to those

in Study 1. Namely, participants frequently mentioned the use of racial slurs as a reason for

justifying the event as a hate crime: "Yes, [it was a hate crime], because of the racial slurs," and

"yes [it was a hate crime] because [the perpetrators] singled out a Black man in a predominantly

White neighborhood." Some participants assigned to a condition in which AW was White also

thought that the incident should be classified as a hate crime, albeit for different reasons: "Yes [it

was a hate crime]. Although the perpetrators were the same race, [they may have beat him

because he was wealthy]." Though some participants inferred that the perpetrators being White

meant that the attack could not be a hate crime (even if it was not race-motivated). And several

participants were more discerning in digesting the information, noting the ambiguity of the

information presented: "Not really [I don't think this was a hate crime] … there was [not enough

information given] and I think that AW was a victim of circumstances," and "I am not sure

because based on the information [given in the vignette] there is not enough evidence to support

this is a hate crime."

The procedure for content coding the free-response in Study 2 was identical to that of

Study 1. Again, tabulations for the highest frequency words were conducted, and the most oft-

mentioned words were "hate" (52), "crime" (49), and "race" (28). Responses in Study 2 were

extremely similar to those of Study 1. Responses representative of the sample overall are reflected in the aforementioned examples. Again, participants in Study 2 have keyed in on AW's race, the circumstances, and the presence of racial slurs. However, unlike Study 1, slightly more (though not statistically significant) participants answered "no" and "unsure" when prompted for a definitive response as to whether the incident is a hate crime, perhaps due to the ambiguity of the manipulation (compared to Study 1) or because of typical participant variance. However, these results again reinforce that victim race remains salient and that perhaps it is AW's race (when Black), and not necessarily the full context of the described circumstances that elicit a reaction from the participants that the event is a hate crime.

The results of Study 2 suggest that victim race is still salient in judging an incident as hate-motivated or not, but that SES and presence of bias are not as important as they were found to be in Study 1. This is likely due to the reduced severity of the vignettes presented in Study 2. While it was a mistake, the confound in Study 1 proved useful in demonstrating that race effects (particularly when expected to interact with other manipulations) are difficult to capture when subtle.

Study 3

The third experiment was conducted with the intent to fully cross the experimental design and expand upon the tests of Studies 1 and 2. Specifically, the aim of this study was to test how much the race of victim alone mattered, which the first two studies were unable to answer. As Studies 1 and 2 showed AW's race automatically generated assumptions about the nature of the incident, we were interested in whether manipulating what is known about him would portray him differently to participants and affect their assessment of the situation. Additionally, Studies 1 and 2 included only positive character mentions about AW, and it is possible that inclusion of

AW's character affected interpretation or reaction to the story. Study 3 made character its own factor to test whether this was the case. Due to the additional questions this study aims to answer, more than minimal changes were made to the manipulations; an additional dummy story and practice items were added to add a greater sense of legitimacy and realism to the study, and the manipulation of character was added.

Method

      Procedure. The procedure for Study 3 remained the same as in the previous studies. However, significant changes were made for the design and stimuli.

      Design and stimuli. The design of Study 3 had large changes: A practice news story drawn from National Geographic concerning whale behavior was added in before the manipulations to provide further legitimacy to the "interpreting news stories" aspect of the study and also so participants would be more familiar with the procedure of the experiment (see Appendix A for this manipulation). The biggest change was making the manipulations a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design so that the experiment was now fully crossed in order to eliminate the issue of race and bias entwined and not individually manipulated. The White victim scenarios were eliminated (i.e., AW was now always Black in the vignettes), and a character manipulation was added to see if AW received more sympathy when his positive character was mentioned vs. no mention of character. It is hypothesized that mention of positive character will be related to higher perceived mean harm and seriousness. Negative character was not included as a manipulation because it would likely distract participants from the incident, or may lend an air of deservingness to his attack. Additionally, securing enough participants to adequately power an additional manipulation in a fully-crossed study could be potentially problematic.

To add a sense of realism, the words "Source: USA Today" were also added at the end of each manipulation. Questions to check the manipulation of character and SES were also added to see how much attention participants paid to that portion of the vignette and whether it might be affecting their responses. Lastly, an additional free-response question was added. After being asked to explain why or why not they think what happened to AW should be considered a hate crime, the open-ended question "What factors led to AW being beaten?" was presented to assess what specific attributions participants were thinking of when trying to determine whether AW's incident was a hate crime or not. The rewritten manipulations are below, with the high SES, mention of good character, and bias conditions appearing in italics.

Vignette

AW is an African-American man in his 40s who [is employed as a dishwasher in New York City/ *is employed as an executive at a large corporation headquartered in New York City*]. [He lives in low-income housing in a rough, predominantly non-White neighborhood/ *He lives in a neighborhood that is predominantly White and upper-middle class*] [. /*and is perceived as a good person by those in his community, often volunteering and donating to local charities*.] While AW walked through Central Park, a group of young men, all of whom are White, approached and severely beat him. [*They also yelled derogatory racial slurs at him.*]

Source: USA Today

Results and Discussion

One hundred-twenty participants were recruited and included in Study 3 analyses. The mean age was 19.01 ($SD = 1.18$), 65.8% ($n = 79$) were female, and 64.2% ($n = 77$) were White.

Like the previous two studies, a cross-tabulation of participants' responses to the question "Do you think AW's experience constitutes a hate crime?" was conducted. Interestingly, regardless of SES manipulation, when mention of the victim's character was absent, participants said the incident was a hate crime more often than when his character was mentioned positively.

In these cases, perhaps participants are attributing his victimhood to him being a seemingly, nice, approachable person rather than his race. See Table 3 for a full cross-tabulation; note that a log linear model showed a marginally significant ($p = .07$) three-way interaction between participants saying the incident was a hate crime when mention of positive character and the racial slur were present in the manipulation. This finding suggests that AW is seen as being more victimized when he is a good person, which raises the possibility that a character bias could exist.

The same dependent variables for mean harm and seriousness as for Study 2 were calculated for Study 3. Consistent with the results of Studies 1 and 2, the inter-item correlation for the mean harm variables was high; physical trauma and psychological trauma $r(119) = .467$, $p < .001$; physical trauma and severity $r(119) = .427$, $p < .001$; psychological trauma and severity $r(119) = .255$, $p < .001$. The correlation for the items composing the seriousness measure were also strongly positively correlated—$r(119) = .87$, $p < .001$.

A univariate ANOVA of racial motivation revealed a significant main effect for bias $F(1,114) = 6.26$, $p = .014$. Participants thought AW's incident was racially motivated more when the racial slur was present ($M = 4.53$, $SD = .657$) than when the slur was absent ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .826$; see Figure 6). This test provides a strong manipulation check (i.e., present bias *should* indicate the incident is racially-motivated), especially now that the crossed design lends itself to making more insightful conclusions.

A univariate ANOVA of mean harm revealed no significant main effects for character ($p = .094$), bias ($p = .351$), nor SES ($p = .640$). An ANOVA of seriousness was also non-significant for character ($p = .352$), bias, ($p = .431$), nor SES ($p = .353$). Thus, the additional hypothesis for the new independent variable was not supported. However, there was an interaction trending

towards significance between character mention and bias $F(1, 114) = 3.36$, $p = .069$. When

AW's good character was mentioned, race motivation was nearly equivalent when bias was

present ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .685$) than when there was no bias ($M = 4.3$, $SD = .794$). When AW's

character was absent from the manipulations, race motivation was higher when bias was present

($M = 4.68$, $SD = .604$) than when bias was absent ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .858$). It is possible that this

ambiguous effect is likely because participants are making the same racial attributions as in the

previous studies, so that being Black alone is enough to elicit a response that the attack was race

motivated. The effect with character might be credited to a halo effect (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977),

so that it paradoxically shifts more blame to the victim for being an "easier target" or perhaps

more approachable and thus more easily subdued.

As with the prior two phases of the experiment, a free-response question was posed after

asking participants whether they thought the incident was a hate crime. The responses were

largely similar to those of previous participants—there were many responses indicating that it

was a hate crime: "Yes there seems to be no motivation other than his race," "Yes. In the end,

racial slurs were used against AW so race was a factor in this case," "I think so. They did not

have a clear reason to hurt him and…were yelling derogatory racial slurs," "Yes…because [the

perpetrators] beat up a Black man for no reason but his color." As with the prior two studies,

Study 3's qualitative responses had similar themes of attribution due to race and circumstances.

Content coding was also conducted, again with the highest word frequencies being "crime" (98),

"hate" (89), and "race" (44). Unlike Studies 1 and 2, ~24% percent of participants ($n = 28$)

reported they were unsure if the incident should be a hate crime or not (in Studies 1 and 2,

roughly 20% of participants ($n = 11$ and 12, respectively) said they were unsure), which is

perhaps due to changes in the manipulations (e.g., the addition of character and removing the White victim conditions).

In addition to asking about whether the incident should be considered a hate crime, the free-response item "What factors led to AW being beaten?" was included in Study 3 to assess what specific characteristics or information participants keyed in on when assessing the incident. Unsurprisingly, most responses included mention of AW's race, but many participants concluded the attack was due to bad timing, being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and some said that it was impossible to definitively say without more information being provided. Content coding was also conducted for this item, and the highest frequency words were "race" (51), "beaten," (20), and "people" 18). To put these in context, examples of participants' exact responses include "race, income," "walking alone, he was a minority…and poor," "race and job status," "bad timing," "unsure, but likely his race," and "impossible to tell without more context and information." All in all, participants from Study 3 seem to be picking up on some of the same things participants in Studies 1 and 2 did, namely AW's race and SES. Though hypotheses involving SES were not statistically significant in any univariate tests conducted, some participants are clearly noting aspects of AW's circumstances as possible causes of his attack, thus reiterating that victim characteristics are not completely fruitless as a variable important in understanding perception of hate crimes.

General Discussion

The purpose of the present research was to assess personal and contextual factors affecting perception of hate crime incidents; specifically, what factors are most attended to when determining whether an incident may qualify as bias-motivated. The hypothesis that high SES victims' experiences will be rated as more severe than those of low SES victims was not

supported in any experiment. I did find support for the hypothesis that perceived severity will be highest when the victim is Black and bias is clearly present was supported across all three studies. In Studies 2 and 3, it is possible that null effects were found for mean harm (severity) due to the changes in the manipulation. That is, when the additional threat of bodily harm to the victim's family and/or similar others (varying by condition) was present (only in Study 1), there was an additional layer of intensity that was ostensibly not present in Studies 2 and 3. These results suggest that it is possible that effects of overt racism are difficult to capture unless the manipulation is exceedingly obvious. Study 3 attempted to rectify the design issues present in the previous studies by fully crossing the manipulations, eliminating the White victim condition, and adding the manipulation of character to assess whether personal qualities overshadowed interpretation of the facts of the incident. An additional interpretation that is of particular interest is the fact that in Studies 2 and 3, participants' assessment of mean harm did not significantly differ based on the presence or absence of a racial slur. In other words, the addition of a racial slur did not change the interpretation of the crime to be any more harmful or severe than when the slur was absent, suggesting a possible indifference to racism. Part of the reason that hate crime perpetrators are more harshly punished is because bias-motivated crimes are sociologically seen as being more severe (therefore the punishment should be more severe), so it is a compelling finding that the incident is seen as equally harmful by participants regardless of motive. Perhaps this is an artifact of this particular study, or possibly an indication that the public does not perceived bias-motivated crimes the way the justice system expects.

In addition to the quantitative information collected from this survey, the qualitative free-responses added a level of depth to the knowledge gained, particularly because the data did not support the hypotheses. The content coding conducted across all studies offered the most

substantial information, as they allowed for greater insight into what participants were thinking about the incident and what attributions they were bringing to their explanation about AW's incident. The results were similar across studies, suggesting that the same cues (AW's race if Black, SES, and racial slurs) were considered relevant in making the judgment as to whether the incident was a hate crime and/or what factors contributed to his attack.

Furthermore, across all three studies, participants were asked information about their knowledge of hate crimes. Though these items were not integral to the testing of any hypotheses or related to the information presented in the manipulations, they offer information about how familiar participants are with U.S. hate crime laws and general information. If participants' responses were contrary to popular opinion and current definitions of hate crimes, it could be plausible that this could be a reason for null effects. Responses were combined across studies for analysis and indicate that, as a whole, participants' opinions and knowledge about hate crimes are aligned with current legal definitions and policy (see Table 4). Therefore, it is unlikely that participants' existing knowledge (or lack thereof) significantly contributed to the null effects observed across studies. Participants were also asked about their attitudes towards different racial and class groups, with the expectation that their responses to the feeling thermometers would moderate their responses in relation to the manipulation. There were no significant effects.

Despite the fact that several main hypotheses were unsupported, namely that SES and character do not play as large a role as initially hypothesized, the participants' responses to the open-ended questions provided insight into the thought processes of how potential hate crimes are assessed and what information is necessary to meet the schema of a hate crime.

Limitations

This study employed an undergraduate sample, which may have affected the range of responses we received. Additionally, the sample was not very diverse or representative of the general population (it should be noted that all univariate tests were run with participant race a grouping factor, and no significant racial differences were found, likely due to group size disparity and lack of power). This undergraduate sample is not necessarily indicative of average readership of sources that would likely report on hate crimes, and therefore they may not be the prime group on which to conduct this experiment. Another issue to consider in using undergraduate samples (particularly University of Connecticut undergraduates) is that they are routinely exposed to/required to partake in sensitivity and inclusivity workshops throughout their college career, so it is possible that any stimuli suggesting racial profiling or targeting will elicit cautious responses. The design issue in the first study was a confound, however it also led to the development of Studies 2 and 3, which included vignettes that were a stronger test of the hypothesis. However, this still means that it is possible that the effects found in Study 1 were due to the unintended additional manipulation, rather than the intended experimental design. Power may have been an issue. Studies 1 and 2 were adequately powered for the 2×3 design, but the introduction of a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design in Study 3 presented challenges for securing a larger number of participants. I expect the null effects observed in Studies 2 and 3 were due to changes in the manipulation (i.e., removal of the "threatened to kill…" and "…come after more of his people" lines) and lack of power. In hindsight, it was realized that a power analyses expecting a medium effect size suggested at least 300 participants would be necessary for between-subject comparisons. Though this study did recruit the appropriate number of participants, the unexpected division of the research into three studies effectively diminished the ability to detect

an effect, medium or otherwise (i.e., instead of running models with 300 data points, the division

of the experiment into segments reduced the power since only 60 – 120 data points were

included). Additionally, I suspect the true effect is small, given previous discussions about the

difficulty of capturing the nuance of racial effects, and despite this error, it is possible that even

if 300 participants were run between-subjects in the same experiment whether significant effects

could be detected. Though additional participants were recruited for Study 3 due to the larger

number of experimental manipulations, it is possible that to detect the (possibly small) effects

this study aimed for, not enough responses were recorded.

Conclusion

The present research is one of the few experimental attempts to investigate the effect of

victim and incident characteristics on the perception of hate crimes. Though strong support for

the hypotheses was not found, other quantitative and qualitative results indicate that victim

characteristics and assessment of the context of the situation do matter in determining whether an

event was a bias crime or not. These findings have implications for recognizing hate within

communities, and also for law enforcement. It is necessary for more objective interpretation of

events to occur within jurisdictions to accurately identify and prosecute hate events and

ultimately put an end to the problem of hate. This study highlights the difficulty of doing so, as

well as the nuance in determining motive when the perpetrators are unknown or unwilling to

cooperate. Future research could potentially focus on the extent to which separating contextual

aspects (e.g., type of area where incident occurred) from personal ones (e.g., victim SES, race or

real/presumed membership in a group) to create standards for assessing incidents. Not only

would this aid law enforcement in effectively fighting hate crime, but would be beneficial to

communities in providing concrete guidelines for what constitutes a bias crime, rather than rely

on subjective norms for what denotes hate.

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Table 1. Study 1 Cross-tabulations of Hate Crime Opinion

Count

Victim SES			Victim Race and Bias			
			White (no bias)	Black (bias)	Black (ambiguous bias)	Total
Low	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	6	8	5	19
		No	2	1	0	3
		Unsure	2	0	4	6
	Total		10	9	9	28
High	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	4	9	6	19
		No	3	0	0	3
		Unsure	2	0	3	5
	Total		9	9	9	27
Total	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	10	17	11	38
		No	5	1	0	6
		Unsure	4	0	7	11
	Total		19	18	18	55

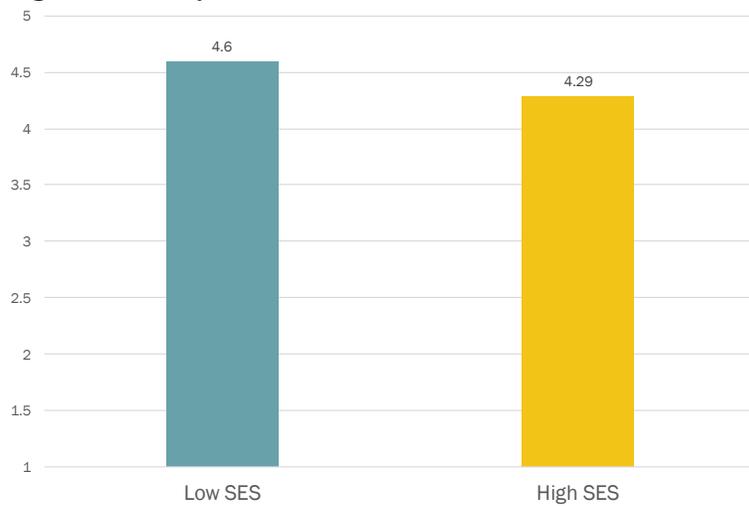**Figure 1. Study 1: Main Effect of SES on Mean Harm**

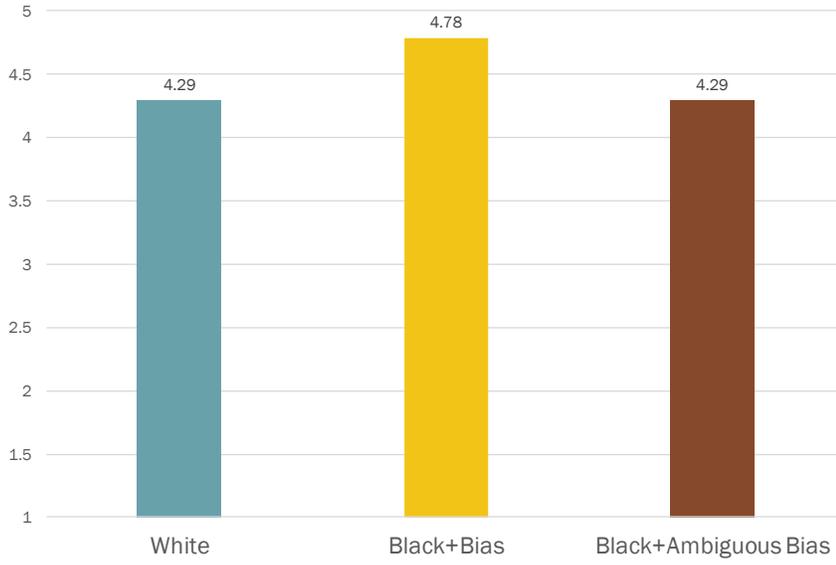**Figure 2. Study 1: Main Effect of Race/Bias Present or Absent on Mean Harm**

Figure 3. Study 1: Main Effect of Race/Bias Present or Absent on Race Motivation
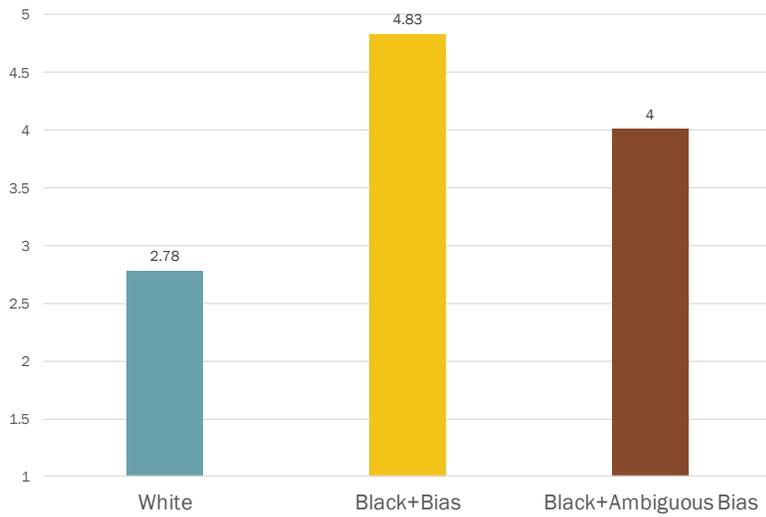
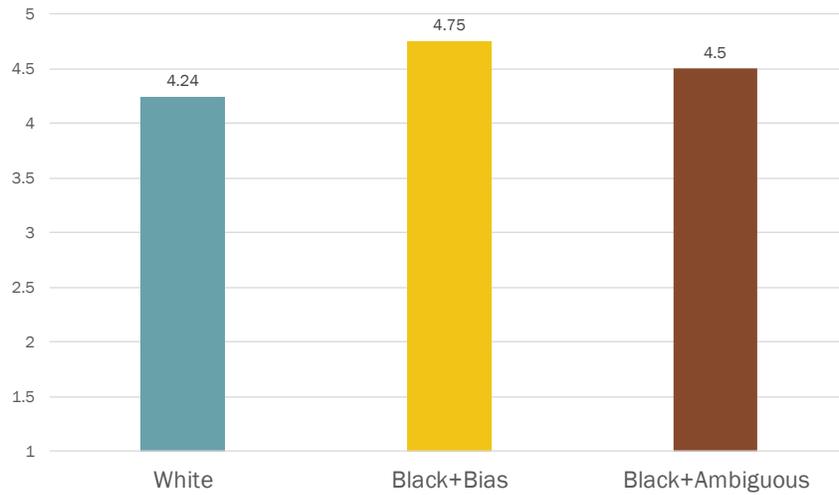**Figure 4. Study 1: Main Effect of Race/Bias Present or Absent on Seriousness**

Table 2. Study 2 Cross-tabulations of Hate Crime Opinion

Count

Victim SES			White (no bias)	Black (bias)	Black (ambiguous bias)	Total
				Race and Bias		
Low	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	3	9	5	17
		No	4	0	1	5
		Unsure	3	1	4	8
	Total		10	10	10	30
High	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	0	11	7	18
		No	7	0	0	7
		Unsure	2	0	2	4
	Total		9	11	9	29
Total	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	3	20	12	35
		No	11	0	1	12
		Unsure	5	1	6	12
	Total		19	21	19	59

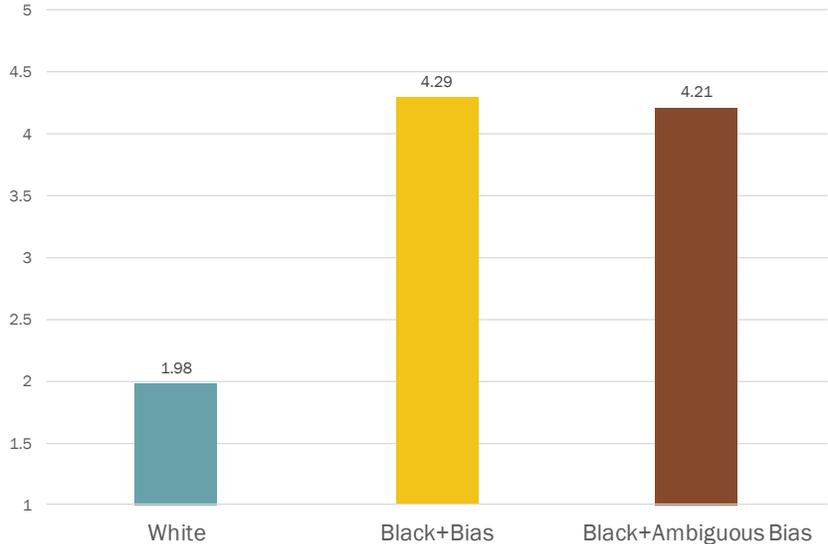**Figure 5. Study 2: Main Effect of Race/Bias Present or Absent on Race Motivation**

Table 3. Study 3 Cross-tabulations of Hate Crime Opinion

Count

SES Manipulation	Bias Manipulation			Victim Character Manipulation		
				Good	Absent	Total
Low	Bias present	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	9	15	24
			Unsure	6	0	6
		Total		15	15	30
	Bias absent	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	8	10	18
			No	1	0	1
			Unsure	5	5	10
		Total		14	15	29
	Total	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	17	25	42
			No	1	0	1
			Unsure	11	5	16
		Total		29	30	59
High	Bias present	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	9	14	23
			Unsure	5	0	5
		Total		14	14	28
	Bias absent	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	12	11	23
			Unsure	3	4	7
		Total		15	15	30
	Total	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	21	25	46
			Unsure	8	4	12
		Total		29	29	58
Total	Bias present	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	18	29	47
			Unsure	11	0	11
		Total		29	29	58
	Bias absent	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	20	21	41
			No	1	0	1
			Unsure	8	9	17
		Total		29	30	59
	Total	Was it a hate crime?	Yes	38	50	88
			No	1	0	1
			Unsure	19	9	28
		Total		58	59	117

Figure 6. Study 3: Mean rating that crime was race-motivated by Bias Presence.
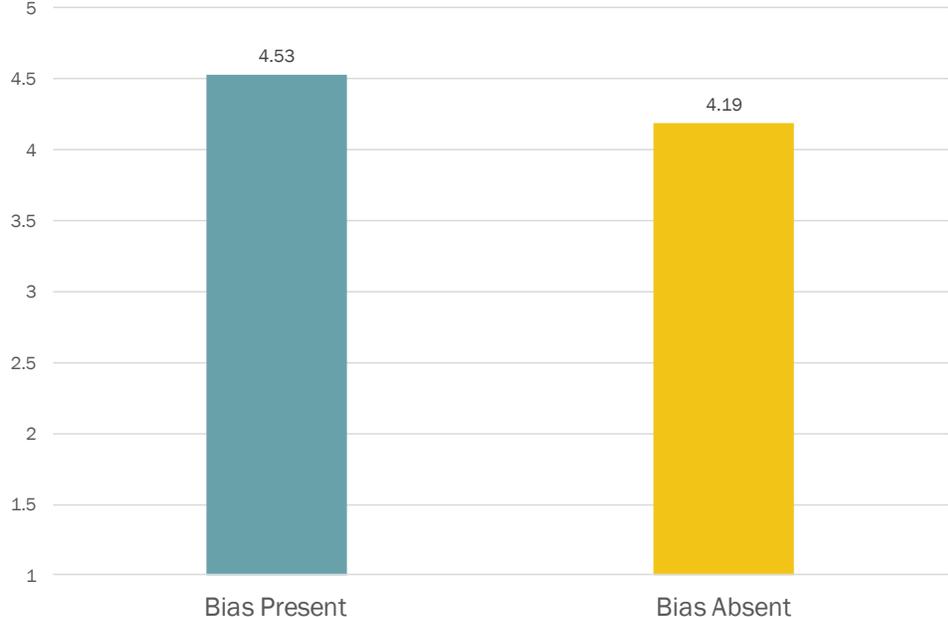
Table 4. Participants' beliefs about hate crimes.

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Men can be victims of hate crimes.	233	1	3	1.11	0.373
Women can be victims of hate crimes.	233	1	3	1.08	0.344
Women can be perpetrators of hate crimes.	233	1	4	1.20	0.523
A person could be a victim of a hate crime because of their religion.	233	1	4	1.11	0.417
Members of a minority group can commit hate crimes.	231	1	4	1.21	0.628
Crimes that are only psychologically damaging (i.e., no physical harm occurred) cannot be considered hate crimes.	230	1	4	3.63	0.818
Hate crimes cannot occur between two members of a minority group.	228	1	4	3.34	1.027
Only minorities can be victims of hate crime.	231	1	4	3.58	0.802

*Note that 1 = definitely true; 4 = definitely false

Appendix A
Please read the following story, paying careful attention. You will be asked questions about what you've just read on the next screen. This story and the following questions are a "warm up" to get you used to the kinds of questions we will be asking later on in the study.

Tests and studies have shown that all whale species use sound for a number of different purposes: to navigate, to detect food, and to communicate with one another over long distances. Despite the breakthroughs in determining the role of sound in whale activities, much about the Blue Whale sounds remains something of a biological mystery.   Blue Whales are relatively solitary animals, usually found alone, or in pairs of mother and calf or two adults, but even then they sometimes swim several kilometres apart. Due to their solitary lifestyles, Blue Whales have evolved an exceptional way of speaking to one another across huge distances. As you would expect from the largest animal on the planet, Blue Whales have exceptionally deep voices and are able to be vocal at frequencies as low as 14 Hz - well below the ability of human hearing - with a volume greater than 180 decibels, which makes the Blue Whale the loudest animal on the planet.

Excerpt taken from: National Geographic

D2 Do you think this article uses too many complex scientific terms for the average reader?
❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)
❍ Unsure (3)

D3 What topic does this article discuss?
❍ Whale diet (1)
❍ Whale mating behavior (2)
❍ Whale communication (3)
❍ Ocean dynamics (4)

Q73 How important do you think research on whales is?
❍ Extremely important (11)
❍ Very important (12)
❍ Moderately important (13)
❍ Slightly important (14)
❍ Not at all important (15)

Q74 Do you think this area of research is currently underfunded?
❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)
❍ Unsure (3)

Q75 Are you aware of the US Navy's interference with whale communication (sonar from ships is disrupting whales' ability to communicate)?
○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

Q76 How effectively does this article address the main concerns of whale communication behavior?
○ Extremely effective (11)
○ Very effective (12)
○ Moderately effective (13)
○ Slightly effective (14)
○ Not effective at all (15)

D4 According to this article, the whale is the loudest animal on the planet.
○ True (1)
○ False (2)
○ This information was not mentioned in the article. (3)

D5 Do you think this article would appeal to a general audience?
○ Yes (1)
○ Maybe (2)
○ No (3)

D6 According to the article, scientists know everything about whale sound communication.
○ True (1)
○ False (2)

Appendix B
The following questions ask about the incident you just read about. There are no right or wrong answers.

Fault How much do you think AW is at fault for what happened?
○ Not at all (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Typical_member Do you think AW is a typical member of his community?
○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Character How would you rate AW's character?
○ Poor (1)
○ Fair (2)
○ Good (3)
○ Very good (4)
○ Excellent (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Trustworthiness Do you think AW is trustworthy?
○ Not at all (1)
○ (6)
○ (7)
○ (8)
○ Extremely (9)
○ Prefer not to answer (10)

Phys_trauma How likely is it that AW was physically traumatized by the incident?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (2)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Psyc_trauma How likely is it that AW was psychologically traumatized by the incident?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (2)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Emot_suppt To what extent do you think AW will get emotional support from his family and friends after this incident?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ (5)
- ○ Extremely (6)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Neg_impact Do you think what happened to AW will negatively impact people similar to him?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (2)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Community Do you think what happened to AW frequently occurs to other people (i.e., same location, same incident)?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (2)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Punishment To what extent do you think the perpetrators of the incident involving AW deserve a harsh criminal punishment?

○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Vig_invest How vigorously should the police seriously investigate this incident if it were reported?

○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Severe Overall, how severe do you think the incident that happened to AW is?

○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Defend Do you think AW should have tried to defend himself?

○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Typical Do you think what happened to AW is a typical occurrence in his community (i.e., his close friends, neighbors, and colleagues)?

○ Not at all (1)
○ (2)
○ (3)
○ (4)
○ Extremely (5)
○ Prefer not to answer (6)

AW_edu What do you think AW's education level is?
- ○ Did not graduate HS (1)
- ○ HS graduate (2)
- ○ Some college (3)
- ○ College graduate (4)
- ○ Advanced or professional degree (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

AW_income What do you think AW's income level is?
- ○ Very low (1)
- ○ Low (2)
- ○ Middle (3)
- ○ High (4)
- ○ Very High (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Money_diff How often do you think AW experiences financial difficulties?
- ○ Constantly (1)
- ○ Often (2)
- ○ Occasionally (3)
- ○ Never (4)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (5)

Other_factors How much do you think what happened to AW was motivated by factors outside of his race?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ (2)
- ○ (3)
- ○ (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Recover How long do you think it will take AW to recover from this incident?
- ○ 3 months or more (1)
- ○ 2 months (2)
- ○ 1 month (3)
- ○ A few weeks (4)
- ○ 1 week (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Race_mot To what extent do you think AW's race motivated the incident?
- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○   (2)
- ○   (3)
- ○   (4)
- ○ Extremely (5)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (6)

Pol_White Police tend to treat crimes with White victims more seriously than those than Black victims:
- ○ True (1)
- ○ False (2)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (3)

Pol_rich Police tend to treat crimes with wealthy victims more seriously than those than poor victims:
- ○ True (1)
- ○ False (2)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (3)

Pol_imp Police treat all types of crimes with equal importance:
- ○ True (1)
- ○ False (2)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (3)

Personal_Att Please slide the bar to indicate your attitude towards the following groups. 0 indicates completely negative feelings, and 100 indicates completely positive feelings.
_____ Whites (1)
_____ Blacks (2)
_____ Hispanics (3)
_____ Asians (4)
_____ LGBT (5)
_____ Wealthy (6)
_____ Poor (7)

Comm_Att Please slide the bar to indicate your community's (i.e., your close friends, neighbors, and colleagues') attitudes towards the following groups. 0 indicates completely negative feelings, and 100 indicates completely positive feelings.

_____ Whites (1)
_____ Blacks (2)
_____ Hispanics (3)
_____ Asians (4)
_____ LGBT (5)
_____ Rich (6)
_____ Poor (7)

Group What group of people do you think are most victimized by hate crimes?
- ○ Whites (1)
- ○ Blacks (2)
- ○ Hispanics (3)
- ○ Asians (4)
- ○ LGBT (5)
- ○ Religious groups (6)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (7)

HC_yn Do you think AW's experience constitutes a hate crime?
- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Unsure (3)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (4)

Free_resp Do you believe what happened to AW should be considered a hate crime? Why or why not? Please explain in a few sentences. *This question is based on your opinion and there is no right or wrong answer.*

FR_factors What factors do you think led to AW being beaten? *Again, this question is based on your opinion and there is no right or wrong answer.*

Men_HC Men can be victims of hate crimes.
- ○ Definitely true (1)
- ○ Probably true (2)
- ○ Probably false (3)
- ○ Definitely false (4)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (5)

Women_HC Women can be victims of hate crimes.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Women_perp Women can be perpetrators of hate crimes.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Relig_HC A person could be a victim of a hate crime because of their religion.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Minority_HC Members of minority groups can commit hate crimes.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Psych_dam Crimes that are only psychologically damaging (i.e., no physical harm occurred) cannot be considered hate crimes.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Min_group Hate crimes cannot occur between two members of a minority group.
- Definitely true (1)
- Probably true (2)
- Probably false (3)
- Definitely false (4)
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Min_victim Only members of a minority group can be victims of a hate crime.
- Definitely true (1)

- ○ Probably true (2)
- ○ Probably false (3)
- ○ Definitely false (4)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (5)

Participant Demographics

Gender What is your gender?
- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Transgender (3)
- ○ Other (4)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (5)

Race What is your race?
- ○ White (1)
- ○ Black (2)
- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ○ Asian (4)
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ○ Arab-American (6)
- ○ Multiracial (7)
- ○ Other (8)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (9)

State What state do you live in? _____

Zip What are the first three digits of your zipcode? _____

Age How old are you? _____

SES Compared to other people in your community, what is your economic situation?
- ○ Wealthy (1)
- ○ Better than most (2)
- ○ Good (3)
- ○ So-so (4)
- ○ Poor (5)
- ○ Destitute (6)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (7)