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Responses to the Unite the Right Rally: Perceptions, Stress, and the Moderating Role of Interpersonal Proximity

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Abstract
Demonstrations led by right-wing extremist groups and racially motivated hate crimes have increased significantly since the 2016 election of Donald Trump (Edwards and Rushin in The effect of Trump's election on hate crimes. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3102652, 2018). However, few studies have examined racially marginalized (RM) persons' perceptions of such events or their potential impact on mental health for this population. Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to examine the association between RM individuals' perceptions of the 2017 Unite the Right rally as a racially motivated hate crime and subsequent perceived stress. Additionally, we investigated the moderating role of interpersonal proximity (i.e., direct or indirect knowledge of someone personally affected by the events that occurred at the rally) in the relationship between hate crime perceptions and stress. Survey data were collected from 388 RM adults living in Virginia at the time of the rally. Our results suggest that perceiving the rally as a hate crime was positively associated with greater levels of stress. Moreover, interpersonal proximity moderated this association, such that the relationship between hate crime perceptions and stress was significant and positive for those who knew someone affected by the rally, but unrelated for RM people who did not know someone affected by the rally. Implications and future directions are discussed.

Keywords Hate crime · Interpersonal proximity · Stress · Social networks

Introduction

On August 12, 2017, a mass of identified hate groups came together for the Unite the Right rally and flooded the University of Virginia, Charlottesville campus. For three days, the Charlottesville area became a site for hate speech, nationalist rhetoric, and ultimately, the murder of Heather Heyer, a racial justice activist. The rally was a symbol and reminder of both the legacy and the contemporary context of racial oppression in the United States. Since this rally, white supremacist and other hate groups have continued to hold rallies throughout the country that terrorize racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, and religious minority people.

The incidents that occurred at the 2017 Unite the Right rally and subsequent rallies may fall under the classification of race-based *bias-motivated crimes*. Race-based *bias-motivated crimes*, or racially motivated hate crimes, continue to account for the majority of hate crimes reported in the United States (US). Specifically, in 2018, approximately 60% of reported hate crimes were motivated by racial bias, with the majority (47%) of these crimes driven by anti-black racism (FBI 2018). Propelled by the Civil Rights movement, desegregation laws, and extensive court hearings on KKK violence, the US Supreme Court unequivocally approved two laws—18 U.S.C. 241 and 242—following several murders of black men in 1965. These two laws established punishment of both civilian and government officials' interference with individuals' civil rights. In 1968, the Voting Rights Act approved a more comprehensive hate crime law establishing "federally protected rights." This law—18 U.S.C. 245—established a legal definition of a *bias-motivated crime* (or hate crime) as a criminal offense that interferes with "particular enumerated rights on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin." The most recent hate crime law expanded protection to include offenses against a "person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation" (18 U.S. Code § 249; 2009). Thus, although identity-based violence has existed since the country's

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inception, the construction of an initial legal definition of a hate crime expressly led to the first wave of legislation designed to regulate anti-black violence (Dunbar 2017).

Though this initial wave led to increased identification and prosecution of hate crime offenders, minority communities do not receive consistent protection from the criminal justice system. For example, despite federal definitions, to date, only 14 of 50 US states have ratified comprehensive laws that prosecute a wide range of hate crimes, including those targeting racial identity, ethnic identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability (Anti-Defamation League 2020). The remaining states have limited hate crime laws, and three of these states have yet to ratify any hate crime legislation. This inconsistency in legislation has left targeted communities at risk for continued identity-based violence without legal protection, particularly in the wake of a recent rise in hate crimes directed toward marginalized groups (Edwards and Rushin 2018).

Psychological Impact of Hate Crimes

In addition to the potentially grave physical consequences of hate crimes, research has found that these incidents can have a greater psychological impact on their targets than non-bias-motivated crimes (e.g., Herek et al. 2002; McDevitt et al. 2001). For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collected data from interviews of a nationally representative sample of 90,000 US households, and found that targets of single bias-motivated violent crimes (i.e., motivated by a bias toward either race, sexuality, ability, and/or gender) reported higher levels of anxiety, anger, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., trouble sleeping, upset stomach, headaches) than targets of non-bias motivated violent crimes. Furthermore, compared to targets of non-biased motivated crimes, targets of a hate crime were more likely to report experiencing distress that was sustained for greater than one month following the incident (Iganski and Lagou 2017). Similarly, an ethnographic examination of the impact of racist hate crimes on racially marginalized (RM) targets in England identified themes of physical, psychological, emotional, and social consequences following a racist incident or assault (Funnell 2015).

Hate Crimes as Message Crimes

Of particular interest to this study is the impact that hate crimes have on marginalized identity groups collectively, rather than on individual targets of hate crimes. Though research has documented the individual-level psychological effect of hate crimes, additional research is needed to further elucidate the mental health implications of group-level experiences of these crimes. Scholars assert that hate crimes are "message crimes" directed toward members of a targeted identity group with the intention to coerce, threaten, or induce fear in individuals who share the identities of the victim (Iganski 2001; Paterson et al. 2019). For example, Perry (2001) offered the following definition of a hate crime to account for the collective experience of this form of collective violence:

> It involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the 'appropriate' subordinate identity of the victim's group (p. 10).

This violence enacted upon one or a few members of an identity group to instill fear in the larger group has been referred to as the *in terrorem effect* (Weinstein 1992).

Though some studies have assessed the *in terrorem effect* of terrorist attacks (e.g., Thoresen et al. 2012; Pfefferbaum et al. 2000), to our knowledge, only one study has examined the indirect psychological impact of racially motivated hate crimes. This study, conducted by Perry and Alvi (2012), used respondent-driven sampling to qualitatively assess the psychological and social impacts of vicarious experiences of bias crimes motivated by racial, gender, and religious prejudice with a group of Aboriginal, African Canadian, and South Asian individuals. Overall, their findings demonstrated that participants who shared similar identities (i.e., race, gender, religion) as hate crime victims in their community experienced similar frequency and intensity of shock, fear, anger, and distress as individuals who directly experienced the hate crimes. Relatedly, a pioneering experimental study compared black and white individuals' emotional and behavioral reactions to observing fictional racially motivated hate crimes and non-biased crimes (Craig 1999). The study found that, although both racial groups endorsed similar emotional responses to the fictional bias- and non-bias motivated crimes, black participants were more likely to believe that hate crimes occur more frequently and to view them as commonplace occurrences, compared to white participants. This seminal work prompted scholars to investigate vicarious hate crime exposure within a victim's community and social network, as well as the psychological consequences of hate crimes (e.g., Paterson et al. 2018; Funnell 2015; Mackie et al. 2009; Huddy et al. 2005; Noelle 2002). Findings of these subsequent studies are consistent with assertions made by both *Intergroup Emotions* and *Social Network* theories, which suggest that people who share an identity with a target of violence are more likely to experience that violence as an attack on the group as a whole. Moreover, these group-based appraisals may elicit specific emotions particular to

the historical background and contemporary context of the social identity group. Taken together, these findings support the assertion that hate crimes have the potential to impact marginalized communities collectively. Thus, it seems important to better understand the ways in which marginalized communities' perceptions of hate crimes impact their mental health.

To our knowledge, no study to date has examined RM individuals' perceptions of national, widely publicized events such as the Unite the Right rally. However, consistent evidence of a positive association between perceived racial discrimination and adverse mental health outcomes for RM people (Pieterse et al. 2012), suggests that for RM individuals, perceiving an event as racially motivated may contribute to the observed increase in negative mental health outcomes for targets of hate crimes, as well as for those who experience the event as a shared identity group member (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Finally, in addition to the potential importance of perception to the mental health of RM people, examining community members' *proximity*, or level of exposure to a critical event, has also been argued as essential when evaluating the impact of an incident (Blanchard et al. 2004).

Proximity to Hate Crimes

Broadly in the literature, investigations of the impact of proximity on mental health outcomes have historically centered around direct, individual experiences of incidents such as terrorist attacks, mass shootings, and natural disasters. More recently however, scholars have expanded the conceptualization of *proximity* to be inclusive of other factors. For example, geographical proximity (e.g., physical closeness to event; Blanchard et al. 2005; Galea et al. 2002), interpersonal proximity (e.g., knowing someone personally affected by the event; Blanchard et al. 2004), and media exposure (listening, reading, or watching media related to the event; Blanchard et al. 2004), were all found to significantly influence psychological distress following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Specifically, Silver et al. (2002) found that degree of exposure following the September 11 attacks, as measured by phone contact with a victim during or directly before the attack, geographical proximity to the site, and degree of watching the act of terror on television significantly predicted psychological distress among a racially and ethnically representative US sample.

Given the potential collective implication of hate crimes on marginalized communities due to shared identities, it seems plausible that interpersonal proximity may be particularly important to investigate in the context of racially motivated hate crimes. To our knowledge, with one exception (i.e., Perry and Alvi 2012), no study has examined the link between interpersonal proximity to a racially motivated hate crime and mental health outcomes. However, prior research with sexual and gender minority individuals has found a consistent positive association between interpersonal proximity to a bias-motivated sexual or gender identity crime and increased levels of psychological distress (i.e., anxiety, anger, and vulnerability; Noelle 2002; Paterson et al. 2018; Perry and Alvi 2012; Walters et al. 2017). Moving forward, it would be helpful to extend this line of research to larger-scale hate crime exhibitions, such as the Unite the Right Rally, and the mental health of RM persons. Additionally, although interpersonal proximity has not yet been examined as a moderating variable in the links between hate crime experiences or perceptions and distress (e.g., stress), hypothesizing the construct as an exacerbating factor seems warranted given the research documenting the significant association between interpersonal proximity to a victim and stress (e.g., Blanchard et al. 2005). As such, this project aims to extend the current hate crime and proximity literatures by examining the potential moderating role of interpersonal proximity in the relationship between perceptions of a large-scale, collective demonstration of hate such as the Unite the Right rally and subsequent perceived stress with a sample of RM individuals.

The Present Study

Based on the studies reviewed here, the present investigation will build on prior hate crime literature by investigating the association between RM people's perceptions of the Unite the Right rally and subsequent distress. The relationship between interpersonal proximity (i.e., connection with someone impacted by the event) and distress will also be examined, as will the potential moderating role of interpersonal proximity in the link between perceptions of the rally as a hate crime and distress. In addition, previous studies examining the association between hate crime perceptions or experiences and mental health have measured these outcomes with single indicators or by combining a few items that assess distinct symptoms (e.g., "To what extent do the following words (afraid, anxious, alarmed) describe how the crime made you feel?"; Paterson et al. 2018, 2019). Given the psychometric limitations of single or limited (i.e., less than 3 items) item assessments of mental health outcomes, the present study also extends the literature by utilizing a common measure of general stress with strong psychometric properties that assesses a wide range of distress symptoms (Cohen and Williamson 1988). Finally, the study was conducted with a sample of RM individuals living in Virginia immediately following the Unite the Right rally. By focusing on participants residing in Virginia, the present investigation was able to inherently account for physical proximity in the study's design, as geographical proximity may be an

important factor to consider in hate crime literature (e.g., Silver et al. 2002).

We hypothesized the following:

1. Perceiving the rally as a hate crime will be positively correlated to stress;
2. Participants who report interpersonal proximity to individuals affected by the rally will report higher levels of stress compared to those who did not report interpersonal proximity;
3. Interpersonal proximity will moderate the relationship between perceived hate crime and stress, such that the association between perceiving the rally as a hate crime and stress would be positive and significant for individuals who endorsed interpersonal proximity to the rally but weakened for participants who reported no such proximity.

Method

Participants

For the purpose of this study, participation was restricted to individuals who self-identified as (a) 18 years of age or older; (b) a racial or ethnic minority person; and, (c) a resident of Virginia at the time of the Unite the Right rally (August 12, 2017). Although 866 individuals began the survey, 329 did not meet all eligibility criteria. An additional 149 participants were missing more than 20% of responses on study measures and were thus not included in the analyses (Dodeen 2003). The remaining participants had no missing data. The final sample included 388 RM individuals living in Virginia at the time of the Unite the Right rally aged 18 to 76 years ($M = 40.06$, $SD = 15.14$). Demographics are reported in Table 1 and were representative of the proportions of RM persons observed in the broader population of Virginia (U.S. Census 2010).

Procedure

Participants were recruited over five months (October 17, 2017–March 18, 2018) beginning two months after the Unite the Right rally utilizing the Qualtrics survey system. Following our request for a sample of RM individuals living in Virginia, Qualtrics contacted participants from their database of individuals interested in participating in survey research. Using the online survey we provided to Qualtrics, participants provided informed consent and completed items related to the eligibility criteria. The survey included a demographic questionnaire, questions related to their perceptions of the rally, and their perceived stress, in that order. Participants received a small remuneration for their

Table 1 Participants demographic information (N =388)

Demographic variables	*n*	Percent
Gender		
Cisgender women	188	48.45
Cisgender men	191	49.22
Gender non-binary	2	0.52
Transgender men	2	0.52
Transgender women	2	0.52
Intersex	1	0.26
Missing responses	2	0.52
Race/ethnicity		
Black/African American	206	53.09
Asian/Asian American	90	23.08
Latinx or Hispanic	21	5.38
Multiracial or Multiethnic	10	2.56
East/Southeast Asian	8	2.05
American Indian/Native American	8	2.05
Middle Eastern/North African	4	1.03
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.51
Missing responses	39	10.26
Sexual identity		
Heterosexual	328	84.54
Bisexual	23	5.93
Lesbian or gay	12	3.09
Asexual	7	1.80
Other sexual/affectional orientation	7	1.80
Queer	4	1.03
Pansexual	4	1.03
Questioning	2	0.52
Missing responses	1	0.26
Religious/spiritual identity		
Christian	242	62.37
Spiritual, but not religious	53	13.66
Hindu	17	4.38
More than one religious/spiritual identity	17	4.38
Agnostic	16	4.12
Muslim	13	3.35
Atheist	12	3.09
Buddhist	8	2.06
Other religious/spiritual identity	44	1.03
Sikh	3	0.77
Jewish	2	0.52
Pagan	1	0.26
Missing responses	1	0.26
Political affiliation		
Democratic	208	53.61
Independent	116	29.90
Republican	49	12.63
Other political view	9	2.32
Liberal	3	0.77
Libertarian	1	0.26
Unsubscribed	1	0.26

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic variables	*n*	Percent
Missing responses	1	0.26

participation. The study was approved by the institutional review board.

Measures

Demographics

Participants completed items assessing age, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual and affectional identity, religious/spiritual identity, and political affiliation.

Perception of a Hate Crime

The incidents that occurred at the 2012 Unite the Right rally (e.g., murder, bodily injury) fall under the classification of a bias-motivated crime, or hate crime. However, the rally itself may be perceived as a discrete event comprised of multiple hate incidents. As such, we sought to specifically assess the degree to which RM persons perceived the rally as a hate crime. Given the lack of a current measure to assess individuals' perceptions of bias-motivated incidents as hate crimes, a single item was developed. Participants were provided with a definition of a hate crime and then asked to report the degree to which they agreed with the following statement: "The Charlottesville rally has a hate crime". Participants rated the items on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 7 (*Strongly Disagree*). Before conducting analyses, these items were reverse coded such that a higher number indicated stronger agreement.

Interpersonal Proximity

Prior examinations of interpersonal proximity to mass shootings and terrorist attacks have utilized single-item measures with dichotomous response choices (e.g., Thoresen et al. 2012). Consistent with this practice, participants in the present study were asked to respond to the following prompt: "Do you know someone who was personally affected by the Charlottesville rally, such as a victim or a victim's friend, family member, or coworker"? Participants endorsed "yes," "no," or "other." Participants who endorsed "other" were asked to describe their response and these responses were reclassified into three categories: (1) direct proximity was defined as direct knowledge of someone affected by the rally; (2) indirect proximity was defined as knowledge of someone within two degrees of separation (e.g., "My friend's relative); and (3) no proximity. Individuals who indicated direct or indirect proximity were combined with participants who endorsed "yes" for the mean difference tests.

Perceived Stress

Participants completed the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10; Cohen and Williamson 1988), which measures the degree to which an individual appraises specific life events as stressful over the past month (Cohen et al. 1983). Example items are, "In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?", and "In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?" Participants responded on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 5 (*Very Often*). The PSS-10 has demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability with African American samples ($\alpha = 0.85$; Barnes and Lightsey 2005) and Asian and Latinx individuals ($\alpha = 0.89$; Wong et al. 2017). Cronbach's α in the current study was 0.73.

Results

Before performing analyses, we evaluated appropriate assumptions for moderation and correlational analyses. The range of skewness (0.05 to − 1.52) and kurtosis (− 0.04 to 1.70) values indicated that our continuous variables (i.e., hate crime perceptions, perceived stress) met criteria for univariate normality (e.g., skewness statistic values between − 2 and 2 and kurtosis values between − 3 and 3; George and Mallery 2010).[1] Regarding multivariate normality, we calculated and examined Mahalanobis distance values to ascertain outliers and identified eleven cases as potentially problematic. However, a Cook's distance test indicated that these cases were not exerting undue influence on the moderation models (e.g., values less than 1; Field 2009). Thus, we retained the eleven identified cases. We examined correlational hypotheses using IBM SPSS Version 25 and conducted moderation analyses using Model 1 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes 2017). Significant interactions (i.e., conditional effects) were decomposed utilizing simple slope analyses (using the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentile; Hayes 2017).

First, participants generally classified the Unite the Right rally as a hate crime ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.52$; midpoint of Likert-type scale = 4). Most participants strongly agreed that the rally was a hate crime (44%, $n = 172$) and 12% ($n = 49$) of participants were inconclusive about their agreement (agree,

[1] To ensure psychometric rigor, study variables were transformed such that absolute skewness values were no greater than .5. Analyses were then rerun with the transformed variables and the pattern of findings were identical.

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and correlations for study variables

Study variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Gender	–	–	0.184***	–	–	–	–	–
3. Race and/or ethnicity	–	–	− 0.112*	0.103	–	–	–	–
4. R/S identity	–	–	0.001	0.036	− 0035	–	–	–
5. Perceived hate crime	5.770	1.519	− 0006	− 0091	− 0118*	− 0044	–	–
6. Interpersonal proximity	1.830	0.374	0.163**	0.005	0.000	0.099	0.037	–
7. Stress	17.863	6.973	− 0395***	− 0132**	0.076	0.030	0.144**	−0.102*

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$

$n = 92$; slightly agree, $n = 47$; slightly disagree, $n = 7$; agree, $n = 10$; strongly agree, $n = 11$). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, this perception was significantly and positively correlated with stress ($r = 0.14$, $p = 0.005$; see Table 2). Regarding our proximity variable, 63 participants (16.24%) reported knowing someone personally affected by the rally and two (0.52%) indicated knowing someone within two degrees of separation (e.g., knowing a resident of the county, knowing a student attending the University of Virginia). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, Welch's *t*-test results indicated that participants who endorsed interpersonal proximity[2] ($M = 19.45$, $SD = 6.56$, $n = 65$) reported significantly higher levels of stress than those who indicated having no interpersonal proximity ($M = 17.54$, $SD = 7.02$, $n = 323$; $t(4.43)$, $p = 0.038$; $d = 0.28$). The effect size for this analysis is consistent with Cohen's (1988) convention for a small observed effect. Finally, results indicated that interpersonal proximity moderated the relationship between perceiving the rally as a hate crime and perceived stress, ($F(1, 384) = 4.27$, $p = 0.04$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$). The main and interaction effects accounted for 4% and 1% of the variance in perceived stress, respectively. Probing of simple slopes to understand the interaction term (Hayes 2018) found that the relationship between hate crime perceptions and perceived stress was significant and positive for RM individuals reporting direct and indirect knowledge of someone affected by the rally, but not significant for those who indicated no knowledge of someone affected by the rally[3] (see Table 3 and Fig. 1). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was fully supported[4]. Interpersonal proximity as a predictor of perceived stress became nonsignificant however, when considered with the all of variables of interest in the model ($t(1.79)$, $p = 0.07$). Given that prior literature

Table 3 Regression analysis predicting stress among racial and ethnic minority individuals

Predictor	*b*	SE	*t*	*p*
Age	− 0.172	0.022	− 7.822	< 0.001
Gender	− 0.722	0.592	− 1.221	0.010
Perception	2.575	0.855	3.011	0.003
Interpersonal proximity	5.509	2.860	1.927	0.055
Perception × interpersonal proximity	− 1.120	0.479	− 2.336	0.020

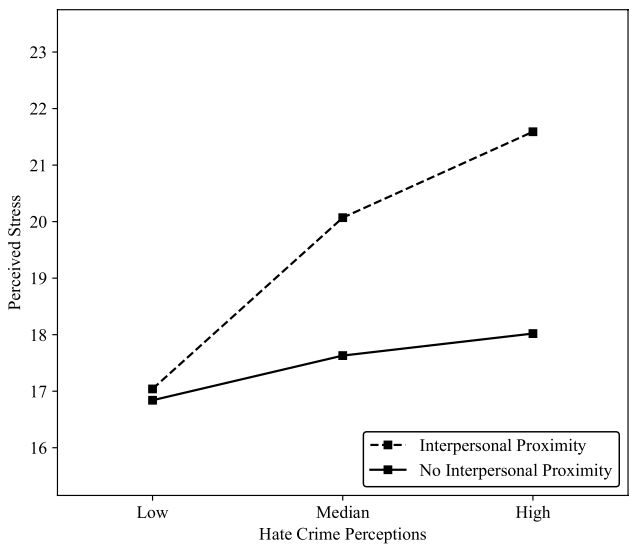

Fig. 1 Interaction of hate crime perceptions and interpersonal proximity on perceived stress. Low, median, and high values were defined as values at the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentile of hate crime perception scores, respectively

with RM persons has suggested that both older adults and women may be more likely to report higher levels of perceived stress than younger adults and men (e.g., age, Din-Dzietham et al. 2004; gender, Flores et al. 2008), we also reran the model with age and gender included as covariates. Indeed, both age and gender were significantly correlated with stress

[2] We reran the analyses omitting the two participants who reported knowing someone within two degrees of separation. The significant mean difference in stress scores remained.

[3] We reran the moderation analyses omitting the two participants who indicated knowing someone within two degrees of separation and the pattern of findings was identical.

[4] All hypotheses were tested again with cases missing no more than 50% of the data on study variables in order to examine the impact of removing missing data, and all results remained the same. Additionally, results of the moderation analysis were identical when run with or without the 11 cases identified as non-problematic outliers.

in our sample (Cohen et al. 2003), and the pattern of results for the moderation analyses were the same ($F(1, 379) = 5.46$, $p = 0.02$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$). This model accounted for 19% of the variance in perceived stress.

Discussion

White supremacist demonstrations such as the Unite the Right rally are reminiscent of night raids that terrorized black individuals and communities throughout and beyond the Jim Crow era. During this time, these night raids were public messages meant to instill fear not only in the individual who was murdered, but in family, friends, and the entire black community. Additionally, these demonstrations mirror commonly occurring individual- and systemic-level violence directed toward indigenous Americans, other racial and ethnic communities, immigrants, Jewish communities, sexual and gender minority people, and others marginalized by oppression and discrimination. As suggested by Perry (2001, 2002), hate crimes serve the same purpose- to use violence and intimidation to reaffirm social hierarchies (e.g., racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, etc.). Hate demonstrations and reported hate crimes like the Unite the Right rally have increased significantly since Donald Trump's presidential election (Edwards and Rushin 2018), and yet to date, social science research has not examined RM persons' perceptions of these demonstrations or their impacts on mental health. Furthermore, though research has established an association between interpersonal proximity to a critical event and subsequent stress, few studies have examined this relationship with bias-motivated crimes. As such, this study sought to understand the relationship between RM individuals' perceptions of the Unite the Right rally as a hate crime and stress, as well as the moderating role of interpersonal proximity in this link, from a sample living in Virginia at the time of the Unite the Right rally.

We examined perceptions of the rally by asking participants to rate the degree to which they would endorse the belief that the events that occurred at the rally would classify as a hate crime. Consistent with expectations, we found that most participants identified the rally has a hate crime. Additionally, consistent with *Intergroup Emotions Theory* and *Social Network Theory*, we found that hate crime perceptions were significantly and positively associated with perceived stress. Though the effect size of this association was small, the significance suggests that these perceptions are of some consequence for RM people. Given the lengthy historical context of racial violence directed toward RM people in the US, as well as substantive literature on the appraisal-stress link (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), the relationship between a negative appraisal of the demonstration and stress is not surprising. Rooted in Lazarus and Folkman's stress and coping model, Outlaw (1993) posited a framework through which black individuals navigate daily experiences of racism. She suggested that when they experience a racially charged encounter, they appraise the situation as either a harm/loss, threat, or challenge, inventory their coping resources, and ultimately experience race-related stress at a degree parallel to the availability of their resources. Research has indeed tested this framework and found that the appraisal of racist events is critically important to emotional psychological responses. For example, in an examination of the relationship between various forms of racism (i.e., lifetime and recent experiences of racism, and appraisal of these experiences) and distress symptoms among black Americans, Klonoff et al. (1999) found that of the 28% of the variance in psychological distress was accounted for by racist events, a full 15% of this variance was explained by participants' appraisal as those events as stressful.

Numerous scholars have since used this paradigm of race-related stress to discuss the individual-level experiences of racism that RM people experience. A significant contribution of the current study's finding then, may be an extension of the concept of race-related stress to the limited social psychological literature related to collective experiences of racism, such as racially motivated hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents. In the case of hate demonstrations, hate rallies, and hate crimes, an appraisal of such an event as a threat to one's identity, safety, or wellbeing may be associated with subsequent distress, even when one does not experience this event individually. As such, the inclusion of hate crimes and hate demonstrations as sources of race-related stress are warranted if we are to better understand the effects of institutionalized and group-level racism on mental health in its totality. Given the noted mental health disparities of RM people, it seems reasonable to extend assertions about the impact of systemic racism on mental health to demonstrations like the Unite the Right rally as a public health issue (Klonoff et al. 1999).

Study results also indicated that participants who knew someone that was affected by the rally reported higher stress levels than those who did not know someone. These findings are consistent with prior studies that found interpersonal proximity to be an important attenuating or exacerbating factor in the levels of stress that individuals report following a critical event (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005). As an extension of these investigations, the present study tested the potential moderating role of interpersonal proximity on the link between hate crime perception and stress. We found that the relationship between hate crime perceptions and stress remained significant and positive only for participants who reported direct or indirect interpersonal proximity. However, it is worth noting that when included with hate crime perceptions in the moderation model, interpersonal proximity became a nonsignificant predictor. These findings may

suggest that while racially marginalized persons with social connections (e.g., friends, family, community members) to people impacted by hate demonstrations may be at greater risk for declines in mental health, other factors may be more important to consider as main effects (i.e., how hate demonstrations are perceived, racial and social group identity, etc.). Consequently, when considering interventions, it seems that community-level approaches to healing are likely needed to more fully address the breadth of impact of demonstrations like the Unite the Right rally.

Limitations and Future Directions

To our knowledge this is only the second study to investigate the indirect impact of hate crimes among RM individuals. In addition, the data were collected within a few months of the Unite the Right rally, likely facilitating a more accurate self-report of perceptions of the rally by participants. Third, the present investigation utilized a psychometrically sound outcome measure of stress. However, despite these strengths, the findings should be interpreted in light of limitations.

First, participants provided data at a single time point and thus, we are unable to make causal attributions about the directionality of the relationship between hate crime perceptions and perceived stress. An important extension of this methodology would be to collect data over time so as to confirm the directionality of the relationships between perceived hate crimes and indicators of psychological distress. In addition, such designs would allow for an examination of changes in the relationship between these variables over time. Second, the moderation model (predictor variables and the interaction term) accounted for a relatively small amount of the total variance (4%; Cohen 1992) in stress. Although the variance explained by our interaction term is typical of interaction effect sizes in cross-sectional moderation analyses in social science research (Chaplin 1991), future studies should examine additional variables that may account for greater proportions of variance or serve as explanatory variables in the link between perceptions and stress. For example, future studies may include measures of individual discrimination in combination with hate crime perceptions. This model would clarify whether the 4% of variance explained by hate crime perceptions is unique and in addition to the variance accounted for by individual-level experiences of discrimination (e.g., microaggressions, racist events). Such findings would further elucidate the impact of racism- both individual—and group-level aspects—on RM people's mental health. Another limitation is related to our inquiry into participants' reported proximity to individuals impacted by the rally. First, although consistent with previous assessments of this construct, interpersonal proximity was measured dichotomously, with an option for participants to explain their direct or indirect knowledge of a person affected by the rally. Although the prompt allowed participants to interpret a broad degree of impact, we also recognize that the wording of our question is somewhat ambiguous and that a dichotomous measure may lack psychometric rigor. For example, future studies could consider operationalizing this construct in a more specific manner by utilizing a brief measure that would allow for both quantitative (i.e., options provided in the survey) and qualitative explanations of interpersonal proximity.

Finally, events such as the Unite the Right Rally have the potential to activate the salience of individuals marginalized social identities. Though we focused on the experiences of RM persons living in Virginia, we acknowledge that for the participants in our study, race and ethnicity may not have been the only identities targeted by the rally's demonstrations of hate. Future research should incorporate an intersectional framework to better understand how acts of racism intersect with other forms of oppression (e.g., sexism, homophobia, transphobia, religious/spiritual bias, ableism) to impact the holistic lived experiences of RM people, in addition to the ways in which the consequences of oppression may exacerbate perceptions of hate crimes. Additionally, though our findings are consistent with the premise that social group identification may have implications for how identity-based incidents are perceived, group identification is not unidimensional. Indeed, Leach et al. (2008) found evidence to support a five-factor model of in-group identification consisting of individual self-stereotyping, in-group homogeneity, solidarity, satisfaction and centrality. Future studies may strengthen our line of inquiry by assessing which components of social group identification are most closely associated with perceptions of identity-based incidents and subsequent psychological distress.

Conclusion

In sum, this study assessed the experiences of RM individuals through their perceptions and proximity to the 2017 Charlottesville Unite the Right hate rally. Specifically, stress was significantly and positively associated with both hate crime perceptions and proximity to someone personally affected by the rally. Additionally, interpersonal proximity significantly moderated the relationship between hate crime perceptions and stress. This paper highlights and broadens our understanding of both the role of perception and interpersonal proximity in RM individuals' experiences of racially motivated hate crimes, contributing to both the current hate crime and race-related stress literature. As such, our findings establish a call for scholars to center the experiences and perceptions of those persons marginalized by hate crimes. We urge legislators to develop comprehensive

hate crime policies that consider the perceptions and mental health consequences of both individuals and communities that are impacted by racially motivated hate demonstrations, incidents, and bias crimes.

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