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Severity Matters: The Moderating Effect of Offense Severity in Predicting Racial Differences in Reporting of Bias and Nonbias Victimization to the Police

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Objective: Previous research has noted contradictory findings regarding race and police notification, such that Black people indicate higher levels of distrust in the police yet report victimization to the police at rates similar to or higher than others. We investigated the role of offense severity in accounting for these discrepancies. ***Hypotheses:*** We hypothesized that severity would moderate racial differences in reporting, such that Black victims would be less likely to report less severe victimization but more likely to report more severe victimization. We expected that these differences would be less pronounced for bias-motivated crime, regardless of other markers of severity. ***Method:*** We used data from the 2003–2016 National Crime Victimization Survey, including information on 21,510 victimization incidents, 1,105 of which were hate crimes. We conducted logistic regression analyses in which reporting was regressed on victim race, offense severity, hate crime status, and control variables. We also examined interactive effects to disentangle whether severity moderated racial differences in notification. ***Results:*** We observed a three-way interaction of Black victims, offense severity, and hate crime status. Specifically, for nonbias incidents, Black victims were more likely than White victims to report severe incidents, but there was no racial difference in reporting nonsevere incidents. Additionally, for nonsevere incidents, Black victims were more likely than White victims to report hate crimes, but there was no racial difference in reporting nonhate crimes. ***Conclusions:*** Offense severity plays an important role in the victim decision-making process. These patterns are different, however, by race and for hate crime victims, suggesting that people perceive hate crimes as important to report, regardless of their severity.

Public Significance Statement
This study links victims' decisions to notify the police to the broader context of race relations in the United States, finding that racial differences in reporting behavior vary according to differences in offense severity. The patterns we observed suggest the importance of encouraging the reporting of less severe victimization, while also indicating the need to engage with concerns regarding police legitimacy and the potential for poor treatment by police.

Keywords: race, offense severity, police notification, bias, hate crime

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Many instances of criminal victimization are not reported to the police (Langton et al., 2012); hate crimes, which are criminal incidents in which victims are targeted because of their group membership, are reported even less frequently to the police than other crimes (Lantz et al., 2019; Levin, 1999; Sandholtz et al., 2013). Researchers have long attempted to understand the situational and contextual correlates of these reporting decisions, and although research on racial differences in hate crime reporting has been limited (e.g., Myers & Lantz, 2020; Powers et al., 2020; Zaykowski, 2010), research on police notification more generally has noted that victim race may play an important role in such behavior. A body of research has suggested, in particular, that the willingness of Black victims to invoke formal social control—in the form of police notification—may be impacted by perceptions of police legitimacy and potential concerns about police bias (Baumer, 2002; Desmond et al., 2016). Considered as a whole, however, the empirical research has largely been inconclusive (e.g., Felson et al., 2002; Rennison, 2007).

Research on the role of offense severity, however, has been considerably more conclusive, noting that offense seriousness—in the form of injury, weapon use, and related characteristics—is one of the strongest predictors of police notification. Yet research examining race and reporting behavior typically examines the influences of race and offense severity independently. In other words, most prior research has attempted to account for the role of offense severity using various control measures, an approach that does not account for the potential for severity to have a *differential* impact across groups. If, however, concerns about police legitimacy and marginalization by the police significantly impact reporting decisions for Black victims, it follows that these factors likely have their greatest impact on reporting for less severe victimization while having a lesser impact for more severe victimization.

There is also significant reason to suspect that hate crime reporting behavior might vary jointly by both race and offense severity. Prior research suggests two competing patterns here. On the one hand, there is considerable research suggesting that Black individuals, in contrast to White individuals in particular, are exposed to racially discriminatory harassment, abuse, and aggression on a near-daily basis. This disproportionate exposure to both noncriminal and criminal discrimination may lead Black victims of less severe hate crimes to perceive their victimization as somehow typical, or as an extension of what they face in their daily experiences (Blee, 2007; Perry, 2002). Thus, Black victims may be less likely than other victims to report less severe victimization to the police but equally likely—or more likely—to report more severe victimization. On the other hand, a number of researchers have emphasized that hate crimes may inherently be perceived as more severe than similar nonbias crimes (Iganski, 2001; Perry & Alvi, 2012), especially for Black victims, in comparison to White victims, given the historical context of race relations in the United States (Alexander, 2012; Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Feagin, 2014). Following this, it is also possible that the animus behind bias-motivated crime may itself lead racial minorities to perceive hate crimes as serious enough to report to the police regardless of other markers of offense severity.

Research suggests that race and offense severity should be considered jointly to better understand differences in reporting bias and nonbias crimes to the police. We focus specifically on Black–White differences given the unique historical and contemporary nature of relations between law enforcement and members of the Black community—in terms of racism, discrimination, and police brutality—as well as their position as the most common targets for hate crime victimization in America (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019). More specifically, the current research explores two interrelated questions. First, does offense severity moderate racial differences in reporting likelihood? Second, to what extent do these patterns differ for bias crimes in comparison to nonbias crimes? In other words, does bias motivation further moderate the influence of severity on racial differences in reporting likelihood?

Reporting Victimization to the Police

A victim's decision to notify the police represents a critical first step in the criminal justice system (Hindelang & Gottfredson, 1976). Put simply, if victims do not report an incident to the police, it is unlikely that the offender will be caught or that the victims will receive help. It is also unlikely that the incident will be counted in official statistics (Rennison et al., 2011; Ruback et al., 2018). Victims of hate crimes, moreover, are particularly unlikely to notify the police of their victimization (Harlow, 2005; Lantz & Wenger, 2021). It is, moreover, particularly important to understand this underreporting of hate crimes given evidence that they might be particularly injurious (Messner et al., 2004), especially when they involve groups of offenders or weapon use (Lantz & Kim, 2019; Malcom & Lantz, 2021). Hate crimes also inflict greater psychological distress than other crimes (Herek et al., 1997; McDevitt et al., 2001) and impact the community more generally by conveying animosity toward marginalized group members (Iganski, 2001). But when hate crimes are not reported to the police, community resources cannot be properly directed to address these issues. Following this, it is crucial that we understand variation in when victims choose to report an incident to the police and when they choose not to notify the police.

In this regard, there is a significant theoretical reason to expect racial differences in reporting to the police for both bias and nonbias crime. Research has suggested, in particular, that Black victims may be reluctant to report victimization to the police because of a more general reluctance to interact with law enforcement, which they may perceive as illegitimate, prejudiced, biased, or unfair (Bell, 2002; Desmond et al., 2016). In general, research has indicated that concerns about police brutality and potential mistreatment may lead members of the Black community to believe they cannot turn to law enforcement for assistance (Brunson, 2007; Slocum & Wiley, 2018). Tyler (2005), for example, found that minority survey respondents generally indicated lower levels of trust in the police than White respondents, and that this trust was directly related to an indicated willingness to cooperate with the police (see also Carr et al., 2007; Marshall & Webb, 1995; Terrill et al., 2003).

There is also a reason to expect racial differences in victims' reactions to hate crimes (Craig, 1999), although research on this topic has been considerably more limited. Concerns about police legitimacy, however, may be particularly salient for minority hate crime victims, given that their victimization experience is, in many cases, motivated by bias against their minority status (Perry, 2002). Indeed, many hate crime victims report that concerns about police reactions play a significant role in the decision to notify the police (Barnes & Ephross, 1994; Craig & Waldo, 1996; Lantz et al., 2019). In one of the few direct examinations of racial differences in

reporting hate crime victimization, Zaykowski (2010) found that racial minority victims of hate crimes were less likely to report the crime than other victims. More recent research by Powers et al. (2020), however, found that White victims were actually less likely than others to report hate crime victimization.

When taken together, despite strong theoretical expectations, findings regarding the role of victim race in police notification, for both bias and nonbias crime, have been largely inconclusive. Although a number of studies have found that Black victims are more likely than other victims to report victimization to the police (Bachman & Coker, 1995; Block, 1974; Carbone-Lopez, 2005; Felson et al., 2002; Hart & Rennison, 2003), other research has found Black victims to be less likely than others to report (Powers et al., 2020; Sigler & Johnson, 2002; Xie et al., 2006). Still other research has found no difference in reporting behavior between Black and White victims (Posick, 2014; Schnelby, 2008; Skogan, 1976). The current research posits that one potential explanation for these mixed findings is that there are racial differences in victim decision-making processes, which vary according to the seriousness of victimization.

Considering the Role of Offense Severity

Although research on racial differences in reporting has been mixed, research on offense severity has consistently noted that severity is positively associated with the likelihood of reporting victimization to the police (e.g., Avakame et al., 1999; Bachman & Coker, 1995; Skogan, 1976). The consistency of these relationships led Skogan (1984) to conclude that the primary reason "for nonreporting is that the crime is not serious enough" (p. 129). Research has also indicated that offense severity may play an important role in police notification following hate crime victimization. Christmann and Wong (2010), for example, found that victims were less likely to report to the police when the incident was less serious, primarily because they believed they would not be taken seriously by the police (see also Williams & Tregidga, 2013). Chakraborti et al. (2014) also interviewed a number of hate crime victims who indicated that they would not report their victimization to the police because of a perception that police would not take it seriously or do anything to resolve the incident (see also Cuerden & Blakemore, 2020; Lantz et al., 2019).

Importantly, however, these differences in severity may also be linked to race. Powers et al. (2020) noted that observed racial differences in reporting may be attributable in part to methodological differences in the measurement of reporting behavior. More specifically, they noted that those studies find a higher likelihood of reporting among Black victims tend to examine actual reporting *behavior,* whereas those studies that find a higher likelihood of reporting among White victims tend to examine reporting *intentions*. In other words, survey research that examines intentions to report generally finds that racial minorities indicate less intent to report (e.g., Mbuba, 2010; Sigler & Johnson, 2002). These patterns are especially important to consider given that prior research on attitudes and behaviors has consistently noted that intentions do not perfectly predict behavior (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). Following this, the current research posits that offense severity may be an important moderator of this attitude–behavior correlation for both bias and nonbias crimes, in that negative attitudes may be more likely to result in the decision to not report a crime to the police when the crime is less severe; other concerns, including the need to get help, however, may override any reluctance to interact with the police when the crime is more severe.

As detailed above, the most frequently cited reasons for expecting racial differences in reporting are strained relations between police and Black communities and concerns about negative police interactions. These mechanisms may be especially important to consider in the context of offense severity; however, put simply, such concerns are likely much more salient when a victimization is less severe. On an average, Black individuals may be especially inclined to view police encounters within a negative framework (Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Slocum & Wiley, 2018), and negative experiences with the police are associated with decreased reporting likelihood (Xie et al., 2006).

Despite these negative expectations, however, some research has found that Black victims are sometimes more likely than others to report victimization to the police (Avakame et al., 1999; Baumer & Lauritsen, 2010; Felson et al., 2002), a pattern that Zaykowski et al. (2019) rightfully label a paradox of crime reporting. Xie and Lauritsen (2012), for example, found that Black victims of Black offenders were more likely to report victimization than victims in any other racial dyad, a finding that they suggested might be attributable to Black victims' greater need for police services. In other words, Black victims may, on an average, have less access to mechanisms of informal social control that can be utilized as an alternative to calling the police. Black victims also disproportionately reside in neighborhoods with fewer resources and less social cohesion (Peterson & Krivo, 2010; Sampson et al., 1997), which may necessitate reliance on formal social control mechanisms like the police, even if that reliance is begrudging (Baumer, 2002; Black, 1976). Within this context, Xie and Lauritsen (2012) argued that an important next step for future research is the consideration of situations in which the needs of Black victims otherwise outweigh their reluctance to interact with the police.

We posit, therefore, that one factor predicting differences in willingness to report victimization to the police may be the severity of the offense: When an incident is less severe, other concerns—including concerns regarding potential mistreatment by police—may be more salient. When an incident is more severe, however, these concerns may be overridden by the need for police assistance. Such a pattern among Black respondents, for example, would be consistent with expectations outlined by Anderson (1999), who argued that disadvantaged Black individuals distrust the police and would be likely to call them only in a dire emergency or in the most severe cases. Most importantly, if offense severity has a differential impact, by victim race, on the likelihood of reporting victimization and this effect is not disentangled, it may partially explain previous mixed findings and null relationships. Yet, the moderating impact of offense severity on racial differences in reporting has not been explicitly considered in prior research.

Hate Crimes, Race, and Offense Severity

Extending these patterns one step further, severity likely plays an important role in hate crime reporting as well, albeit in different ways (Lyons, 2008; Wong & Christmann, 2008). A distinctive characteristic of bias crimes is the motivation behind them, and whether a crime is perceived as bias-motivated is often open to individual interpretation (Craig & Waldo, 1996; Lyons, 2008;

Nolan et al., 2004; Wickes et al., 2016). In other words, many victims do not automatically label discriminatory victimization as hate motivated, but rather assign meaning through processes of interpretation that are contextually situated. Within this context, prior research suggests two possible competing hypotheses regarding the role that severity might play in impacting victim reactions to hate crimes by race.

Regular experiences with low-level discrimination, even when this discrimination is not technically criminal in nature, might desensitize Black individuals to experiences with less severe bias-motivated criminal victimization. Blee (2007) noted, for example, that although African American day laborers freely acknowledged consistent experiences with racially motivated discrimination, abuse, and violence, they were generally reluctant to interpret such incidents as hate violence. Instead, they largely interpreted such incidents as "normal vicissitudes of daily life" (Blee, 2007, p. 265). Put simply, hate crimes are related to and embedded within broader societal power dynamics. Perry (2002) argued that hate crimes against racial minorities are best viewed as normative manifestations of societal dominance, rather than as an aberration (see also Perry & Alvi, 2012). This general culture of oppression and discrimination may desensitize Black victims to less severe forms of hate victimization and contribute to a general unwillingness to report such instances to the police (see also Moran, 2001). Although these instances have significant negative consequences, they may become normalized, potentially leading minority victims of less severe hate crimes to not recognize those incidents as hate crimes in the first place or to view them as unexceptional (see also Browne et al., 2011; Craig, 1999). Following this, one potential hypothesis is that Black victims of hate crimes may be particularly unlikely to report less severe hate crimes to the police.

Other research suggests that bias or animus may itself act as an indicator of severity that warrants calling the police in most situations. Prior studies have consistently found, for example, that hate crimes have a greater psychological and emotional impact on victims than other crimes (Herek et al., 1997). This likely varies by race as well; however, Racism and racist hate crimes directed toward Black victims have a long history in the United States, but the same is not true for White victims (Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Desmond et al., 2016). Bowling (1998) noted that, because racist violence exists on a continuum of severity, such incidents are not discrete events but are representative of a series of interconnected racist incidents—some more or less severe than others—that have a significant cumulative impact on the victim. Similar research has posited that racial minorities who experience chronic discrimination may actually become hypervigilant and more sensitive to potential instances of discrimination (Major & Vick, 2005). In such cases, Black individuals may be more inclined to perceive acts of discrimination as severe (Hanasono et al., 2014; Marcus-Newall et al., 2002).

Taken together, this body of research suggests that when a Black American experiences a hate crime victimization, the instance may be likely to incite strong feelings of anger, fear, and pain that are inextricably linked to a social history of discrimination in the United States. Moreover, even when these hate crimes are not themselves motivated by race, the decision to notify police is still likely considered within this collective experience. And, although White victims likely experience significant individual consequences (e.g., psychological distress), these consequences are not situated within the same larger historical and social context. Thus, these findings suggest an alternative hypothesis wherein Black victims of hate crimes may experience their victimization more acutely than White victims of similar crimes (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003), leading them to be more likely to report hate crime victimization regardless of offense severity.

The Present Study

Taken together, prior research on the relationship between race and police notification following both bias and nonbias victimization has been largely inconclusive. The present study posits that offense severity likely conditions this relationship between race and reporting behavior. More specifically, the present research begins by examining the direct impact of victim race, offense severity, and whether an incident was a hate crime on the likelihood of police notification. Next, we examine differences in the relationship between race and reporting according to the severity of an offense. Finally, we examine whether the relationship among race, severity, and reporting varies significantly according to whether the incident was a hate crime. In doing so, we examine two competing hypotheses: whether Black victims of hate crimes are (a) particularly unlikely to report less severe, relative to more severe, hate crimes or (b) more inclined than other victims to report all forms of hate crime, regardless of severity. We conclude by conducting various supplementary analyses, including the examination of these same patterns among Hispanic victims of bias and nonbias crime.

Method

Data

To examine differences in reporting, we used data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS; U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019) for 2003 through 2016. The NCVS is a primary source of information on victimization in the United States, and the data include information on both those crimes that are reported to the police and those that are not (Lynch & Addington, 2006). The NCVS survey methodology has been detailed in depth elsewhere, but the survey employs a stratified, multistage cluster survey design to identify a nationally representative probability sample of U.S. residents aged 12 years and older. The final sample contains 21,510 victimization incidents, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and threat incidents. A total of 1,105 of these incidents were identified as hate crimes. We elected to focus specifically on violent offenses because it reduces issues with missing offender information and because our focus is on how offense severity impacts the decision to notify the police of a crime; to that end, we use common indicators of offense severity—weapon and injury, as outlined by prior research (e.g., Felson & Lantz, 2016; Xie & Lauritsen, 2012)—that are markedly less clear for property victimization. It is also important to note that the value of stolen goods, which might function as an indicator of offense severity for property victimization, is less clearly related to the relationships outlined here, given additional complexities associated with the necessity to report victimization to file an insurance claim.

Next, rather than excluding cases with missing data, we used multiple imputation procedures in Stata (Version 15.0) to impute missing values for all analytical variables (Royston, 2005). The imputation procedure uses predictions based on random draws from the posterior distributions of parameters observed in the sample to iteratively replace missing values (Allison, 2001; Royston, 2005). Our results are averaged across 10 imputed data sets according to Rubin (1987) rules. The percentage of missing information due to nonresponse was largest for offender age (12% missing). Overall, 27% of cases had missing values on at least one variable.

Measures

The primary dependent measure was a dichotomous indicator of whether a criminal victimization was reported to the police. Altogether, roughly 48% of victimizations were reported to the police. Reporting rates were slightly lower for hate crime victimizations, such that roughly 46% of hate crimes were reported to the police compared to 49% of nonhate crimes. The current research focuses on three primary independent measures. First, victim race/ethnicity was coded into four mutually exclusive dummy measures indicating whether the victim was non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, or another race (non-Hispanic White victims are the reference category in all models). (Although we recognize that the term "Hispanic" is not universally preferred, we use it because it is the term employed by the NCVS.) Second, we followed prior research by Felson and Lantz (2016) and created an indicator of crime seriousness, or severity, in which an incident was coded as severe if it involved either the use of a weapon or victim injury (1 = yes). For example, an incident involving assault, no weapon, and no resulting victim injury would be defined as not severe, whereas an incident involving assault and either a weapon or victim injury would be defined as more severe, even if both indicators are not present. This convention follows prior research, which has consistently found that such indicators are related to seriousness (e.g., Felson et al., 2002; Lizotte, 1985; Xie & Lauritsen, 2012), and is a replication of the construct as used in previous work (Felson & Lantz, 2016). Finally, we included a dichotomous measure indicating whether the incident was motivated by bias or was a hate crime (1 = yes). More specifically, in the NCVS, respondents who indicate that they experienced victimization are asked the following question:

> Hate crimes or crimes of prejudice or bigotry occur when an offender/offenders target(s) people because of one or more of their characteristics or beliefs. Do you have any reason to suspect the incident just described was a hate crime or crime of prejudice or bigotry?

Incidents in which a respondent answered "yes" to this question were coded as 1 for the hate crime variable.

We also included a number of additional covariates, including victim sex, age, education, marital status, employment, and homeownership status. Additionally, we controlled for several offender characteristics, including offender sex, age, race, and relationship to victim and whether the incident involved more than one offender (1 = yes). Because prior research has indicated that hate crimes involve high rates of co-offending (Lantz & Kim, 2019), we elected not to exclude such cases from the analyses. Thus, offender sex was coded as male if the victimization involved a single male offender or if all offenders were male (1 = yes). Offender age was coded into dummy measures indicating whether the solo offender or youngest offender involved in the incident was a juvenile (i.e., 17 or younger) or a young adult (i.e., 18–29; adults 30 and over are the reference). Offender race was coded as White if all or most offenders were White (non-White is the reference). And the victim–offender relationship is coded into three dummy measures: intimate partner, acquaintance, and stranger. The intimate partner indicator was coded 1 if any of the offenders was an intimate partner or ex-intimate partner of the victim. The acquaintance indicator was coded as 1 if any of the offenders were known to the victim but none were intimate or ex-intimate partners. The stranger indicator was coded as 1 if none of the offenders were known to the victim in any way (stranger is included as the reference category). Finally, we controlled for several offense characteristics, including whether the incident occurred in a private location (1 = yes), whether the incident was a part of a series crime (1 = yes), and offense type. Offense type was coded into four dummy measures: sexual assault (including rape), robbery, assault (both simple and aggravated), and threats (the reference category). All analyses were conducted at the incident level. Descriptive statistics for all variables are in Table 1, both for the full sample and, separately, for hate crimes and nonhate crimes.

Analytic Strategy

The NCVS was collected via a stratified, multistage cluster sampling design, and therefore standard errors produced from traditional regression approaches that assume independence of observations would be biased. To account for this complex survey design, we used weights provided by the NCVS and Stata's *mi svyset* suite to calculate appropriate standard errors for analyses. Selection and nonresponse bias have the potential to bias estimates from the NCVS as well, and the NCVS provides weights to account for these possibilities. There is disagreement, however, about whether such weights are appropriate for multivariate regression; we follow the advice of Lohr and Liu (1994) and present results without these incident weights. We note, however, that all analyses using the weights were consistent with those presented here.

To assess the joint relationship among victim race, offense severity, bias motivation, and police notification, the current research presents a series of three logistic regression models. In the first model, we estimate the overall influence of victim race, offense severity, and hate crime motivation on police notification. In the second model, we introduce an interaction term between offense severity and whether the victim was Black. Finally, in the third model, we estimate the joint relationship among victim race, offense severity, and hate crime by including a three-way interaction term for these measures.

As scholars have noted, interpreting interaction effects using only an interaction coefficient and associated significance level can be problematic when estimating models with a binary outcome (Allison, 1999; Long & Mustillo, 2021). Therefore, for our two-way interaction, we followed Mize (2019) and calculated predicted probabilities of reporting to the police for White victims of nonsevere offenses, Black victims of nonsevere offenses, White victims of severe offenses, and Black victims of severe offenses. We then used Wald tests to calculate the magnitude and significance of the marginal effects of victim race at each level of severity; these tests of the marginal effects are also referred to as *first difference tests*.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Full Sample and by Hate Crime Status

Variable	Full sample (N = 21,510)		Non-hate crimes (N = 20,405)		Hate crimes (N = 1,105)		Missing data (%)
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	
Reported to police	.49		.49		.46		1.7
Victim characteristics							
Black	.13		.13		.11		0.0
Other race[a]	.07		.06		.10		0.0
Hispanic	.14		.14		.18		0.0
Male	.51		.50		.53		0.0
Age	34.51	0.143	34.41	0.144	36.37	0.583	0.0
Education	12.78	0.028	12.77	0.028	12.91	0.118	0.8
Married	.27		.27		.29		0.4
Homeowner	.49		.49		.46		0.0
Employed	.57		.57		.54		0.0
Offender characteristics							
Multiple offenders	.18		.18		.33		3.0
Male	.77		.77		.72		5.5
Juvenile	.22		.22		.24		11.8
Young adult	.36		.36		.34		11.8
White	.60		.61		.48		6.5
Intimate partner	.14		.14		.03		7.8
Acquaintance	.54		.54		.57		7.8
Offense characteristics							
Private	.21		.22		.09		5.5
Series	.04		.04		.04		0.0
Sexual assault	.04		.04		.03		0.0
Robbery	.11		.11		.10		0.0
Assault	.56		.56		.56		0.0
Hate crime	.05						0.0
Severity	.59		.60		.54		5.0

Note. Standard errors omitted for binary variables.
[a] "Other race" includes all victims who did not identify as non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, or Hispanic.

Finally, we used an additional Wald test to calculate the difference between the marginal effect of victim race among nonsevere victimizations and the marginal effect of victim race among severe victimizations to determine whether these "first differences" were significantly different from one another; this test for equality is also referred to as a *second difference test* and is viewed as a better test for an interaction effect in models with a binary outcome. For our three-way interaction, we followed similar procedures, but separately for nonhate crimes and for hate crimes. These tests resulted in two second difference values, which we then used to conduct a final Wald test for the equivalence of these second differences; this last test is also referred to as a *third difference test*. In our description of the results, we use these first, second, and third differences to more fully convey the meaning of each interaction (Mize, 2019).

Finally, although we present results using the full sample of hate crimes, we acknowledge that victims are not the only party capable of reporting a victimization to the police; roughly 14% of victimizations in our sample were reported by someone other than the victim or a member of the victim's household. Therefore, we replicated all of our models omitting victimizations in which the incident was reported by other parties; results were consistent with those presented here. Additionally, approximately 43% of hate crimes with White victims and 39% of hate crimes with Black victims were motivated by a bias other than race or ethnicity. Therefore, although we did not necessarily expect our hypotheses to be limited to only these hate crimes, we conducted sensitivity analyses with the 39% of bias-motivated victimizations (2% of the total sample) not motivated by race or ethnicity omitted. Results of this analysis were consistent with our primary analyses as well. Results of both sensitivity analyses can be found in the Supplementary Material available online (Tables S1 and S2). All study procedures were conducted in compliance with Florida State University's institutional review board.

Results

Results of logistic regression models predicting reporting to the police are presented in Table 2. As shown by Model 1, Black victims were significantly more likely than White victims to report a victimization. Specifically, Black victims had roughly 29% greater odds of reporting to the police than White victims. Additionally, and perhaps unsurprisingly, severe victimizations were significantly more likely than nonsevere ones to be reported to the police, with severe victimizations having nearly 70% greater odds of being reported to the police than nonsevere victimizations. Finally, hate crimes were significantly less likely to be reported to the police than crimes not involving bias. The odds ratio for hate crime reveals that hate crimes had roughly 16% lower odds of being reported to the police than nonhate crimes.

Table 2
Logistic Regression Models Predicting Police Notification by Victim Race, Severity, and Hate Crime (N = 21,510)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	OR	*p*	95% CI	*OR*	*p*	95% CI	*OR*	*p*	95% CI
Victim characteristics									
Black	1.290	<.001	[1.155, 1.440]	1.012	.890	[0.852, 1.203]	0.960	.655	[0.802, 1.149]
Other race[a]	0.880	.080	[0.762, 1.016]	0.882	.085	[0.764, 1.017]	0.882	.085	[0.764, 1.018]
Hispanic	1.032	.516	[0.938, 1.136]	1.036	.474	[0.941, 1.140]	1.035	.483	[0.940, 1.139]
Male	0.795	<.001	[0.740, 0.854]	0.793	<.001	[0.738, 0.852]	0.794	<.001	[0.739, 0.853]
Age	1.011	<.001	[1.009, 1.014]	1.011	<.001	[1.009, 1.014]	1.011	<.001	[1.009, 1.014]
Education	0.991	.196	[0.977, 1.005]	0.991	.191	[0.977, 1.005]	0.991	.181	[0.977, 1.004]
Married	1.297	<.001	[1.195, 1.407]	1.293	<.001	[1.192, 1.404]	1.294	<.001	[1.193, 1.405]
Homeowner	0.983	.624	[0.917, 1.054]	0.982	.607	[0.916, 1.053]	0.982	.616	[0.916, 1.053]
Employed	1.135	.001	[1.053, 1.224]	1.136	.001	[1.054, 1.226]	1.137	.001	[1.054, 1.226]
Offender characteristics									
Male	1.065	.130	[0.982, 1.156]	1.063	.146	[0.979, 1.153]	1.062	.149	[0.979, 1.153]
Juvenile	0.600	<.001	[0.536, 0.672]	.602	<.001	[0.538, 0.674]	0.602	<.001	[0.538, 0.673]
Young adult	1.037	.405	[0.952, 1.129]	1.037	.396	[0.953, 1.130]	1.037	.397	[0.953, 1.130]
White	0.991	.806	[0.920, 1.067]	.992	.829	[0.921, 1.068]	0.986	.717	[0.916, 1.062]
Intimate partner	1.085	.222	[0.952, 1.238]	1.088	.209	[0.954, 1.241]	1.090	.201	[0.955, 1.243]
Acquaintance	0.987	.742	[0.910, 1.069]	.987	.747	[0.911, 1.069]	0.986	.739	[0.910, 1.069]
Multiple offenders	1.856	<.001	[1.692, 2.037]	1.852	<.001	[1.688, 2.032]	1.853	<.001	[1.689, 2.034]
Offense characteristics									
Private	1.459	<.001	[1.323, 1.608]	1.461	<.001	[1.325, 1.610]	1.461	<.001	[1.326, 1.611]
Series	0.900	.209	[0.764, 1.061]	0.901	.213	[0.765, 1.062]	0.902	.219	[0.766, 1.063]
Sexual assault	0.483	<.001	[0.399, 0.585]	0.484	<.001	[0.399, 0.586]	0.483	<.001	[0.399, 0.586]
Robbery	1.409	<.001	[1.228, 1.616]	1.405	<.001	[1.225, 1.611]	1.402	<.001	[1.222, 1.608]
Assault	1.165	.006	[1.045, 1.299]	1.166	.005	[1.047, 1.300]	1.165	.006	[1.045, 1.299]
Hate crime	0.845	.017	[0.736, 0.970]	0.847	.019	[0.737, 0.973]	0.749	.009	[0.602, 0.932]
Severity	1.699	<.001	[1.541, 1.873]	1.624	<.001	[1.470, 1.795]	1.612	<.001	[1.457, 1.782]
Interactions									
Black victim × Severity				1.452	<.001	[1.186, 1.777]	1.530	<.001	[1.242, 1.886]
Black victim × Hate crime							2.364	.009	[1.241, 4.504]
Hate crime × Severity							1.164	.321	[0.862, 1.571]
Black victim × Severity × Hate crime							0.399	.045	[0.162, 0.982]
Intercept	0.419	<.001	[.335, .525]	0.431	<.001	[.344, .539]	0.437	<.001	[.349, .546]

[a] "Other race" includes all victims who did not identify as non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, or Hispanic.

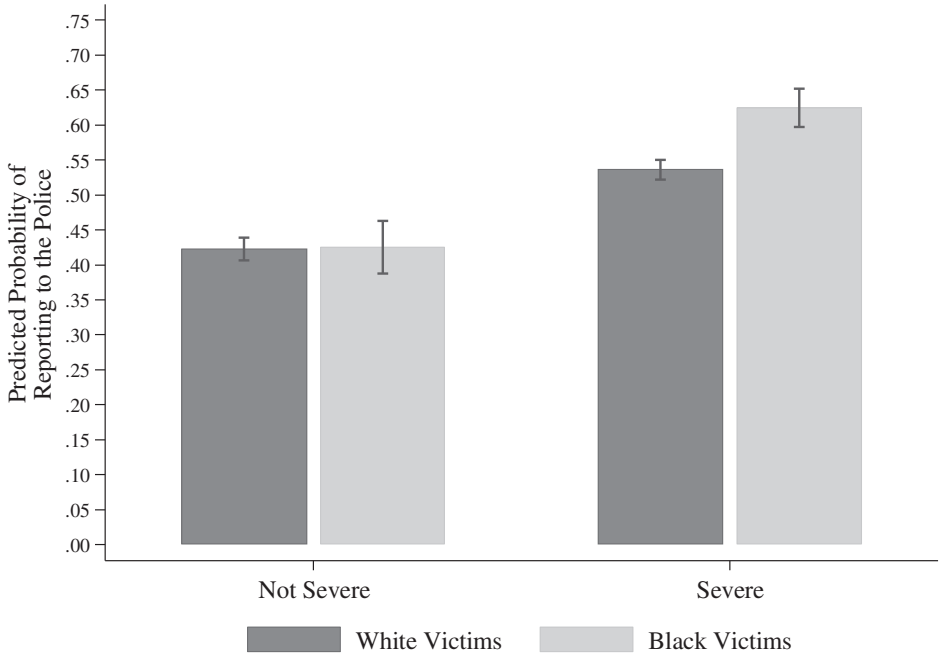
Two-Way Interaction of Offense Severity and Victim Race

To examine whether offense severity moderates the relationship between victim race and police notification, we turn to Model 2 in Table 2. The two-way interaction between victim race and offense severity is positive and significant, suggesting that the relationship between the race of the victim and reporting to the police varies significantly by severity. As mentioned earlier, however, relying on the significance test of an interaction term to interpret an interaction is inadvisable in models with binary outcomes. Figure 1, therefore, presents predicted probabilities of reporting to the police depending on victim race (White vs. Black) and offense severity (not severe vs. severe). Additionally, we tested for first differences between White and Black victims at each level of severity and then for the second difference between the racial disparity among nonsevere incidents and the racial disparity among severe incidents. The results of these first and second difference tests for the two-way interaction are shown in Table 3. As seen in Figure 1, although Black victims were more likely than White victims to report to the police on average (see Model 1), this trend appeared to be primarily driven by severe victimizations. The predicted probability of reporting a nonsevere victimization to the police was .42 for White victims and .43 for Black victims. As shown in Table 3, the first difference test revealed that this marginal effect of victim race for nonsevere victimizations was not significant ($p = .890$). However, the predicted probability of reporting a *severe* victimization to the police was .54 for White victims and .62 for Black victims. The first difference test shown in Table 3 reveals that this marginal effect of victim race for severe victimizations was statistically significant ($p < .001$). In other words, Black victims were significantly more likely than White victims to report a victimization when that victimization was severe, but not when it was not severe. The second difference test revealed that the difference in racial disparity between nonsevere and severe victimizations was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Three-Way Interaction of Offense Severity, Victim Race, and Bias Motivation

To examine whether bias motivation further moderated the interaction between victim race and offense severity, we turned to Model 3 in Table 2. Model 3 revealed a significant and negative three-way interaction among victim race, offense severity, and hate crime. As with the prior two-way interaction, we calculated predicted probabilities of victim reporting to the police with varying values for the three interaction variables. Additionally, we tested for the significance of first, second, and third differences. Results of these tests are all shown in Table 4. The third difference (i.e., the

Figure 1
Predicted Probability of Police Notification by Victim Race and Severity



Note. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals around predicted probability estimates. Confidence intervals that do not overlap between predicted probability estimates indicate that estimates are significantly different from one another. Additionally, although other racial/ethnic groups are accounted for in models, the interaction is restructured to Black versus White comparisons and as such, predicted probabilities are restricted to just White and Black victimizations.

difference in the effect of hate crime on the effect of severity on the effect of victim race on the predicted probability of reporting to the police) was statistically significant, suggesting that there was a significant three-way interaction of victim race, offense severity, and hate crime. In the remainder of this section, we discuss results of the first and second difference calculations to facilitate interpretation of this complicated interaction. Only differences that were significant based on these post hoc tests are described as such. Although there is a lot of information in Figure 2, we highlight three primary results. First, the predicted probabilities of reporting nonhate crimes reveal an important comparison. As shown in Table 4, the first difference test of the marginal effect of victim race among severe nonhate crimes reveals that victimizations involving Black victims were significantly more likely to be reported to the police than victimizations involving White victims ($p < .001$). However, the comparable test among less severe nonhate crimes again reveals no racial difference in reporting ($p = .654$). The second difference between these first differences was significant ($p < .001$), suggesting that severity moderates the relationship between victim race and reporting for nonbias crimes such that, although no racial difference exists in the predicted probability of reporting a *nonsevere* nonhate crime to the police, Black victims are significantly more likely than White victims to report a *severe* nonhate crime. Furthermore, as shown in Table 4, first difference tests of the marginal effect of severity among both Black and White victims of nonhate crimes revealed that the probability of reporting to the police significantly increased when the offense was more severe ($ps < .001$).

A second important pattern revealed in Figure 2 is that for hate crimes involving White victims, the influence of offense severity on reporting is similar to that for nonhate crimes; in other words, as

Table 3
First and Second Difference Test Results for Interaction Between Offense Severity and Victim Race

	Victim race				First difference			Second difference		
	White		Black		(White–Black)					
Severity	Pr	*SE*	Pr	*SE*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*
Not severe	.422	.008	.425	.019	−.003	.019	.890	.085	13.181	<.001
Severe	.536	.007	.624	.014	−.088	34.351	<.001			

Note. Pr = predicted probability; Diff. = difference.

Table 4
First, Second, and Third Difference Test Results for Interaction Between of Offense Severity, Victim Race, and Hate Crime

		Victim race				First difference								
		White		Black		(White–Black)			Second difference			Third difference		
Hate crime status	Severity	Pr	*SE*	Pr	*SE*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*
Non-hate crimes	Not severe	.426	.008	.417	.020	.009	.201	.654	.097	16.144	<.001			
	Severe	.538	.007	.626	.014	−.088	33.224	<.001						
												.211	3.961	.047
Hate crimes	Not severe	.361	.024	.550	.069	−.190	6.730	.010	−.114	1.219	.270			
	Severe	.506	.024	.582	.069	−.076	1.081	.299						

		Victim race				First difference								
		White		Black		(White–Black)			Second difference			Third difference		
Severity	Hate crime status	Pr	*SE*	Pr	*SE*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*
Not severe	Non-hate crime	.426	.008	.417	.020	.009	.201	.654	.199	6.841	.009			
	Hate crime	.361	.024	.550	.069	−.190	6.730	.010						
												.211	3.961	.047
Severe	Non-hate crime	.538	.007	.626	.014	−.088	33.224	<.001	−.012	.026	.871			
	Hate crime	.506	.024	.582	.069	−.076	1.081	.299						

		Severity				First difference								
		Not severe		Severe		(Not severe–Severe)			Second difference			Third difference		
Victim race	Hate crime status	Pr	*SE*	Pr	*SE*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*	Diff.	Wald	*p*
White	Non-hate crime	.426	.008	.538	.007	−.112	87.346	<.001	.033	.896	.344			
	Hate crime	.361	.024	.506	.024	−.145	75.526	<.001						
												.211	3.961	.047
Black	Non-hate crime	.417	.020	.626	.014	−.209	16.861	<.001	−.178	3.149	.076			
	Hate crime	.550	.069	.582	.069	−.031	.101	.751						

Note. Pr = predicted probability; Diff. = difference.

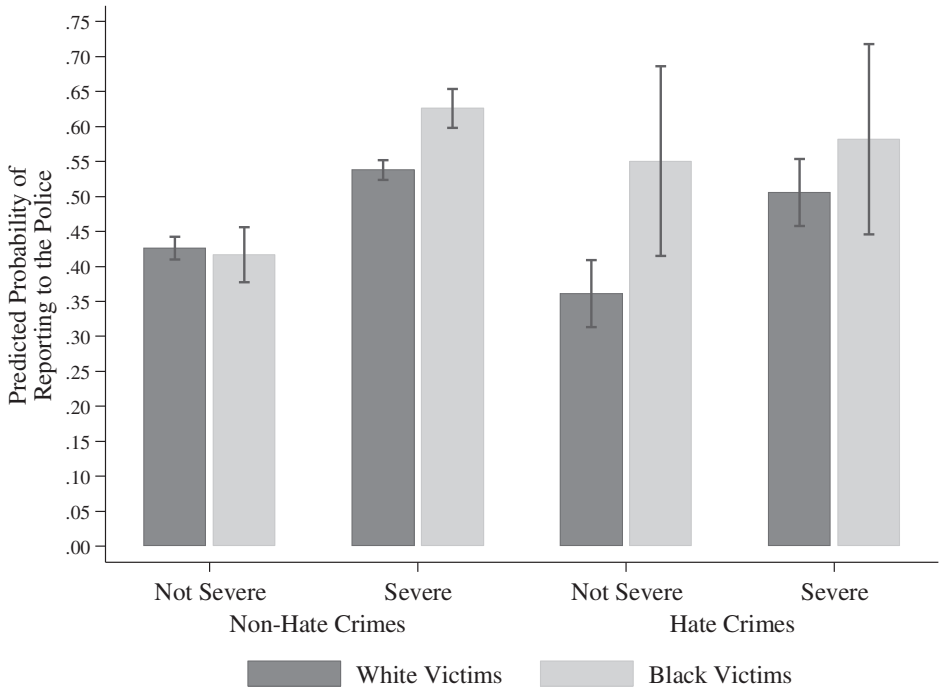
shown in Table 4, the first difference test of the marginal effect of offense severity among White victims of hate crimes reveals that the probability of reporting these hate crimes was significantly greater when the victimization was severe ($p < .001$). Importantly, however, the third important finding from Figure 2 is that the first difference test of the marginal effect of severity among Black victims of hate crimes revealed that severity did not influence the probability of reporting these hate crime victimizations to the police ($p = .751$). In other words, hate crimes against Black victims were just as likely to be reported to the police when they were not severe as when they were severe. Additionally, the predicted probability of reporting to the police was statistically equivalent for Black victims of nonsevere hate crimes, severe nonhate crimes, and severe hate crimes, suggesting that hate crime motivation may itself be an indicator of severity for Black victims.

Secondary Analyses

Though we believe that these results, when taken together, make a compelling case, prior research has suggested that clear evidence of offender bias, like verbal slurs against the victim, may play an important role in hate crime identification (Lyons, 2008). Thus, it is possible that differential evidence for bias motivation—the primary factor that individuals must consider when identifying a hate crime—by race might account for these observed patterns. To account for this possibility, we examined differences in evidence for bias motivation by race. Since 2010, the NCVS has allowed respondents to choose from a list of possible pieces of information used to identify bias motivation, and respondents can select as many as they want. The possible indicators of bias motivation included whether (a) the offender said something or left anything behind that indicated the victim was targeted because of characteristics or religious beliefs; (b) the offender used slang, hurtful, or abusive language; (c) any hate symbols (e.g., a swastika) were present; (d) the offender had previously committed hate crimes; (e) the incident occurred at a place, or on a date, associated with a specific group; and (f) other hate crimes had occurred in similar paces or targeted the victim previously. Therefore, we relied on the 788 hate crime incidents reported in the NCVS since 2010 and used these evidence indicators to create a variety score indicator of the total number of pieces of evidence selected as well as a dummy variable indicating whether any evidence was identified. We then employed ordinary least squares and logistic regression analyses including the same control measures used in the above analyses to test for racial differences in whether or not the survey respondent indicated additional evidence for a hate crime. Interestingly, we found no significant differences in evidence by victim race whether comparing the individual evidence types, the variety score, or the dummy measure. In other words, we think it unlikely that racial variation in evidence for bias motivation explains our findings. In additional analyses, we tested for interaction effects between offense severity and whether the victim was Hispanic and between hate crime and

Figure 2

Predicted Probability of Police Notification by Victim Race, Offense Severity, and Hate Crime



Note. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals around predicted probability estimates. Confidence intervals that do not overlap between predicted probability estimates indicate that estimates are significantly different from one another. Additionally, although other racial/ethnic groups are accounted for in models, the interaction is restructured to Black versus White comparisons and as such, predicted probabilities are restricted to just White and Black victimizations.

whether the victim was Hispanic to examine whether there was similar variation in victim reporting by victim ethnicity, but neither of these interactions was significant.

Discussion and Conclusion

A considerable amount of scholarship has examined the correlates of reporting both bias and nonbias victimization to the police. One of the most consistent findings emerging from this research is the important role of offense seriousness in the decision to notify the police (Xie & Baumer, 2019); research on the impact of victim race on these decisions, however, has been less decisive. Following this, the current research posited that offense severity may play an important role in conditioning racial differences in reporting behavior given that (a) seriousness is one of the strongest predictors of reporting behavior and (b) concerns about negative police interactions are likely more salient—and thus a better predictor of actual behavior—when incidents are less serious. Importantly, our research did not produce any evidence that Black victims are less likely to report crime than White victims; our findings do, however, provide evidence for greater variability in reporting decisions among Black victims. On the basis of these analyses, we draw three primary conclusions.

First, our results indicate that offense severity plays an important role in conditioning differences in reporting nonbias victimization and may, in part, help explain one of the most significant paradoxes of crime reporting patterns among Black victims (Zaykowski et al., 2019). More specifically, although Black victims are significantly more likely than White victims to report severe violent victimization, they are no more likely than White victims to notify the police of less severe incidents. Put simply, there are important differences within racial groups, and after accounting for variation according to the severity of the offense, these unexpected patterns are no longer observed. Although we were unable to directly assess the mechanisms underlying these patterns with the NCVS data used in the present study, these results may indicate that reluctance to report to the police—among both Black and White victims—plays a stronger role in predicting actual reporting behavior when incidents are less severe. In other words, whereas prior research has frequently observed increased reporting among Black victims and noted that this pattern is often contrary to theoretical expectations (Zaykowski et al., 2019)—and we find similar patterns when examining more severe victimization—our results indicate that Black victims are *not* more likely than White victims to report victimization when the incident is less severe.

Although we cannot necessarily test the mechanism behind these patterns, and we note that we also see decreased reporting among non-Black victims (i.e., the effect is not necessarily race-specific), this may mean that reluctance to engage with the police plays a stronger role in structuring reporting behavior after less serious

victimization. When incidents are more severe, however, Black victims are significantly more likely than White victims to notify the police of victimization. Although we emphasize that we cannot say as much with certainty, these patterns could be indicative of a greater need for service and help (e.g., Baumer, 2002; Xie & Lauritsen, 2012), which may serve to override or supersede concerns regarding negative interactions with the police. More specifically, Black individuals are more likely than White individuals to live in disadvantaged urban communities (Peterson & Krivo, 2010); disadvantaged communities have lower access to informal social control mechanisms (Sampson et al., 1997); and victim reporting to the police may be higher in places with lower informal social control (Baumer, 2002; Black, 1976). These explanations, however, require further testing, and future research should explore these mechanisms more directly.

Second, our results indicate that offense severity plays an important role in conditioning racial differences in reporting bias victimization as well. Among White victims, we found similar results as for nonbias crimes, in that White hate crime victims were significantly less likely to notify police of a victimization incident when the incident was less severe. Furthermore, our results indicate that when the incident was less severe, White victims were significantly less likely to report bias-motivated crime to police than non-bias-motivated crime. Although we could not examine perceptions directly with the data at hand, it is possible that such reactions are reflective of disproportionate identification of crimes as hate motivated among White victims, compared to Black victims (see Lantz et al., 2019; Perry, 2001). Specifically, given that Black individuals, compared to White individuals, are subject to more consistent instances of harassment and everyday discrimination (Bowman, 1993; Ray et al., 2003; Wang, 2002), it is possible that Black victims may have a higher threshold for defining an incident as hate motivated (see Blee, 2007) or that White victims may be more apt to identify a crime as bias motivated. Future research should consider the role that differential perceptions of hate crimes by race might play in structuring decisions to report victimization to the police.

Finally, we found that offense severity did not significantly impact Black victims' reporting of hate crime victimization, suggesting some support for the hypothesis that hate crime victimization experiences may be interpreted as more serious and felt more acutely than other crimes, regardless of the presence of other markers of severity. Perry (2005) argued that bias-motivated violence was reflective of "culturally normative values of domination and subordination. It is one of the many mechanisms in an arsenal of oppressive practices" (p. 125). Whereas some research has suggested that this broader context may desensitize Black victims to less severe hate crime victimization, other research has suggested that this context may in fact make the offense more acute for Black victims (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). Our results suggest support for this second explanation, indicating that experiences with this larger oppressive context may be enough to warrant the reporting of hate crimes to the police, regardless of the presence of other markers of offense severity. In other words, everyday experiences with both subtle and overt bias might serve to make individual reactions to hate crime victimization even more acute. It is possible that bias-driven victimization may be perceived as serious or egregious enough to override concerns about engaging with the police, regardless of whether the victimization would be considered severe by other standards.

Limitations

The present study is, of course, not without limitations. First, we could not explicitly measure the mechanisms underlying the patterns that we observed here, and further work is necessary to directly assess them. Future research might, for example, consider using experimental vignettes or a similar approach to assess variation in the salience of concerns about interacting with the police according to the severity of an offense. Second, the data used here were based on victims' survey reports, which are susceptible to error. Although it is important to acknowledge this limitation, it is also important to note that the NCVS design includes numerous mechanisms to assist with victim recall, including limiting recall periods to 6 months to minimize response errors and clearly bound incidents.

Third, we found interesting racial differences in the importance of offense severity for the reporting of hate crime victimization. When considering these findings, it is important to note that that the identification of hate crimes within the NCVS data are based—at least in part—on victim *perceptions*. Nearly 57% of the White hate crime victims in the data indicated that they believed the hate crime was motivated by race or ethnicity, and some research has suggested that White victims may be more likely than other victims to indicate that their victimization in interracial contexts was motivated by bias, regardless of the actual motivation behind the offense (Powers et al., 2020; Wiedlitzka et al., 2018). Within this context, we cannot rule out the possibility that there may be fundamental racial differences in victims' willingness to define an incident as hate motivated, and we encourage researchers to consider these patterns in the future.

Finally, although these results suggest important within- and between-group racial differences in the relationship between severity and crime reporting that we believe are at least partly related to both historical and contemporaneous experiences with discrimination, we recognize that such experiences are not exclusive to the Black population. In other words, although the Black experience in America is unique in that it is characterized both by discrimination and racism and by particularly poor relationships with law enforcement, other populations—including Native Americans, Asian Americans, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) community, among others—may also make reporting decisions that are impacted by concerns regarding bias and discrimination. Unfortunately, however, we were unable to examine this variation directly because the data contained too few incidents of each bias type to allow for reliable estimates with hate crime type further disaggregated in the analyses; future research should explore these possibilities in greater depth. Members of the LGBTQ+ population, for example, face both increased brutality and severity of violence (Dunbar, 2006; Malcom & Lantz, 2021) and unique challenges when deciding whether or not to notify the police of victimization, including concerns about homophobia among police officers and the risk of "outing" (e.g., Dunbar, 2006; Lantz, 2020). These patterns may also be reasonably expected to interact with offense severity, such that LGBTQ+ victims may be reluctant to report less severe hate crime victimization. These possibilities warrant further exploration in future research.

Research and Policy Implications

These results suggest several additional directions for future research. Nearly two decades ago, Bell (2002) noted that police

actions have exacerbated poor relations between the police and Black citizens, given that Black communities are racially profiled and disproportionately subjected to excessive force, police brutality, and general neglect. These patterns have not changed significantly since that time, either. Recently, mass protests in response to the police killing of George Floyd in Minnesota and to police treatment of Black people more generally have taken place across the United States. We think it important to situate our findings concerning reporting of nonbias violence within this context. Our results suggest that whereas Black victims are more likely than White victims to report serious victimization, they are similarly likely to report victimization when the incident is less severe, a pattern that could be due in part to hesitancy to engage with the police for these less severe crimes. Although we cannot examine these processes directly with the data at hand, future research should continue to explore these patterns in greater depth.

From a policy perspective, these results suggest that social programs and policies that are intended to facilitate or improve the reporting of less serious crime may be promising avenues for increasing victim reporting. One such avenue for increasing reporting, if the results we observed were indeed attributable to a reluctance to interact with police when a crime is less serious, is the implementation of third-party reporting centers (TPRCs). These centers are places, unaffiliated with the police, where community members can go to report victimization (Myers & Lantz, 2020). TPRCs provide advice to victims, direct them toward various services, assist in reporting to the police, and provide general support to victims; when reporting to a TPRC, victims may choose to remain anonymous and do not need to have direct contact with the police. Prior research has shown that, when properly implemented, such reporting centers can provide an important service for victims (Wong et al., 2020). Given the reluctance among all victims to report less severe victimization, even when that victimization involves some form of violence, these centers could provide a much-needed reporting option for those who wish to seek help or resolve their victimization but would prefer not to interact with police.

More broadly, Chakraborti (2015) recently called for researchers to rethink how they frame the boundaries of hate crime, and these results suggest that it may be important to further explore racial differences in how victims frame and interpret such crimes. As Chakraborti (2015) argued, as long as such issues remain peripheral and underexplored, "we risk marginalizing the experiences of many victims, and thereby reducing the 'real-life' impact of hate crime policy" (p. 1740). If hate crime policies are to effectively protect all victims of such crimes, it is especially important for policy makers and law enforcement officers to recognize and address less severe forms of victimization. This increased attention to such instances may then translate to greater societal attention. These results indicate racial differences in the reporting of severe and nonsevere hate crime, suggesting the potential for differences in the framing and interpretation of hate crime victimization; future research should explore this possibility.

These results suggest other promising avenues for future research as well. Recent research has indicated that hate crimes cluster in certain communities (Wenger & Lantz, 2021), and Wickes et al. (2017) recently found evidence that perceptions of hate crime victimization varied significantly by community context, such that hate crimes were less likely to be identified in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of community members who spoke languages other than English. The researchers suggested that, in such neighborhoods, residents may interpret incidents as intergroup violence rather than hate-motivated violence. They further noted the possibility that residents of such neighborhoods may develop a relative tolerance for bias and bias crime given normative experiences with racism. Applied to the current research, these results suggest that it may be important to consider whether differential perceptions of hate crime by community impact differences in the reporting of potential hate crimes to the police, and whether these relationships vary by race.

These findings might also suggest some implicit support for research on the greater harms associated with hate crime victimization. In the current research, we examined differences in reporting according to *physical* severity and found no significant differences in reporting likelihood among Black victims. We posited that these differential effects might be grounded in part in the unique context of historical and contemporary racial oppression within which Black individuals have been victimized; one additional potential explanation for these patterns is that there are increased *psychological* harms associated with hate crime victimization that we are unable to account for here but that are present regardless of physical severity. Although this explanation would be consistent with past research (e.g., Fetzer & Pezzella, 2019; Herek et al., 2002; McDevitt et al., 2001), it is important to note that we did not observe similar patterns for White victims, suggesting that there may be differential psychological impacts by race. Future research should continue to explore these possibilities in greater depth as well.

Conclusion

In the end, these findings indicate that offense severity plays an important role in the decision-making process following victimization among victims of both bias and nonbias crimes. As Desmond et al. (2016) noted, "it is one thing to disparage law enforcement in your thoughts and speech . . . It is quite another to witness a crime, or even to be victimized, and refuse to report it" (p. 870). Our analyses suggest that attitudes toward police and reporting behavior may align most closely when the offense is less severe but that the impetus to notify the police may outweigh negative attitudes toward law enforcement once the incident reaches a certain level of severity. These patterns are different, however, for Black hate crime victims. We posit that the broader context of Black hate crime victimization—which is often an extension of normative discrimination and oppression—likely plays an important role in this finding, by leading to increased vigilance and acute consequences (e.g., increased anger, fear). Future research should continue to explore how broader societal experiences might structure responses to victimization, both bias and nonbias, and subsequent decisions to formally invoke the criminal justice system.

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