The White Man Marches On: Examining the Effects of State-Level Indicators on White Supremacist Groups, 1997-2006

Thesis

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Previous studies of the white supremacist movement have focused mainly on qualitative research that examines symbolism, ideology, and individual agency. Few studies have analyzed the movement quantitatively or assessed the effect of social arrangements on this activism. I propose that when disruptive structural changes occur, they will be considered threatening to working-class whites, the demographic group that comprises the membership of most white supremacist groups. Thus, I predict that when threatened, particularly in economic and political arenas, white supremacist groups are more likely to become active to address those threats. In order to test these hypotheses, this study uses zero-inflated Poisson regression to analyze how white supremacist groups respond to structural threats. I measure the number of hate groups defined by activity in each state and regress this measure on variables that capture demographic, political, and economic threats.
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, as a response to grievances over immigration, increasing minority rights, feminism, and tolerance for non-Christian religions, many white supremacist groups have become active social movement organizations that aim to rectify the “problems” of an integrated society. Past sociological studies of white supremacist groups have relied heavily on qualitative interviews with white supremacists, case studies, and content analyses of white supremacist websites and literature (Blee 1996, Blazak 2001, Burris, Smith, and Strahm 2000, Adams and Roscigno 2005, Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997). These studies have focused on individual ideologies, group associations, and motivations for joining organized racist groups. Although this type of research has provided useful information in understanding extreme cases of racism and how it develops into social movement organizations, most of these studies only examine white supremacy at the individual or small group-level. Little research has provided macro studies of white supremacist activity that examines whether particular social conditions or political factors affect the number of active white supremacist groups. The information based on previous qualitative studies shows a pattern of mobilization against perceived status threats, such as immigration and civil rights. Yet, the extent to which these threats actually serve as a mobilizing factor is unclear.

In Van Dyke and Soule’s (2002) study of patriot and militia groups, they assert that understanding reactive activism requires the use of macro-level strain theory. The
authors note that other classical social movement theories such as resource mobilization
and political opportunities are deficient because they focus on the effects after a
movement gains resources and political opportunities. Neither really addresses movement
activism when resources or opportunities have been taken away or lost. Patriot and militia
groups, much like white supremacists tend to be a reactive movement responding to
threats involving decreases in status and power. Prior studies of the white supremacist
movement reveal that many of these groups respond to threat from losses (Blazak 2001;
Southern Poverty Law Center 1999; McVeigh 1999; Blee 1996). White supremacists fear
they are losing the current status they enjoy as the majority race. In order to reverse these
losses, white supremacist groups become active to gain back their prior levels of power
and status.

The few quantitative studies on white supremacist groups that do exist analyze
county-level data or a small region of a few states, focus on groups that do not qualify as
white supremacists, and do not address the combination of multiple threats (Van Dyke
and Soule 2002; Beck 2000; McVeigh 1999). My study aims to fill these gaps in the
literature by providing evidence of macro structural effects on activism. To accomplish
this task, I use data from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that measures the
number of active white supremacist groups annually by state. The SPLC considers a
group to be “active” if they engage in any of the following: marches, rallies, speeches,
meetings, leafletting, publishing literature, or criminal acts. The information the SPLC
gathers about active white supremacist groups is based on hate group publications, citizen
reports, law enforcement agencies, field sources, and news reports (SPLC 1998). The
number of annual active white supremacist groups is the dependent variable in the study.
To assess the affect of structural and historical considerations on the number of white supremacist groups, I use several independent variables measuring different types of threat. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no comprehensive study of white supremacist groups that considers the combination of multiple threats at the national level.

My statistical analysis will advance the study of the white supremacist movement in two ways. First, it will show that social arrangements matter. Because most of the current studies of white supremacists are qualitative, they only allude to macro factors that affect the number of active white supremacists groups. A test of the explanatory power of these factors may reveal which ones contribute to white supremacist activity, and whether there is a significant link between the number of active white supremacist groups and structural changes. Second, by taking on Blumer’s (1958) theory that the development of racial prejudice is a collective process shaped by historical events and current social arrangements, I will show that there are significant links between past events and their present day effects on the number of active white supremacist groups.
THEORY

There are strong reasons to suspect that historical racism and the fear of victimization by non-white criminals are significant factors determining white supremacist activity. Blumer’s (1958) discussion of racial prejudice asserts that group position is a key component in understanding inter-group hostility between different racial and ethnic groups. He asserts that members of the dominant group tend to view themselves as superior to other racial groups. They are not concerned with subordinate groups per se; rather they are concerned with their position relative to the subordinate group. This concern is driven by fears that the subordinate group will threaten their status. When a subordinate group does pose a threat to the dominant group, this model tends to result in some form of retaliation by the dominant group in order to maintain their status.

Blumer (1958) further argues the group position developed by prejudice is not merely a collection of beliefs from many individuals who make up the dominant group. It is an historical and social process that evolves over long periods. This process is shaped by exchanges between groups that reinforce or challenge where a particular group fits into the social hierarchy. (Blumer and Duster 1980; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Real or perceived challenges to a dominant group’s position relative to a subordinate group result in threats, and influence how the dominant group reacts. Blumer’s group position model,
suggests there is perceived competition between groups, resulting in a zero-sum contest for valuable resources (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Jacobs and Wood 1999). Reactions can range from extremes, such as the lynchings, to more minor alternatives, such as a white person blaming affirmative action for not being admitted to a particular university. These implications of racism and racial threat result in real consequences when examining inter-group relations.

Group position is particularly significant to the white supremacist movement, because they view society in racialized terms. White supremacists believe whites should occupy a dominant position in society, because they are culturally, biologically, and intellectually superior to non-white groups. These beliefs lead them to engage in overt actions to maintain their position. Since the end of the Civil War, white supremacists believe their rightful position is threatened by minorities who have obtained undeserved rights and power. They understand these threats as part of a larger historical process in which gains made by minorities came at the expense of whites. To support these claims they use examples such as: affirmative action, welfare, Civil Rights, desegregation, cultural acceptance of intermarriage, and changes in immigration laws (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Berbier 2000). In order to reassert their dominance, white supremacists engage in a number of activities to empower their members. These activities range in severity from violence such as bombings, murders, and beatings, to distributing literature and maintaining websites (Adams and Roscigno, 2005; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997, Intelligence Report, 2008; Perry 2000).

The Connection between Racial Threat and White Supremacist Activity
By examining Blumer (1958), Bobo and Hutchings (1996), and other studies on lynchings, I expect it is likely that lynching histories are a factor in whether a state contains active white supremacist groups. Blumer argues that the development of racial prejudice and a group’s sense of their position is a historical process. If a state has a history of lynching, it should continue to have important effects on the relationship between blacks and whites. Jacobs, Carmichael, and Kent (2005) argue that the historical force of such lengthy causal chains based on tradition and power have precedents in sociological research. Durkheim (1895) noted that “social facts” or practices and beliefs, “continue to exist merely through force of habit.” Additionally, the “force of habit” has also led to a system in which power holders are socialized to have the same values as their predecessors. Because whites have habitually held power in the Unites States, dominance continues to be passed on to succeeding generations of whites (Stinchcombe 1968). Institutional controls such as slavery, Jim Crow, ghettos, and prisons, have supported whites in power by replicating the dominant-subordinate relationship between whites and blacks through American history (Wacquant, 2001).

Lynchings were a particularly violent form of control over those blacks who challenged their subordinate status in the social order (Tolnay and Beck 1996; Ayers 1984; Beck and Tolnay 1990). Lynchings essentially served as a violent method to constantly remind black ex-slaves that in the racial caste system of the South, they belonged on the bottom (Jacobs, Carmichael, and Kent 2005; Ayers 1984; Tolnay et. al 1996). Tolnay and Beck (1996) also view lynchings as a form of terrorism tolerated by the state as a response to economic and social threats that free blacks presented to whites in the South. In order to deter blacks from rebelling against social and economic orders,
white southerners carried out public torture lynchings often under the pretense that their black victims had committed crimes such as rape or murder (Stovel 2001). They clarified this violent message by sometimes pinning notes to the bodies of lynch victims warning blacks they would receive the same fate if they overstepped the bounds set by whites (Tolnay et. al 1996). Following the end of the Civil Rights era and the dismantling of Jim Crow, repression through vigilante violence was no longer acceptable. Whites then engaged in prejudicial actions to maintain boundaries between themselves and blacks by abandoning public schools, protesting against blacks who moved into white neighborhoods, supporting legal policies that impeded racial mixing, and heavily policing black neighborhoods (Jacobs et. al 2005; Wacquant 2001; Chambliss 1994).

A fundamental assumption of my research is that although lynchings are no longer a tolerated form of social control among the general public, their legacy continues to have an effect. This effect is especially prominent among white supremacist groups. Currently, most whites avoid meaningful contacts with the African American population through their choices regarding housing, schooling, and people with whom they socialize. Some groups of whites, however, believe that merely avoiding blacks is not enough. They carry a strong hatred towards blacks that has persisted through generations. Historically, lynchings reflected this deep-seated hatred towards blacks, and served as an extreme method to control threats posed by members of this race. It is likely that where lynchings occurred, residual antipathy for blacks remains.

We know that white supremacist groups display an extreme aversion to blacks and other minorities by making them scapegoats, protesting and using anti-black
propaganda, identifying “race traitors,” and engaging in anti-black violence (Bertlet and Vysotsky, 2006; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997; Adams and Roscigno, 2005; Sharpe, 2001). White supremacists provide an outlet for racists because they regularly express the same fervent abhorrence and impassioned desire to control the black population that was seen during periods when lynching was accepted. Their displays demonstrate the resilience of extreme hatred through time. Because of the association between racial animosity and lynchings, I expect states that have a history of lynching are more likely to produce larger numbers of white supremacist groups.

Racial Threat and Crime

Multiple studies (Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchiro 1982; Quillian and Pager 2002) have found that as the number of blacks in an area increase so does fear of crime among whites. Miller (1994) observed that in our culture, crime tends to be considered a black phenomenon. The concept of the black male as the “symbolic assailant” (Skolnick 1966) has evolved into a stock character. This perception has been intensified with help from crime programming on television and the news, which has emphasized a powerful association between “blackness and crime” (Beckett and Sasson, 2001). Furthermore, black suspects on the news are more likely than white criminals to be depicted in police custody, associated with drug use, and connected with violent crimes rather than property crimes (Entman, 1992; Entman 1994; Beckett and Sasson, 2001). These considerations lead to a system in which crime and race are intertwined creating a fear among whites.

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1 In the white supremacist movement, a race traitor is any person who is white but does not support the white supremacist movement. Examples of race traitors would be women who enter into sexual and romantic relationships with Jews and non-whites, homosexuals, and whites who advocate for the rights of racial and ethnic minorities. Because these actions subvert the goals of the movement, particularly the propagation of the white race and the protection and preservation of white rights and culture, the people who engage in them are considered to be enemies of the movement, and in some cases are viewed as more harmful than Jews and racial and ethnic minorities.
that they are at risk of being victimized by a racial minority (Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico 1982). Although there is evidence that shows blacks and whites are far more likely to engage in intra-racial violence, fear of being victimized by a minority nevertheless persists among whites (Jacobs and Wood, 1999). Thus, higher levels of social control are employed where there are larger minority populations to keep the threat they pose in check. Social control may come about through formal legal methods such as policing (Chambliss 1994) or incarceration (Wacquant, 2001). Extra-legal methods may also be employed such as vigilantism and other kinds of intimidation (Quillian and Pager, 2001).

White supremacist groups are especially taken with the idea that non-whites are predisposed to crime and must be controlled. For instance, if we examine several of cartoons that appeared in *White Aryan Resistance* (WAR), we can see these beliefs clearly demonstrated. The man in Figure 1 displays caricatured facial features and the diagram of his brain shows that nearly half of it is taken up by criminal behavior, while another fourth is occupied by cravings for “drugs, alcohol, pussy, gold chains, and drum beats” (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997). In this crude rendering, it is clear that white supremacists view criminality as mentally hard-wired into blacks.
Another WAR cartoon depicts the disproportionate number of black inmates in prisons. Figure 2 references this large black population, which suggests that blacks are more likely to engage in criminal activity. It ignores that there are other factors that can account for this disproportion such as poverty and institutionalized racism. The cartoon also takes the problem of black criminals a step further. Aside from drawing on fears that this large minority population poses a criminal threat, the cartoon attempts to provoke anger over the taxes paid by whites that provide food and shelter for these criminals.
Additionally, white supremacists are firm believers that whites are often victims of interracial crimes and work to bring national attention to such crimes. One prominent example of their efforts occurred in 2007, when several white supremacist groups rallied around the rape and murder of a young, white Tennessee couple. The crimes were perpetrated by five black men, which the groups characterized as a “hate crime” against whites and blamed the Jewish media for downplaying coverage of the murders (Sanchez, 2007). Other research supports the white supremacist view about the close association between minorities and crime (Blazak, 2001; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997). Through these examples, it is clear, that the connections American society has drawn between race and crime have influenced white supremacist beliefs regarding criminality. It is therefore probable, that states with higher murder rates are more likely to have larger numbers of active white supremacist groups.

**Political Ideology**

Although most white supremacist groups do not align themselves with a particular political party, they take political stances that overlap with the Christian Right and conservative Republicans. Bertlet and Vysotsky (2006) characterized political white supremacist groups as being inspired by neo-fascist ideology. Adherence to this ideology often involves appeals to traditional values. Many white supremacist groups emphasize traditional gender and familial roles by taking stances against abortion and gay marriage and encouraging women to stay at home to raise children (Sharpe 2000; Blee 1996). They see the preservation of these roles and values as a way to stand against a changing troubled society that they have come to understand in racialized terms (Blee, 1996). Their
racialized view of the world and acceptance of traditional values are part of an impending “holy war” between the faithful and their “unholy enemies” (Bertlet and Vysotysky). Conservative Republicans, especially those among the Christian Right, also have similar views about traditional gender roles and family structures. These overlaps in values and beliefs suggest that states where conservative values are predominant are more likely to have higher numbers of active white supremacist groups.

**Unions as a Political Factor**

Another factor examined in this study is the effect of unions on white supremacist groups. Unions often provide working-class citizens with a platform for political expression. Historically, unions have rallied around various issues, which have given their members a means to assert their beliefs. Since the early 1950s, unions have decreased in strength and size, which has limited their political influence (Fiorito, Jarley, and Delaney 1995; Voss and Sherman 2000). The absence of unions in a state eliminates one of the few opportunities that blue-collar workers would normally use to advance their political views. White supremacist groups have historically been politically active and support some of the same issues that a union might. For example white supremacists have often supported measures to protect American jobs from outsourcing and stifle immigration. They also fight against policies that might give minorities economic advantages (McVeigh 1999; Blazak 2001; Dobratz Shanks-Meile 1997). Because white supremacist groups appeal to similar economic issues and their membership is primarily made up of a blue-collar workers, these groups can thus offer an alternative in areas where unions are weak or do not exist. *I therefore expect that states with weakened unions are more likely to have active white supremacist groups.*
Employment in Manufacturing and Other Economic Considerations

While many researchers have identified circumstances in which the membership of white supremacist group crosses class lines, the movement is predominantly composed of working or lower middle-class whites (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997). Rubin (1994) found that affirmative action, intermarriage, immigration, and the “contracting economy” were worrisome to these groups, because they “threaten the mobility aspirations of working-class families.” She also argues that the joint effects of these factors have left white workers with feelings that they are missing out as minorities gain more economic opportunities and political power (Rubin 1994). Additionally, Wellman’s (1993) review of the literature examining the association between class and race demonstrates that working-class whites are more inclined to have racist attitudes. Studies show that middle-class whites with some economic security were likely to be shielded from policies that advanced the status of African Americans while working-class whites often bore the brunt of such changes. Wellman (1993) points out that the working-class was more quickly affected by integration because it led to interracial job competition since blacks were more likely to be qualified for working-class occupations. I therefore predict that states with higher numbers of manufacturing jobs (indicating blue-collar workers) are also more likely to have higher numbers of active white supremacist groups.

Economic threats have also been a traditional mobilization tool used by white supremacists, especially when they are coupled with racial threats from a subordinate group. Olzak (1986) argues that ethnic competition occurs when two or more ethnic groups try to acquire the same valued resources, which often leads to ethnic collective action. As non-white minorities enter the country as immigrants or move out of niche
markets that had been traditionally dominated by one ethnic group, competition, tension, and the perception of the subordinate group as a threat occurs (Olzak 1986, Kinder and Sears 1981, Jacobs and Wood 1999, Beck 2000). Additionally, if the number of the jobs remains relatively stable, the gains of one racial or ethnic group in the job market diminishes the economic opportunities of another group. This creates a zero-sum relationship between different racial or ethnic groups (Jacobs and Wood 1999). Such tensions form a threat to white dominance, which white supremacists to mobilize.

An example of this type of collective action occurred during the resurgence of the Klan in the 1920s. The Klan responded to structural and social changes within American society by viewing them as threats to white economic status. The influx of immigrants as a cheap labor supply created an ethnically based economic threat that challenged the power of white males (McVeigh 1999). Blazak’s (2001) study of skinheads found these groups would often recruit in the midst of an economic crisis and would blame a minority group for hardships. For instance, a massive layoff at a company would be attributed to Jewish greed, because the Jews outsourced jobs for higher profits. Because white supremacist groups attribute economic hardships to minority threats and can mobilize supporters around this issue, I predict that states with higher unemployment rates are more likely to have active white supremacist groups.
METHODS

Despite several strong qualitative studies on white supremacist groups (Blee 1996; Blazak 2001; Ezekiel 2000; Adams and Roscigno 2005), researchers still encounter significant problems when studying these movements quantitatively. It is nearly impossible to gauge the number of members within any given group or their levels of participation. Because many white supremacist groups operate underground or engage in unsavory activities, membership within a group is often secret. Estimates of the number of members within the movement could be off by tens of thousands (Perry 2000). Additionally, even if membership levels could be ascertained, they still would not tell us much about the member participation levels.

Due to the difficulties associated with studying membership levels, this paper uses data from the Southern Poverty Law Center’s (SPLC) Intelligence Report, which measures the number of active hate groups annually. Compared to other watchdog agencies, the SPLC has done the most thorough job tracking groups for the longest period of time and their data have been successfully utilized by other social scientists (McVeigh 2005; McVeigh 2006; Van Dyke and Soule 2002; Beck 2000). Using information from hate group publications, citizen’s reports, law enforcement agencies, news reports and field sources, the SPLC compile an annual list of active hate groups that are broken down
by specific type and by state. The SPLC defines activity as participation in marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafletting, publishing literature, or criminal acts (SPLC, 1998). For this project, I use data on counts of four white supremacist groups, Neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, Skinheads, and Christian Identity Adherents between 1997 through 2006 for 49 states. Because Nebraska has a nonpartisan legislature, partisanship in this body cannot be measured, so I removed it from the analysis. Measured over a ten year period, this provides 490 state years for analysis. To correct for serial correlation, I clustered on each state’s unique case identification number.

**Estimation**

Publicly active white supremacist groups are uncommon. There were many states in the analysis that did not have any active hate groups while other states had active hate groups in one year but none the next. Using a conventional count model for this data would be inappropriate because there are many zeroes in the dependent variable. Often, a count model will underfit the zeroes. Limiting the model to include only states with active hate groups in the ten year period between 1997 and 2006 would introduce selection bias into the analysis. To overcome this difficulty, I employ a zero-inflated Poisson approach that uses two equations. One equation estimates the factors producing zeroes and the other equation models the factors that produce one or more active hate groups (Jacobs, Carmichael, and Kent, 2005). In order to use a zero-inflated Poisson model, it must first satisfy the mixture condition.

Long’s (1997) explanation of the mixture condition uses academic publishing as an example. He states that some academics do not publish because their work does not

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2 At times, the SPLC has been criticized for possible subjectivity in their reporting of hate crimes and racist activities; however, the *Intelligence Report* is the only comprehensive data set of active hate groups in all fifty states (Dobratz and Shanks Meile 1997).
require it, while other academics do not publish because their work is rejected by journals. The academics who never submit to journals and the ones who do submit but were rejected would both be recorded as zeroes. These zeroes represent a mixture of outcomes as to why academics do not publish. In my analyses of the 49 states, I encountered a similar issue. Based on theory and literature reviews, there are certain conditions that should influence the number of white supremacist groups a state contains. Factors such as lynching histories, racial threat, conservative political views, and economic considerations have all shown to have strong associations with the white supremacist movement. In my analysis, certain states have more of these characteristics which should make them more likely to contain active white supremacist groups. Other states, however, should use greater pressure to repress white supremacist activity. These states are unlikely to contain active white supremacist groups, and would therefore be considered not at risk. The zeros in the dependent variable should be a mixture of states not at risk and states that are. This explanation satisfies the mixture condition, which makes zero-inflated Poisson models appropriate to use in my statistical analysis.

**Explanatory Variable Measurement**

Racial threat and minority presence were measured using demographic variables. Larger minority presence leads to higher instances of racial threat, and thus results in higher numbers of active hate groups. A percentage of the black population for each state was created using Census data. I squared this variable to test for a non-linear relationship. I created a measure for each state’s Hispanic population as well. Lynch rates represent a violent response to suppress minority threat. They were calculated with data collected by the NAACP on the number of lynchings by state that occurred from 1889 to 1931. These
numbers were then divided by the mean state populations in the same time period to determine the rate of lynchings within each state.

To examine the association between blacks and criminal threats, I use murder rates measured with the FBI’s annual Universal Crime Reports (UCR). I use murder rates in the analysis because compared to other crime rates, they have less measurement error. The murder rates are in log form to adjust for skewness. A skewed variable could introduce heteroskedasticity into the model and produce outliers that create considerable leverage.

Because members of white supremacist groups often express conservative values, I predicted that states with a strong Republican presence would be more likely to contain active white supremacists (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997; others). I use the percentage of people who voted Republican in each state during the 1996, 2000, and 2004 presidential elections to measure this effect. The data on voting were obtained from the *Statistical Abstract*. Additionally, I use a variable developed by Berry, Ringquist, Fording and Hanson (1998) that measures citizen political ideology within a state. The authors view political ideology as a point on a liberal-conservative continuum. They employ interest group ratings based on roll call votes in the House to construct an ideology score for each Congressional representative. Then they computed ideology scores for political challengers to the current representative. By combining the scores and weighting them by district election results, they estimate a district’s political ideology. This score was then translated to a statewide ideology score by taking mean scores of the congressional districts; lower scores indicate a more conservative state.

Union strength is another indicator used in the model. This variable was measured
as the state percentage for union membership among non-agricultural workers and was gathered from the *Statistical Abstract*. I suspect there is a non-linear relationship between this variable and the dependent variable, but I did not anticipate for a change in direction in union strength. This variable should be negatively associated with numbers of active white supremacist groups, because a strong union presence provides working-class citizens with a political outlet. It is difficult to understand how increases in union strength would result in more white supremacist groups. I added a cubic specification for percent in unions to capture the non-linear relationship between this variable and the number of active white supremacist groups.

Economic factors may explain the numbers of active white supremacist groups as well. Past research has indicated that white supremacist group membership is comprised of primarily working-class and lower-middle class members (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997), so I use the percentage of manufacturing jobs within the state found in the *Statistical Abstract*. Economic considerations should also have an affect on the number of white supremacist groups. Many of these groups use unemployment, business closings, competition, and job outsourcing as recruitment strategies (Blazak 2001, McVeigh 1999). By attributing these problems with minority gains in the workplace and the greed of presumably Jewish business owners, white supremacists note that there is greater economic competition between whites and minorities for a limited number of jobs. This increased competition may result in white grievances over an economy where the domination that they have traditionally held is diminishing. I use unemployment rates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to examine the effects of economic conditions.

Regional controls were included in the model to demonstrate that variables
affecting the number of active white supremacist groups were not just attributable to geographic areas historically associated with these groups.
ANALYSES

Variable Distribution

Table 1 shows the expected signs, means, and standard deviations overall, over time, and across states. The predicted signs demonstrate my expectations of how these variables will affect the number of active white supremacist groups.

Zero-Inflated Analyses of 49 States

Table 2 presents the results from the four zero-inflated Poisson regression models. The first equation in these models explains the presence of one or more active white supremacist groups in a state while the second equation in the models explains the absence of such groups. Because the second equation predicts the absence of white supremacist groups the signs are reversed. Model 1 is a restricted model that does not use all the regional controls or the non-linear variable transformations. In Model 2, I add additional regional controls. Model 3 introduces a squared term for percent black and in Model 4 I include a cubic specification for percent union membership. The squared and cubic terms for percent black and percent union membership capture the non-linear relationships between these explanatory variables and the dependent variable. The variables in the second equation, which explain the absence of these groups, remain unchanged through all four models.

The results of the first equation in Model 1 indicate that states with lynching
histories are more likely to contain active white supremacist groups. These findings support my expectations based on Blumer’s (1958) work regarding racial prejudice and group position. He argues that because racial prejudice is a collective process that evolves over time, historical factors, such as lynchings, should affect present-day race relations. These results also support my expectations about the association between racial threat and crime. They show that states with higher murder rates are more likely to have active white supremacist groups. Additionally, my predictions regarding the effects of employment in manufacturing and political considerations on these groups are supported. Increased employment in manufacturing jobs and a higher incidence of Republican voting have positive effects on the dependent variable. The results in the second equation in Model 1 further support my predictions regarding the connection between white supremacist groups and political ideology. They show that states with more liberal political ideologies are not as likely to have these groups.

In Model 2, the added regional controls do not change the results from the first equation. Lynch rates, murder rates, percent employed in manufacturing, and Republican voting continue to be positively associated with the dependent variable. These regional controls, however, affect some of the variables in the second equation of Model 2. My results for political ideology remain the same, but percent black now explains the absence of active white supremacist groups. According to these findings, states with liberal political ideologies and smaller black populations are not likely to have any of these groups.

After, I add the squared percent black term to the first equation in Model 3, race predicts the number of white supremacist groups. Adding the squared term captures the
non-linear relationship between percent black and the dependent variable. Percent black has a positive coefficient while the squared term for percent black has a negative coefficient. Figure 3 illustrates this non-linear relationship. This graph demonstrates that as the black population within a state increases so does the number of white supremacist groups. This increase continues until the black population reaches a threshold of about 16.85 percent. After that point, as the black population increases, the number of active white supremacist groups decreases.

As in Models 1 and 2, lynch rates, murder rates, percent employed in manufacturing and Republican voting continue to be positively associated with the dependent variable in the first equation of Model 3. In the second equation in Model 3, the only significant explanatory variable is percent black. This finding indicates that states with smaller black populations are not likely to have white supremacist groups.

In Model 4, I add a cubic specification for percent union membership to the first equation. Figure 4 shows the curvilinear relationship between percent membership in unions and the predicted number of white supremacist groups. When percent in unions reaches 18.9 percent there is a dramatic decline in the dependent variable, which demonstrates that higher rates of union membership result in considerably fewer numbers of white supremacist groups. Lynch rates, murder rates, percent employed in manufacturing, Republican voting, and percent black remain significant in the first equation for Model 4. Like Model 3, the findings in the second equation in Model 4 continue to suggest that states with smaller black populations are not as likely to have these groups.

All four models contain two variables that do not display any significant
association with the number of active white supremacist groups. In the first equation, I use unemployment rates to measure economic threat. In the second equation, I employ percent Hispanic as an indicator for minority threat. I initially suspected that perhaps these variables had non-linear relationships with the dependent variable. In other models (not shown), however, variable transformations had no affect on the significance of either of these independent variables.
CONCLUSIONS

Results

These findings show consistent support for my primary theoretical assumptions. Historical considerations, racial threat, and conservative political ideology should explain white supremacist activity. Such connections informed my predictions and the selection of my explanatory measures. Blumer (1958) argues history plays a significant role in the development of race relations. Dominant-subordinate group relations between blacks and whites are part of an ongoing process, and such relations are reinforced through tradition, habit, and institutions (Jacobs, Carmichael, and Kent 2005; Durkheim 1895; Wacquant 2001). The violent legacy of lynchings is part of this process. In the first equation for all four models, there is a positive significant relationship between lynchings and active white supremacist groups. Areas that experienced higher incidence of lynchings contained more of these groups, which demonstrates that history continues to affect current race relations.

My racial threat hypotheses test the relationship between African-Americans and crime; a common perception among the general public (Beckett and Sasson 2001; Entman 1992; Skolnick 1966). According to the literature, the intersection between race and crime results in greater fear among white populations that they are at risk for being victimized by a minority (Roberts 1993; Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico 1982). Such fears can be fueled by the size of the minority population. As the number of African
Americans in an area increases, so does fear of crime after the crime rates are held constant (Quillian and Pager 2002; Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico 1982). My findings show that both crime and minority presence have substantial effects on the number of white supremacist groups.

The results from the first equation in all models show that murder rates predict the dependent variable. In states where murder rates are high, there is an increased likelihood of white supremacist groups. This finding makes sense, because in their racialized view of the world, white supremacists see a strong relationship between race and crime. Previous studies along with cartoons and literature circulated by these groups demonstrate their belief that African Americans have a higher proclivity towards crime and that the majority of blacks are or will become criminal offenders (Blazak, 2001; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, 1997; Sanchez 2007). According to their logic, an increase in crime rates indicates that African Americans are committing more crimes. Such increases enhance the threat blacks pose, and thus lead to more active white supremacist groups.

My findings indicate that increased minority presence also leads to higher numbers of white supremacist groups. When I account for the non-linear relationship between percent black and active white supremacist groups in the first equation, there is a positive association between these two variables in Models 3 and 4. Percent black is also statistically significant in the second equation, which predicts the absence of these groups. The results of the second equation in Models 2, 3, and 4 show a connection between smaller black populations and zero active white supremacist groups. The results of my statistical analyses imply that racial threat posed by higher crime rates and increased minority presence is a significant determinant of the number of white
I also test the influence of minority threat using percent Hispanic. My results show no significant relationship between percent Hispanic and white supremacist groups. These findings are not entirely surprising. Although, there is evidence in the literature that white supremacists have targeted Hispanics in some of their racist beliefs, they are not the primary focus for their hatred. African Americans have been the subject of intense hatred among these groups for a longer period of time. Furthermore, Jacobs, Carmichael, and Kent (2005) argue that African-Americans have been at the center of “the exceptionally violent and divisive conflicts about race throughout U.S. history.” This history makes the association between racial threat and blacks more pronounced than threats from other minority groups.

My last main theoretical premise focused on political ideology. I expected that states where conservative values prevail would be more likely to contain white supremacist groups. Prior research and theory show many of these groups often share similar views with conservative Republicans and the Christian right. These views emphasize traditional values that include conventional gender and family roles. In the first equation of all of my models, there is a strong relationship between Republican voting and white supremacist groups. This finding is consistent with previous studies on the connection between these groups and partisanship. The results of the second equation are somewhat less clear. In that equation, I use the liberal-conservative index to predict the absence of white supremacist groups. States with more liberal political ideologies were less likely to have active white supremacist groups. The findings for the second equation in Models 1 and 2 support this result. With the addition of a squared percent
black term in the first equation of Model 3, however, the relationship in the second equation between liberal ideology and the absence of these groups disappears.

Union strength is another political factor that accounts for the number white supremacist groups. Unions have been an outlet for political expression for working-class citizens. Where they are weak or non-existent, white supremacist groups may step in to fill the void. Because unions and white supremacist groups share many of the same economic concerns, it is likely that white supremacist groups can offer another political avenue for working-class citizens who do not have access to unions. Adding a cubic specification for union membership in the first equation in Model 4 reveals a significant negative relationship between this variable and the dependent variable. This finding, therefore, supports my suspicions that strong unions stifle white supremacist activity.

My secondary hypotheses examined links between percent employed in manufacturing, economic considerations, and the dependent variable. Because blue-collar workers are a large contingent within the white supremacist movement, I expected that in states where manufacturing jobs are abundant, it is likely there are more white supremacist groups. The results from my analysis support this hypothesis by demonstrating a positive significant relationship between the percentage of manufacturing jobs and these groups. My indicator for economic threat, unemployment rates, was not as successful. I predicted that white supremacist groups would have a more pronounced presence in states with high unemployment rates. This prediction was based on previous research, which indicated that these groups would often recruit members in areas that are depressed or going through some sort of upheaval economically. My findings did not support this prediction. In all four models, unemployment rates had no
significant relationship with the dependent variable.

Wider Implications

I undertook this research to provide a macro quantitative approach to studying white supremacist groups. Although many qualitative studies have provided useful information about the white supremacist movement, there are still critical gaps that needed to be filled. Individual interviews and content analyses of white supremacist literature, cartoons, and websites have suggested relationships between group mobilization and larger structural factors, but until I examined these relationships statistically, their effect on white supremacist groups was largely unknown. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to examine the effect of structural determinants on white supremacist groups at the national level. The results from this study clearly show that social arrangements as well as history have real, measurable effects on white supremacist groups.

One of the most important findings in this study is that history matters. Although the United States has made progress in race-relations, the implications of repression and violence continues to have an affect. Lynchings, one of the most horrific forms of repression, are significantly associated with the number of active present-day white supremacist groups. This connection reveals that the residue of such intense hatred for blacks remains in areas where lynchings occurred. It also supports Blumer’s (1958) argument that racism is a collective process, which is shaped by history and exchanges between groups over time. He (1958) notes, “Race prejudice becomes entrenched and tenacious to the extent the prevailing social order is rooted in the sense of social position…In such a social order race prejudice tends to be chronic and impermeable to
change.” The legacy of lynchings harkens back to a period when extreme forms of domination were acceptable in order to preserve white dominance. Although, lynchings are incredibly rare nowadays, the hatred responsible for them still exists. Where such antipathy remains, white supremacist groups have a more pronounced presence, which demonstrates the impact of historical racism.

It is also interesting that murder rates have a significant affect on the number of white supremacist groups. Although conventional wisdom holds racial and ethnic minorities accountable for violent crime and the victimization of whites, studies have shown that these connections are misleading (Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico 1982). Most violence, particularly murder, is an intra-racial occurrence (Jacobs and Wood 1999). The demographic group most likely to be victimized is young black males, yet the belief that racial and ethnic minorities are likely to attack whites, especially white women, persists (Beckett and Sasson 2000). The perpetuation of such beliefs is largely fueled by the media, which often depicts black criminals as more menacing than white ones and places greater emphasis on crimes perpetrated against white female victims (Entman 1992; Entman 1994; Chiricos, Escholz, Gertz 1997). To white supremacists, increases in crime intensify racial threat, because they attribute such increases to blacks committing more crimes. These findings reveal that there are real consequences associated with the connections society has drawn between race and crime.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL FIGURES
Figure 3. Relationship between the Percentage of Blacks and Predicted Number of White Supremacist Groups. *Note:* Vertical line indicates threshold of 16.85%
Figure 4. Relationship between the Percentage of Non-Agricultural Labor Force in Unions and Predicted Number of White Supremacist Groups. Note: Vertical line indicates threshold of 18.9%
APPENDIX B: TABLES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Predicted Sign</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Overall SD</th>
<th>Over time SD</th>
<th>Cross Sectional SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Active White Supremacist Groups (n)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7.973</td>
<td>7.261</td>
<td>3.128</td>
<td>6.61</td>
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<td>Lynch Rate</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0.0496</td>
<td>0.0721</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murder Rate</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>6.585</td>
<td>3.772</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
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<td>Manufacturing (%)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>17.409</td>
<td>8.042</td>
<td>4.721</td>
<td>6.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Votes for President (%)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>50.82</td>
<td>10.258</td>
<td>8.855</td>
<td>5.229</td>
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<td>Unemployed (%)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>5.774</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.761</td>
<td>1.06</td>
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<td>Population (n)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>5,545,535</td>
<td>6201177</td>
<td>40663540</td>
<td>6244967</td>
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<td>Black (%)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>9.603</td>
<td>9.291</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td>9.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union Membership (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.942</td>
<td>8.042</td>
<td>4.792</td>
<td>6.522</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal-Conservative Index</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47.291</td>
<td>15.759</td>
<td>7.686</td>
<td>13.894</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic (%)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>5.678</td>
<td>7.833</td>
<td>2.324</td>
<td>7.554</td>
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</table>

Table 1. Variable Means and Standard Deviations

*Note:* Data is based on 490 state years; expected signs are opposite in the second equation, which predicts the absence of active white supremacist groups. SD = Standard Deviation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 or More Active Hate Groups</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Lynch Rate</em></td>
<td>1.671** (0.563)</td>
<td>1.624** (0.551)</td>
<td>1.755*** (0.413)</td>
<td>1.977*** (0.433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Murder Rate (logged)</em></td>
<td>0.353** (0.112)</td>
<td>0.318** (0.130)</td>
<td>0.239* (0.131)</td>
<td>0.213* (0.118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Manufacturing</em></td>
<td>0.040*** (0.012)</td>
<td>0.043*** (0.012)</td>
<td>0.042*** (0.01)</td>
<td>0.037*** (0.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Republican Votes for President</em></td>
<td>0.017* (0.008)</td>
<td>0.016* (0.008)</td>
<td>0.017** (0.007)</td>
<td>0.022** (0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Unemployed</em></td>
<td>-0.006 (0.034)</td>
<td>-0.016 (0.034)</td>
<td>0.012 (0.031)</td>
<td>0.020 (0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if time period 2001-2003</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.093)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.095)</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.084)</td>
<td>-0.053 (0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if time period 2004-2006</td>
<td>0.077 (0.149)</td>
<td>0.112 (0.154)</td>
<td>0.073 (0.126)</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Population Statistic (logged)</em></td>
<td>0.673*** (0.054)</td>
<td>0.676*** (0.056)</td>
<td>0.599*** (0.054)</td>
<td>0.584*** (0.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if South</td>
<td>0.147 (0.151)</td>
<td>0.106 (0.148)</td>
<td>-0.052 (0.118)</td>
<td>0.005 (0.103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if Northeast</td>
<td>-0.188 (0.282)</td>
<td>-0.293 (0.283)</td>
<td>-0.128 (0.181)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if Midwest</td>
<td>-0.125 (0.140)</td>
<td>-0.224* (0.110)</td>
<td>-0.251* (0.103)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Black</em></td>
<td>-0.011 (0.008)</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.008)</td>
<td>0.052** (0.017)</td>
<td>0.066*** (0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Black2</em></td>
<td>0.013 (0.012)</td>
<td>0.016 (0.012)</td>
<td>0.011 (0.012)</td>
<td>-0.081 (0.081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Union Membership</em></td>
<td>0.012* (0.007)</td>
<td>-0.0003* (0.0002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Union Membership2</em></td>
<td>-10.391 (0.914)</td>
<td>-10.329 (0.972)</td>
<td>-9.350 (0.976)</td>
<td>-9.301 (1.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intercept</em></td>
<td>-2.238 (3.973)</td>
<td>-2.089 (2.309)</td>
<td>-2.147 (2.013)</td>
<td>-0.914 (0.928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if time period 2004-2006</td>
<td>-1.072* (0.546)</td>
<td>-1.086* (0.507)</td>
<td>-1.120 (0.527)</td>
<td>-0.674 (0.462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Liberal-Conservative Index</em></td>
<td>0.114*** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.116*** (0.029)</td>
<td>0.129 (0.104)</td>
<td>0.072 (0.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Black</em></td>
<td>-0.060 (0.492)</td>
<td>-0.631* (0.300)</td>
<td>-0.636** (0.272)</td>
<td>-0.188* (0.112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Percent Hispanic</em></td>
<td>0.030 (0.040)</td>
<td>0.028 (0.027)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.030)</td>
<td>0.012 (0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if Northeast</td>
<td>-3.239 (1.986)</td>
<td>-3.306* (1.481)</td>
<td>-3.824 (3.988)</td>
<td>-0.533 (1.144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if South</td>
<td>-5.705*** (0.779)</td>
<td>-5.938*** (0.733)</td>
<td>-5.787 (0.882)</td>
<td>-4.710*** (1.193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if West</td>
<td>-1.050 (1.921)</td>
<td>-0.942 (1.320)</td>
<td>-0.918 (1.374)</td>
<td>-0.027 (1.202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intercept</em></td>
<td>-4.878 (1.982)</td>
<td>-5.094 (2.088)</td>
<td>-5.964 (7.179)</td>
<td>-4.538 (4.476)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Zero-Inflated Poisson Models of Numbers of Active Hate Groups by State on Independent Variables, 1997-2006

Note: Data shown are coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Analysis based on 490 state-years. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (one-tailed tests except for intercepts, regions, and time periods).