



Racial Animosity, Adversary Effect, and Hate Crime: Parsing Out Injuries in Intraracial, Interracial, and Race-Based Offenses

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Summary

This study evaluates the adversary effect, racial animosity and racial threat as theoretical frameworks for exploring the role of victim and offender race on the likelihood and severity of victim injury. Using data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the authors address the following hypotheses: (1) the perceived dangerousness of black victims, as proposed by the adversary theory, should result in greater likelihood of injury in Black victims; (2) if racial animosity exists, then interracial crimes should be more injurious than Intraracial crimes; (3) given the adverse factors and heinous nature of hate crimes, bias-motivated violence should be more injurious regardless of victim or offender race. The researchers found that injurious outcomes vary across racial dyad and the presence of bias motivation.

Methods

Data included violent incidents (i.e., sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) reported in NIBRS from 2005 to 2014. The researchers specifically targeted violent offenses in which the victim and offender are male, and either non-Hispanic White or non-Hispanic Black. The relationship between injury (dependent variable) and racial dynamic of victim and offender (independent variable) were analyzed using a multinomial logistic regression model.

Results

The authors' findings did not support the theoretical orientation of the hypotheses. Contrary to their predictions, they found that Black-on-White hate crime represents the highest chance of sustaining an injury (65.5%) and the most likely to feature major injuries (14.7%). The researchers note that the results may be incomplete because the injury variable does not include fatality, and prior studies suggests Black victims are more likely to be killed in violent incidents.

Implications

This article provides significant insight into bias-motivated crime by exploring the dynamics of victim and offender race in tandem. The research further expands the literature on hate crime by testing prominent theoretical approaches against racial dyads. The authors urge future research to explore variation within hate crimes and how racial characteristics shape incident outcomes.