# Defining the boundaries of violence: political xenophobia and hate crime in the United States

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**Abstract**

This thesis discusses the potential connections between hate crime and xenophobia in the United States during the first two years of Donald Trump's presidency. Drawing upon the academic debate on violence and the potential connections between different levels of violence, this thesis aims to contribute by researching the potential connections between a form of structural violence and a form direct violence. Through an analysis of White House documents and the FBI's hate crime statistics, this study has sought to discuss the influence of Trump's political xenophobia towards Arabs and Latinos on the number of hate crime incidents with either Arab or Latino victims. The case studies have illustrated that there is clear correlation between political xenophobia and hate crime towards Arabs and Latinos in the US, as the number of hate crimes towards these group increased after periods of clear xenophobic sentiment from the Trump administration. This thesis, therefore, argues in favor of a broader approach to the concept of violence, as acknowledging the true width of violence in societies is the only way to eradicate it.

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# 1 Introduction

On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old African-American man, was killed during a jog in Brunswick, Georgia, in the United States. Two white men, father and son, were filmed while shooting Arbery three times, until he collapsed and died on the street.[1] Even though the camera footage did not leave much room for imagination, the two perpetrators were only arrested and charged for murder and aggravated assault two and a half months after the shooting took place.[2] Within these two and a half months, people protested nation-wide with the hashtag '#IrunwithMaud', which eventually led to the arrest of Ahmaud's killers.

Even though conclusions cannot yet be drawn, as the judicial case has not come to an end, many people have argued that this assault should be charged as hate crime.[3] But what exactly constitutes as hate crime? Often stimulated by characteristics as ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, hate crime is fueled by biased prejudice.[4] Minority groups are, therefore, often the victim of hate crime, because of their specific characteristic(s) which the dominant group does not accept or is not willing to normalize. The LGTBQ+ community, for instance, is often physically or emotionally attacked because of their sexual orientation or gender.[5] Race is, however, still most often the motive behind hate crimes. In the United States in 2018, for instance, 59,6 percent of hate crime victims were targeted because of their race or ethnicity.[6]

Racism does not, however, only manifest itself through physical violence such as hate crime, but also through language and culture. Xenophobia is an example of how racism can be embedded in language and culture, as it targets foreigners and immigrants within nation-states, and actively discriminates them through speech.[7] Thus, whereas hate crime has a physical element, xenophobia does not and is, therefore, more difficult to 'see' and punish.

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[1] "Ahmaud Arbery: What do we know about the case?" *BBC*, May 16, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52623151.
[2] BBC, "Ahmaud Arbery."
[3] Ibid.
[4] Natalie Alkiviadou, "Regulating Hatred: Of Devils and Demons?" *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 18, no. 4 (2018): 223.
[5] Joke Swiebel and Dennis van der Veur, "Hate Crimes Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Persons and the Policy Response of International Governmental Organisations," *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 27, no. 4 (2009): 486.
[6] FBI, *2018 Hate Crime Statistics: Victims, Table 1: Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders, by Bias Motivation.* November 12, 2019, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2018/topic-pages/tables/table-1.xls.
[7] Oksana Yakushko, "Xenophobia: Understanding the Roots and Consequences of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigrants," *The Counseling Psychologist* 37, no. 1 (2009): 44-45.

This distinction is quite important, as it explains why certain politicians are also able to make xenophobic statements without being officially held accountable for them. Political xenophobia, meaning xenophobia created and enforced by politicians, has increased during the past decade, due to the rise of the political far-right in both Europe and the United States.[8] Even though xenophobia may sometimes seem less dangerous in comparison to hate crime because of its verbal and non-physical nature, it can have an equally destructive power.

But how is racism, and specifically hate crime and xenophobia, maintained in the increasingly modern societies we live in? Moreover, are these phenomena social constructs and thus influenced by culture and politics, or should they be considered independent from societal processes? These are questions this thesis aims to answer by investigating manifestations of racism and their relations to each other and to society. Scholars have argued that there are multiple levels of violence which influence each other.[9] Galtung, for instance, argues that there are three levels of violence: cultural, structural and direct.[10] Even though these levels of violence are not all equally visible in society, Galtung argues that they are all destructive and, in order to truly eliminate violence, they should be considered and responded to in relation to one another.[11] However, Coady, among other scholars, contends that Galtung has overstretched the concept of violence, and that his theory is not applicable to real societies.[12] He argues that Galtung's concepts of direct and structural violence are fundamentally different, as physically hurting someone is much more violent than, for instance, social injustice within societies.[13] Moreover, Coady contends that broadening the concept of violence could actually have a reversed effect, as it could lead to inaction due to the large scope of violence, when approached from Galtung's theoretical angle.[14]

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[8] Michelle Hale Williams, "Can Leopards Change Their Spots? Between Xenophobia and Trans-ethnic Populism among West European Far Right Parties," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 16, no. 1 (2010): 111.

[9] Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-294; Sean Byrne and Jessica Senehi, *Violence. Analysis, Intervention, and Prevention* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012): 16; Sondre Lindahl, *A Critical Theory of Counterterrorism. Ontology, Epistomology and Normativity* (London: Routledge, 2018): 84; Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 2011): 2.

[10] Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 291-294.

[11] Jason A. Springs, "Structural and Cultural Violence in Religion and Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, ed. R. Scott Appleby et al. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015), 151.

[12] C.A.J. Coady, *Morality and Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 27-34; Loïc Wacquant in Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (2004): 322; Katherine Hirschfeld, "Rethinking "Structural Violence"," *Society* 54, no. 2 (2017): 161; Susan Beckerleg and Gillian Lewando Hundt, "Women Heroin Users: Exploring the Limitations of the Structural Violence Approach," *International Journal of Drug Policy* 16 (2005): 189.

[13] Coady, Morality and Political Violence, 34.

[14] Ibid.

Since there clearly is a normative academic disagreement on the definition of violence and how different levels of violence work and potentially influence each other, this thesis aims to contribute to this debate by answering the following research question: does political xenophobia influence racially biased hate crime in the United States? Within this research, political xenophobia is considered as a form of structural violence, and hate crime as a manifestation of direct violence. By analyzing if and how these two forms of violence influence each other, this thesis will be able to contribute to the academic debate on the definition of violence and the potential existence of multiple levels of violence. I hypothesize that, even though direct correlations may be difficult to prove, a clear relationship between political xenophobia and hate crime in the United States will be observed, which would support the theoretical assumption that different levels of violence can, and do, influence each other.

As exemplified in the first paragraph, the United States frequently see hate crime incidents. Although hate crimes probably occur in every nation in the world, the United States has one of the highest numbers of hate crime. Even more striking is the percentage of hate crimes reported by the police, of which the perpetrators are actually prosecuted. In Belgium, for instance, 69,9 percent of reported hate crime perpetrators are prosecuted. In the UK this percentage is 16,3 percent, and in Poland 35,5 percent. In the United States, the percentage is extremely low, as only 0,3 percent of reported hate crime perpetrators are actually prosecuted.[15] The difference between the US and other states in which hate crime frequently occurs, is striking and illustrates that hate crime and especially the prosecution of hate crime perpetrators is a large and underestimated issue in the US. For this reason, and with the purpose of limiting the width of this research, this thesis solely focuses on the hate crime and xenophobia in the United States for its analysis. As the current president of the United States, Donald Trump, is known for his uncensored xenophobic sentiments towards minorities, I have chosen to analyze the relations between political xenophobia and hate crime during Trump's presidency.

This study will answer its research question by observing the implications of Trump's political xenophobia on hate crime in the US. It will analyze the relations between hate crime and political xenophobia in four stages: the relations between Trump's rhetoric on Latinos and the reports of hate crime in 2017 and 2018, and the relations between Trump's rhetoric on

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[15] These percentages have been derived from statistics of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: OSCE ODIHR, *Report on Racism and Xenophobia*, November 15, 2019, https://hatecrime.osce.org/taxonomy/term/228.

Arab people and the reports of hate crime in 2017 and 2018. The research design will be explained in more detail in the third chapter.

First, this thesis will provide an overview of the academic debate on levels of violence, xenophobia and hate crime. It will then elaborate on the research design in the third chapter, after which the fourth and fifth chapters will present the findings of the analysis. The sixth chapter will critically evaluate and compare the findings of this study and situate these in a wider framework on violence and its manifestations in American society.

**2 Literature review**

<u>2.1 Violence</u>

Galtung argues that violence constitutes itself in various ways, which can be split up into three levels: direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence.[16] Direct violence is an event. It entails the physical form of violence in which a person intentionally physically harms another person.[17] Structural violence is a process. It slowly creates segmentation and emphasizes differences between societal groups, aiming to structurally naturalize the differences between these groups in society.[18] Within this process, there is always a group who is "de-socialized" and turned into second-class citizens, who are expected to abide by the rules of the dominant culture or group.[19] Cultural violence is a permanence and exposes violence that has been normalized in societies, up to a point in which it is not directly noticeable anymore. This type of violence constitutes of cultural aspects that legitimize or justify noticeable violence, such as direct or structural violence.[20]

Not only does Galtung categorize different expressions of violence, he also presents an analytical framework to analyze how these different levels can influence each other.[21] For example, direct violence and structural violence can be legitimized by cultural violence. However, the process can also occur in the opposite direction.[22] Realizing the different ways and levels in which violence expresses itself is essential according to Galtung, as there is a great danger in only acknowledging and reacting to direct expressions of violence. If we do not recognize the different levels of violence and their interrelated connections, it will be impossible to truly eliminate the roots of violence in every layer of society.[23]

Byrne and Senehi also argue that violence is rooted in the relation between multiple factors in society and assert that we must address the different levels of violence and the connections between them.[24] In order to build lasting peace, it is thus essential to acknowledge the 'breadth' of violence in societies.[25] Lindahl contends that violence is always

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[16] Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 291-294.
[17] Ibid., 294.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 293.
[20] Ibid., 291.
[21] Springs, "Structural and Cultural Violence in Religion and Peacebuilding," 147; Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 295.
[22] Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 295.
[23] Springs, "Structural and Cultural Violence in Religion and Peacebuilding," 151.
[24] Byrne and Senehi, *Violence*, 16;42.
[25] Ibid., 219-221.

a response to a larger issue or another manifestation of violence.[26] Nixon goes even further, as he introduces the concept of "slow violence."[27] He challenges the thought that violence is a static event in time, and instead contends that violence is incremental and should be seen across multiple "temporal scales."[28]

Galtung's theory of violence has been tested by various scholars in different academic fields. Kaufman, for instance, applies it to Middle Eastern studies and calls on his colleagues to approach violence in the Middle East from a broader theoretical perspective.[29] Whittle et al. apply Galtung's theory to food insecurity and illness in the United States. They argue that only by acknowledging the larger inequalities and thus structural violence in American society, can we help vulnerable Americans escape chronic illnesses and food insecurity.[30] Both Kaufman and Whittle et al. have thus successfully applied Galtung's theory to their research. In Banerjee's paper on structural violence in residential care, however, he contends that even though structural violence is often an adequate approach to research violence in society, it has a danger of being too broad.[31] This sentiment is shared by other scholars as well, whose arguments will now be discussed.

Coady argues that wide definitions of violence are not useful in real life.[32] Broadening or even overstretching the definition of violence could lead to a paralyzed and thus unfavorable reaction to violence, as it might legitimize not prioritizing solving direct and urgent types of violence or conflicts.[33] Coady rejects Galtung's notion that social injustice should be considered as violence, as there is a profound difference between the intent inherent in physical violence, or the intent embedded in structural or cultural violence.[34] He does, however, not discuss whether the degree of violent intent in non-physical forms of violence could be measured, which slightly weakens his argument. Instead, he argues that there are not enough similarities between direct and structural violence, as the types of harm and the context in which it is executed are profoundly different.[35] In this line of thought, Coady

[26] Lindahl, *A Critical Theory of Counterterrorism,* 84.

[27] Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 2.

[28] Ibid.; Asher Kaufman, "Thinking Beyond Direct Violence," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 2 (2014): 443.

[29] Kaufman, "Thinking Beyond Direct Violence," 443.

[30] Henry J. Whittle et al., "Food Insecurity, Chronic Ilness, and Gentrification in the San Francisco Bay Area: An Example of Structural Violence in United States Public Policy," *Social Science and Medicine* 143 (2015): 161.

[31] Albert Banerjee et al, "Long-term, Residential Care for Older People: Comparing Canada and Scandinavia," *Social Science and Medicine* 74 (2012): 390.

[32] Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 27; 34.

[33] Ibid, 34.

[34] Ibid., 29-32.

[35] Ibid., 29-30.

argues that Galtung's theory is too general and does not offer a realistic vision of what societies should look like and what their definition of violence should be.

Various authors agree with Coady's critique of Galtung's theory. Wacquant, for instance, argues that it is not useful to merge every imaginable form of violence into the same category, as it will only limit our research on and possible reaction to it.[36] Beckerleg contends that structural violence allows victimizing people and putting structural blame on 'the system', which is not always useful and necessary.[37] Hirschfield also contends that the concept of structural violence should not be used to unilaterally explain processes that also have other origins or causes, and mentions the example of blaming colonialism for epidemics in postcolonial countries.[38]

There is thus a clear normative academic disagreement on the definition of violence. Scholars such as Galtung, Byrne and Senehi, and Nixon contend that the definition should be broadened in order to truly tackle the issue of violence in societies. Coady, Wacquant, Beckerleg and Hirschfield, however, argue that broadening the definition of violence can negatively influence our response to it. Even though Galtung's theory of violence has been tested by scholars such as Kaufman, Whittle et al. and Banerjee, this scholarship has not exclusively proven one of the theories to be correct.

In this thesis, I seek to contribute to this academic debate on violence by performing a case study in which the possible implications of a form of structural violence on a form of direct violence are observed. Even though Coady points to an essential flaw in Galtung theory in his critique on the large differences between the three levels of violence, I argue that Galtung is not wrong in his broad definition of violence. Precisely a broad definition of violence will enable us to truly contest its existence, as it will expose all of its manifestations in society, even those that cannot be easily seen. More importantly, this will reveal the ways in which different manifestations and levels of violence have the ability to justify each other. The analysis of this thesis will illustrate whether or not a broad definition is indeed necessary.

2.2 Xenophobia and hate crime
To contextualize the somewhat abstract concept of violence, and its direct, structural and cultural forms, this thesis seeks to research two of its manifestations: xenophobia and hate crime. These specific manifestations of violence are most often aimed at racial minorities.

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[36] Wacquant in Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," 322.
[37] Beckerleg and Lewando Hundt, "Women Heroin Users," 189.
[38] Hirschfield, "Rethinking "Structural Violence"," 161.

Violence and resentment against minorities arises when the interests of the dominant group or culture are threatened and when the majority group has to compete with the minority group over resources.[39] Violent acts against minorities are often the result of certain ideologies or prejudices, which, in the perpetrators opinion, justify violence against a group with a specific characteristic.[40] Violence against minorities exists in many forms and levels in society, and is perpetrated by both citizens as official entities.[41] This literature review will now discuss two specific manifestations of violence against minorities: xenophobia and hate crime.

Yakushko defines xenophobia as "a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreign."[42] In other words, xenophobia is biased prejudice towards racial or ethnic minorities. As xenophobia is a manifestation of structural violence, it is much more difficult to punish, and, therefore, a more accessible way to be violent without having to directly bear the negative consequences.[43] Yakushko ties the concept of xenophobia to nationalist and ethnocentric sentiments in the US, which are fueled by feelings of superiority over other nation-states.[44] Political xenophobia is described as "the desire to create and apply public policies that actively discriminate against foreign individuals."[45] During difficult times – e.g. political or economic crises – foreigners are often targeted as 'scapegoats', blamed for economic hardship and criminality, by both a part of the public as political individuals or entities.[46]

Stephan and Stephan have identified four types of threat that lead to prejudice and xenophobia. The first, called the realistic threat, points to the fear of people to lose their economic and political power.[47] The second type is symbolic threat, which is caused by the fear that the values and beliefs of the in-group, are contested by the out-group.[48] The third and fourth types of threat are intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, which are focused on the direct interaction with the out-group.[49] These fears are often used to justify (physical)

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[39] Byrne and Senehi, *Violence*, 102; Tore Bjørgo, "Violence against Ethnic and Religious Minorities," in *International Handbook of Violence Research*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (Dordrecht: Springer, 2003), 790-791.

[40] Bjørgo, "Violence against Ethnic and Religious Minorities," 791.

[41] Thema Bryant-Davis et al, "The Trauma Lens of Police Violence against Racial and Ethnic Minorities," *Journal of Social Issues* 74, no. 4 (2017): 855; Jeannine Bell, *Hate Thy Neighbor: Move-In Violence and the Persistence of Racial Segregation in American Housing* (New York: New York University Press, 2013): 84.

[42] Yakushko, "Xenophobia," 43.

[43] Springs, "Structural and Cultural Violence in Religion and Peacebuilding," 157.

[44] Yakushko, "Xenophobia," 44.

[45] Ibid., 45.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Walter G. Stephan and Cookie White Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice," in *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination*, ed. Sutart Oskamp (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000), 25.

[48] Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice," 25-26.

[49] Ibid., 27.

violence against racial or ethnic minorities. Scholars, therefore, often connect xenophobia to direct violence, as violence against racial minorities is often the result of xenophobic sentiments.[50]

Xenophobia is a clear example of what Galtung would define as structural violence. It could even be argued that, in some parts of the world, xenophobia can be seen as cultural violence, as it is so deeply embedded in certain societies. This thesis, however, contends that American xenophobia should be categorized as structural violence, as it is not yet a permanence in the US. Even though xenophobic sentiments towards immigrants and foreigners have increased over the past few years, it cannot (yet) be stated that these sentiments have become embedded in American culture, because not every American citizen acts upon them or agrees with them. In order to investigate whether xenophobia, as a manifestation of structural violence, influences the presence of direct violence, this thesis will now discuss the concept of hate crime.

According to Natalie Alkiviadou, hate crimes have two main characteristics: they consist of a criminal act and they are based on bias motivation, meaning that the perpetrator chooses its victim on the basis of a specific characteristic.[51] Hate crimes have multiple effects. First of all, in most cases, they cause physical harm. Secondly, they cause psychological damage, because victims are targeted because of their unchangeable characteristics or parts of their identity.[52] As such, hate crimes will not only influence the victim, but the psychological harm will also be felt by the community of the victim, as they often share his or hers demographical or identity-based characteristics.[53] Alkiviadou mentions this as well, and argues that hate crimes cause harm on three levels: the micro-scale (the individual victim), the meso-scale (the community surrounding the victim) and the macro-scale (the society).[54] The latter is harmed through the decay of a cohesive community.[55]

As hate crimes are always meant to target a specific characteristic of a human being, race is often a part of these kind of crimes. Powers even argues that hate crimes based on racial bias are the most common kind of hate crime.[56] Various authors mention the rise in hate

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[50] Robert Braun, "The Diffusion of Racist Violence in the Netherlands: Discourse and Distance," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 6 (2011): 753-754; Byrne and Senehi, *Violence*, 111-112.
[51] Alkiviadou, "Regulating Hatred: Of Devils and Demons?" 223.
[52] Ráchael A. Powers and Kelly M. Socia, "Racial Animosity, Adversary Effect, and Hate Crime: Parsing Out Injuries in Intraracial, Interracial, and Race-Based Offenses," *Crime & Delinquency* 65, no. 4 (2019): 452.
[53] Powers and Socia, "Racial Animosity, Adversary Effect, and Hate Crime," 452.
[54] Alkiviadou, "Regulating Hatred," 219.
[55] Ibid., 219.
[56] Powers and Socia, "Racial Animosity, Adversary Effect, and Hate Crime," 453.

crimes against immigrant minorities in the United States.[57] As hate crime is thus often motivated by racial bias, a relation between hate crime against immigrants and rising xenophobia in the US should not be denied.

This thesis seeks to investigate whether or not xenophobia can and should be considered as violence, and, most importantly, if so, whether it influences direct violence in the form of hate crime. This thesis thereby situates itself within the debate on the definition of violence, as it aims to research the possible existence of influences across different types of violence. By analyzing this specific case study, which will be explained in more detail in the next chapter, this thesis will have a twofold result. First of all, the case study will inform us on how political xenophobia in the US is formed and how it has potentially affected hate crime rates during the presidency of Donald Trump. Moreover, this thesis will be able to elaborate on a more general level on the academic debate on violence and its manifestations.

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[57] Goleen Samari, "Islamophobia and Public Health in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 11 (2016): 1920; Craig Considine, "The Radicalization of Islam in the United States: Islamophobia, Hate Crimes, and 'Flying while Brown'," *Religions* 8, no. 9 (2017): 1-2.

## 3 Research design

In order to answer the research question, this thesis will analyze the potential connection between political xenophobia and hate crime in four cases. The first case study will consider the possible relation between Trump's political xenophobia towards Arabs and hate crimes towards Arabs in 2017, after which the second case study will perform the same analysis, but with data from 2018. These case studies will be discussed in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter will evaluate the possible relations between Trump's political xenophobia towards Latinos and the number of hate crimes towards this group in 2017 in the third case study, and in 2018 in the fourth case study.

The results from these four separate analyses will enable this study to evaluate which theoretical school of thought offers the best explanation for the different levels and manifestations of violence in societies. It will observe whether political xenophobia, as a form of structural violence, influences hate crime, as a form of direct violence. This will ultimately enable the thesis to situate itself in the academic debate between, on the one hand, Galtung, Byrne and Senehi, and Nixon, who argue in favor of a broad, multilevel concept of violence, and on the other hand Coady, Wacquant, Beckerleg and Hirschfield, who argue that broadening the concept of violence will have negative consequences. If the analyses point to a positive correlation between Trump's political xenophobia towards Arabs and Latinos and hate crime towards them, it can be argued that a broad concept of violence is necessary to truly understand how violence and its different manifestations in society work. If, however, the analyses do not necessarily portray a relation between xenophobia and hate crime, this would prove that a different, less extensive definition of violence would suffice to understand violent behavior in societies.

Notwithstanding that this thesis is mainly focused on determining whether or not there are connections between the levels of violence, the analysis of two different populations will also explore the potential differences between the social and political place of both groups in American society. Even though most hate crime and xenophobia is still targeted at African-Americans, I have deliberately chosen to analyze the xenophobia and hate crime targeted at Latino and Arab people in the US. Racism towards both of these groups has gradually increased during the past few years, yet there is still a gap in the literature on this topic. Analyzing xenophobia and hate crime towards these specific groups will thus add to a more extensive academic debate in the future, which is necessary in order to work towards societies in which the presence of racist violence decreases, instead of increases.

Due to the scope of this thesis, the research will be limited to the United States. As explained in the introduction, the US have published shocking reports on hate crime in their country, which points to a large and undermined issue in American society. Even though hate crime and xenophobia have existed for a long period in the United States, I have chosen to solely focus on the presidency of Donald Trump. Trump frequently demonstrates clear and explicit xenophobic sentiment towards multiple minority groups in the US, which is often legitimized because of his political power. This, in turn, legitimizes American citizens to express xenophobic sentiments as well. As Trump's presidency thus exemplifies how political xenophobia has the potential to influence the population, it is a fitting case to connect to the academic debate this thesis aims to contribute to. The specific case studies were selected to display both the potential change in the administration's stance towards minorities within one presidential term, as the potential differences in Trump's xenophobic sentiments towards two different minority groups. Even though an analysis of the entire term would have resulted in a more inclusive answer to the research question, the FBI reports on hate crime have only been published until 2018, which is why this thesis will only investigate 2017 and 2018.

Dependent on the severity of political xenophobia in each case, which is the independent variable in this research, the subchapters will separately define what the expected outcome, thus the dependent variable, will be. To determine the existence of political xenophobia towards Arabs and Latinos in the United States in 2017 and 2018, this thesis will first analyze documents issued by the White House during these years, such as statements by Trump, conversations with politicians and weekly addresses. The analysis will determine if Trump creates xenophobic sentiments around these population groups, which, in the bigger image, could be labeled as structural violence. In the second part of the analyses, both the FBI's hate crime statistics and newspaper articles will be utilized to analyze the amount of hate crime towards the groups in 2017 and 2018. Ultimately, the chapters will discuss whether xenophobia has indeed influenced the manifestation of hate crime, or if no clear connection was discovered.

**4 Xenophobia and hate crime towards Arabs in the United States**

The first Arab-speaking immigrant group that migrated to the United States, was the Syrian population, which arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[58] Since then, many Arab groups have migrated to the United States, experiencing the same hardship as various other immigrant groups in the US, such as Jews, Asians and Latinos. Even though xenophobia towards Arabs was thus not a new phenomenon, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York ushered in an era of unprecedented hate and fear towards Arabs in the United States.[59] Islamophobia, which can be explained as hostility specifically aimed at Muslims and Arabs, has, since then, not only spread throughout the United States, but has also gained support in other parts of the world, particularly Western-Europe.[60] Accordingly, hate crime towards Arab immigrants and Arab-Americans has also increased during the past two decades.[61]

This chapter seeks to investigate the potential connections between political xenophobia and hate crime towards Arab immigrants and citizens in the United States. In order to determine if political xenophobia towards Arabs in the United States was present in 2017, this chapter will first discuss Donald Trump's rhetoric and actions towards Arabs during this year. On the basis of this analysis, the observable implications will be specified, after which this chapter will analyze hate crime statistics and media outlets on hate crime towards Arabs in the US. This analysis will eventually determine whether or not the implications of the political xenophobia have actually been observed. The same structure will then be applied to data from 2018.

4.1 Political xenophobia towards Arabs in 2017
Even before Trump became president in January 2017, he had already established a clear vision on Islam and Arab immigrants. During his campaign, Trump, for instance, stated that he would consider closing mosques all over the US. In 2015, he labeled Islam as a sickness,

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[58] Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2009): 11.
[59] Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 10; Elsadig Elsheikh, Basima Sisemore and Natalia Ramirez Lee, *Legalizing Othering: The United States of Islamophobia*, Berkeley: Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, 2017, accessed May 29, 2020, https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haas_institute_legalizing_othering_the_united_states_of_islamophobia.pdf: 15.
[60] Considine, "The Radicalization of Islam in the United States," 3; 5.
[61] Elsheikh, Sisemore and Ramirez Lee, *Legalizing Othering*, 41.

and Muslims as "sick people."[62] Only seven days after he was sworn in office as the 45th president of the United States, Trump issued executive order 13769, better known as the 'Muslim Ban', in which he prohibited the entry of people from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen into the United States.[63] The purpose of this executive order was to "protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals", as "numerous foreign-born individuals have been convicted or implicated in terrorism-related crimes since September 11, 2001."[64] The document emphasizes that foreign-born nationals who "engage in bigotry or hatred" towards women and people with other religions, or those who would "oppress Americans of any race, gender or sexual orientation" could form a great threat to the United States and "its founding principles."[65] Furthermore, the document presents the idea of a mechanism which would assess whether or not an immigrant would have the intent to commit terrorist attacks after he or she would enter the US.[66] A particular emphasis is placed on the entry of Syrian refugees, as the document was issued during the Syrian refugee crisis, and it states that "the entry of nationals from Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the US."[67] The document also pronounces the intent to be transparent to the American people about information regarding foreign people in the US who have been associated with terrorism or anything else which might harm national security.[68] This transparency, however, is just a facade, as the 'facts' given in the governmental documents completely ignore the vulnerability of many refugees and only focus on their negative influences on American society. This is a clear implication that the administration is adamant in painting a negative image of Arab people, instead of providing Americans with transparency and the truth, as it claims to do.

On the 6th of March, 2017, Trump reiterates the government's stance towards foreign nationals by stating that "it is the policy of the United States to keep its citizens safe from terrorist attacks, including those committed by foreign nationals," by averting "the entry into the United States of foreign nationals who may aid, support, or commit violent, criminal, or

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[62] Jenna Johnson and Abigail Hauslohner, "'I think Islam hates us': A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims," *Washington Post*, May 20, 2017, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/05/20/i-think-islam-hates-us-a-timeline-of-trumps-comments-about-islam-and-muslims/.
[63] US Government, Executive Order 13769, *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,* January 27, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states/.
[64] US Government, *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

terrorist acts."[69] In order to execute this policy, the document states that the executive branch will enhance the screening protocols for admission to the US.[70]

In a fact sheet, issued by the White House on the 29th of September, the Trump administration emphasizes the cases in which refugees have been affiliated with terrorism. It states that since 2011, twenty refugees have been arrested on the basis of terrorism investigations.[71] Therefore, due to the dangers affiliated with refugees from Arab countries, the administration gave an executive order on the 24th of October, which ordered even stricter vetting procedures within the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).[72] According to this document, the entry of refugees into the US through this program "poses unique security risks and considerable domestic challenges that require the application of substantial resources," which is the reason for implementing even stricter vetting procedures on possible refugees.[73] On the 16th of December, the administration reiterated the dangers of accepting refugees from certain countries, as Trump devoted his weekly address to the nation to the terrorist attacks in New York in October and November, which, in both cases, were executed by refugees from Arab countries who arrived through the 'broken' immigration system.[74]

The above mentioned documents and statements clearly illustrate xenophobic sentiments of the administration towards Arab immigrants in 2017. By directly putting the Muslim Ban into force, and then repeatedly emphasizing the dangers of accepting refugees and immigrants from Arab countries, Trump succeeded in creating fear among the American public. Whether or not this fear had direct consequences for the amount of hate crime towards Arab people in the US, will be discussed in the next subchapter.

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[69] US Government, Presidential Memorandum, *Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security*, March 6, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/memorandum-secretary-state-attorney-general-secretary-homeland-security/.

[70] US Government, *Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security*.

[71] US Government, Fact Sheet, *President Donald J. Trump is Taking a Responsible and Humanitarian Approach on Refugees*, September 29, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-taking-responsible-humanitarian-approach-refugees/.

[72] US Government, Executive Order, *Presidential Executive Order on Resuming the United States Refugee Admissions Program with Enhanced Vetting Capabilities*, October 24, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-executive-order-resuming-united-states-refugee-admissions-program-enhanced-vetting-capabilities/.

[73] US Government, *Presidential Executive Order on Resuming the United States Refugee Admissions Program with Enhanced Vetting Capabilities*.

[74] US Government, Weekly Address, *President Donald J. Trump's Weekly Address*, December 16, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-weekly-address-121617/; "New York Port Authority attack: Man held after Manhattan blast," *BBC*, December 11, 2017, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42312293; Benjamin Mueller, William K. Rashbaum and Al Baker, "Terror Attack Kills 8 and Injures 11 in Manhattan," *The New York Times*, October 31, 2017, accessed May 29, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html.

<u>4.2 Hate crime towards Arabs in 2017</u>

In order to determine whether or not there is a connection between the political xenophobia of the Trump administration and the hate crime statistics on Arab victims in 2017, this thesis will first define the expected implications for this part of the analysis. As illustrated in the previous section, the Trump administration manifested its xenophobia towards Arab immigrants through both speech and actions during its first year in office. Persistently labeling people from Arab countries as terrorists and never mentioning the Arabs in America who are good, reliable and hardworking citizens, Trump slowly but steadily created a negative social identity on all Arab people, instead of only those who actually deserve this identity because of criminal offenses. This constructed social identity then easily found its audience due to the already existing Islamophobia in the United States. The expected implication of this political xenophobia is, therefore, an increase in hate crime towards Arabs in 2017.

On a yearly basis, the FBI issues a statistical report on hate crime. These reports present the numbers and percentages of hate crime on and by different societal groups. When using the data from these reports to perform an analysis, it is essential to recognize that these reports are not completely reliable. The FBI is dependent on the data from state-level entities, which are sometimes reluctant to publish the data on hate crime in their state or do not have sufficient legislation to properly address and record hate crime, resulting in unreliable statistics from these states.[75] Most important, however, is to recognize the cases of hate crime which were not even witnessed or processed by the police. Many illegal immigrants know that if they would report a crime, it would become clear that they are not legal citizens of the US. Reporting a hate crime is, therefore, not even an option for many immigrants. Even though the exact number is unknown, it can be said with certainty that there are many cases of hate crime that the police and FBI do not know about. The data from the FBI can thus not be considered to be completely inclusive. Even though the above mentioned flaws of this data should be considered in this analysis, these reports still have great value in assessing the state of hate crime in the US, which is why they will be used in this analysis.

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[75] Maya Berry and Kai Wiggins, "FBI stats on hate crimes are scary. So is what's missing," *CNN*, November 14, 2018, accessed May 30, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/2018/11/14/opinions/fbi-hate-crimes-data-whats-missing-berry-wiggins/index.html.

According to the FBI, the number of Arab victims of hate crime in the US in 2015, was 48.[76] In 2016, this number had already increased to 57.[77] In 2017, however, this amount had more than doubled, with 131 reported Arab victims of hate crime.[78] This increase in the number of Arab victims points to an alarming rise in hate towards Arabs in the US. It is safe to say that the election of Donald Trump did not positively influence hate crime towards Arabs in 2017, as the weeks following the election showed an increase of 92 percent in daily hate crimes.[79] The second largest increase was in the hate crime towards Arab Americans, which poignantly proves a correlation between Trump's xenophobia and the number of hate crimes towards Arabs, which means that the expected implication of Trump's political xenophobia has been proven to be correct.

4.3 Political xenophobia towards Arabs in 2018

On the 16th of January, 2018, the White House published a fact sheet called "Our Current Immigration System Jeopardizes American Security."[80] In this document, it is once again emphasized that suspects of terrorist attacks in the US are foreign born three out of four times.[81] It then moves on to list 'terrorists' – the list only mentions Arab names – who have entered the US through either chain migration and family ties, or the visa lottery program. Moreover, it states that "by failing to impose meaningful selection criteria, such as skills or likelihood to assimilate," the current immigration system is "incompatible with national security."[82] The administration is thus aiming to introduce a different immigration system, in which acceptance to enter the US is based on skills and the prospects of assimilation.

Two weeks after this document was published, two other fact sheets were presented. Specifically chain migration and the visa lottery system are subject of critique in these

[76] FBI, *2015 Hate Crime Statistics: Victims, Table 1: Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders, by Bias Motivation.* November 14, 2016, as Motivation, 2015
https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/1tabledatadecpdf.
[77] FBI, *2016 Hate Crime Statistics: Victims, Table 1: Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders, by Bias Motivation.* November 13, 2017, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-1.
[78] FBI, *2017 Hate Crime Statistics: Victims, Table 1: Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders, by Bias Motivation.* November 13, 2018, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/tables/table-1.xls.
[79] Omar Baddar, "Hate Crimes Continue to Surge in America," *Arab American Institute USA*, November 13, 2018, accessed May 30, 2020, https://www.aaiusa.org/hate_crimes_continue_to_surge_in_america.
[80] US Government, Fact Sheet, *Our Current Immigration System Jeopardizes American Security*, January 16, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/current-immigration-system-jeopardizes-american-security/.
[81] US Government, *Our Current Immigration System Jeopardizes American Security*.
[82] Ibid.

documents, as they "jeopardize the security of American communities."[83] It discusses how immigration reform would benefit American workers, as "years of mass low-skilled immigration has led to suppressed wages and has strained Federal resources."[84] It states that the current immigration system "strains the resources of our Nation's welfare programs," as "more than half of all immigrant households use one or more welfare programs."[85] Moreover, these documents reiterate the lists of names that have been mentioned before, which have the purpose to personify and villainize the people behind terrorist attacks in the US. Once again, all of these names are Arab.[86] The document mentions, for instance, "Ahmed Amin El-Mofty, an Egyptian national," who entered the United States through chain migration and "was killed during a shootout after allegedly opening fire and targeting police."[87] Another example is Syed Haris Ahmed, a Pakistani immigrant, who entered the United States as a visa lottery winner. According to the document, "Ahmed was convicted in 2009 of terrorism-related activities in the United States and abroad."[88] It is needless to say that these crimes are, indeed, horrendous and obviously ask for punishment. It is, however, unfair and unjust to use these examples to attribute certain sentiments and characteristics to an entire foreign group. In none of the governmental documents of 2018, Arab-Americans or Arab immigrants are described in a positive manner, which points to the administration's continuing effort to construct a negative social identity around Arab people.

Even though the above mentioned documents clearly echo the hostile and xenophobic sentiments of the Trump administration which were seen in 2017, the administration abandoned its focus on Arabs during the remainder of this year. The above mentioned documents were all published in the first two months of 2018, after which only a few documents from 2018 shortly mentioned Arabs or terrorists. Even though we cannot know whether the stance of the administration towards Arabs actually changed, it cannot be denied that the 'official' xenophobia towards Arabs decreased in 2018.

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[83] US Government, Fact Sheet, *President Donald J. Trump Wants Immigration that Makes America Stronger and Safer*, January 30, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-wants-immigration-makes-america-stronger-safer/.
[84] US Government, *President Donald J. Trump Wants Immigration that Makes America Stronger and Safer*.
[85] US Government, Fact Sheet, *National Security Threats – Chain Migration and the Visa Lottery System*, February 1, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/national-security-threats-chain-migration-visa-lottery-system/.
[86] US Government, Fact Sheet, *National Security Threats – Chain Migration and the Visa Lottery System*.
[87]Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

4.4 Hate crime towards Arabs in 2018

First, this chapter will define the expected implications of the analyzed political xenophobia of the previous chapter. The documents that were published in the beginning of the year, in which the administration clearly echoed its stance towards Arabs of the previous year, would suggest that the xenophobia, and thus hate crime, would still be present in the US in 2018. However, due to the diminishing attention of the administration during the remainder of the year, it can be expected that the hate crime numbers of 2018 were lower than those in 2017. In comparison to the numbers of 2015 and 2016, however, a large reduction would be an illogical result.

Whereas 2017 saw a sharp increase in hate crime towards Arabs, the numbers from 2018 were, fortunately, less dramatic. In 2017, the FBI reported the number of hate crimes towards Arabs to be 131.[89] In 2018, this number had declined to 100, which points to quite a steep reduction.[90] This reduction can, at least partially, be accredited to the decrease in political xenophobia from the Trump administration. Even though this will most definitely not have been the only factor, it can be stated with certainty that the decrease in negative attention from the White House had a positive effect on the amount of hate crime during 2018. The New York Times suggested that the White House changed its priority from terrorism to immigration, and that this had a clear impact on hate crime rates, as the number of Arab victims decreased.[91] The next chapter will illustrate whether or not this shift in priority from terrorism to immigration actually occurred.

Even though this chapter expected the implication of Trump's policy towards Arabs in 2018 to be a small reduction in the hate crime rates, it actually showed quite a large reduction. Although there is definitely a positive correlation between the decrease in political xenophobia and the number of hate crime towards Arabs in 2018, this analysis cannot fully explain the rather large reduction during this year. Other factors may have played a role in this decrease. For instance, as the Muslim ban resulted in less Arab immigrants and refugees in the US, it could be argued that the decrease in Arabs in the US directly influenced the decrease in hate crime towards Arabs.

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[89] FBI, *2017 Hate Crime Statistics*.
[90] FBI, *2018 Hate Crime Statistics: Victims, Table 1: Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders, by Bias Motivation.* November 12, 2019, https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2018/topic-pages/tables/table-1.xls.
[91] Adeel Hassan, "Hate-Crime Violence Hits 16-Year High, F.B.I. Reports," *The New York Times*, November 12, 2019, accessed May 31, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/12/us/hate-crimes-fbi-report.html.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the political xenophobia and hate crime towards Arabs in the US in both 2017 and 2018, which has resulted in a few interesting observations. First of all, the change throughout the two years is quite remarkable. The Muslim ban was one of Trump's most noted and contested ideas during his campaign, which received a lot of positive as well as negative feedback. During his first week in office, Trump immediately put this idea into operation, which marked a rather 'strong' beginning of the administration on the topic of terrorism and Arab immigration. Throughout 2017 and the first two months of 2018, the same information was often reiterated, as a reminder of the negative implications of Arab immigrants as a justification for the Muslim Ban. This repetition of old facts points to the lack of new and noteworthy news on Arab immigrants and refugees. Even though there was thus clearly no new reason for xenophobic sentiments towards Arabs in the US, Trump still found a way to continue constructing a negative social identity around Arabs. This approach apparently worked in 2017 – as hate crimes rose by more than 100 percent – but the administration clearly chose to slowly drift away from their focus on Arab immigration in 2018.

Secondly, the administration's construction of a social identity around Arabs was an noteworthy observation. Throughout the entire two years, the administration always referred to Arabs in connection to terrorism. By repetitively listing the names of Arab immigrants and their crimes, often related to terrorist organizations, Trump attempted to create a direct connotation between Arabs and terrorism. Almost every document on this topic stated that Arab refugees are detrimental to the American national security. By constantly reaffirming the relation between Arabs, terrorism and their threat to national security, Trump created a culture of fear. Even though the documents only spoke about Arab immigrants and refugees, and not about Arab-Americans who legally live in the US, he still managed to create a feeling of threat and danger surrounding the entire Arab population in the US.

This feeling of threat and danger among American citizens can, of course, not be solely ascribed to Trump's political xenophobia. The terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda in 2001, the San Bernardino attack in 2015, the Orlando night club shooting in 2016 and other terrorist attacks on American soil had already created fear among many American citizens, resulting in a general culture of fear towards Arab people in the US. Even though Trump is thus not the only reason for fear towards this societal group, his position and power as president and his use of xenophobic language have certainly exacerbated the underlying sentiments in

American society and legitimized civilians to express xenophobic sentiments and violence towards this group.

The undeniable relation between the increase in political xenophobia, mostly in 2017, and the rising numbers of Arab victims of hate crime, points to a positive correlation between political xenophobia and hate crime in the US. As political xenophobia is a form of structural violence, and hate crime a form of direct violence, this observation supports the theoretical assumption that different levels of violence exist and influence each other. Moreover, it supports the argument that a broad definition of violence is necessary to understand its multiple levels and manifestations in society and how, most importantly, they have the ability to justify each other.

## 5 Xenophobia and hate crime towards Latinos in the United States

Immigration from Latin and South America to the United States has increased heavily over the past few decades.[92] Recent developments have resulted in a border crisis between the US and Mexico, affecting the lives of many Latino immigrants in the US. During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump clarified his views on immigration and announced his plans to not only deport undocumented immigrants, but to even build a wall to stop illegal immigrants from entering the United States.[93]

Xenophobia towards Latinos is not a new phenomenon in the US. Hispanophobia, as Zentella names it, has existed from the early 1920's onwards.[94] Latinos have been racially framed as "illegal aliens", which has resulted in the public often immediately thinking of American Latinos as illegal, even though many Latinos are legally living in the US.[95] This racial framing has taken place over the course of almost the entire 20th century, and has, one can argue, only worsened over the past two decades. Hate crime towards Latinos has also increased in the past decades in the United States.[96] Some scholars even argue that the growing xenophobia and hate crime towards Latinos has been influenced by the rising Islamophobia in the United States, resulting in an overall negative attitude towards immigrants.[97]

This chapter seeks to discover the potential relation between political xenophobia and hate crime towards Latinos in the US in 2017 and 2018. It will have the same structure as the previous chapter, as it will first discuss political xenophobia towards Latinos, secondly identify the observable implications and then analyze whether or not the observations can be observed in the data on hate crime towards Latinos

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[92] Jacqueline Mazza, "The US-Mexico Border and Mexican Migration to the United States: A 21st Century Review," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 37, no. 2 (2017): 36.

[93] Tatyana Kleyn, "Centering Transborder Strudents: Perspectives on Identity, Languaging and Schooling Between the U.S. and Mexico," *Multicultural Perspectives* 19, no. 2 (2017): 76; Hanna Samir Kassab and Jonathan D. Rosen, *Illicit Markets, Organized Crime, and Global Security* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), 78.

[94] Anna Celia Zentella, "The Hispanophobia of the Official English Movement in the US," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 127 (1997): 74; Luis A. Romero and Amna Zarrugh, "Islamophobia and the making of Latinos/as into terrorist threats," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 12 (2018): 2238-2239.

[95] Romero and Zarrugh, "Islamophobia and the making of Latinos/as into terrorist threats," 2238.

[96] Maria Pabon Lopez, "An Essay Examining the Murder of Luis Ramirez and the Emergence of Hate Crimes against Latino Immigrants in the United States," *Arizona State Law Journal* 44, no. 1 (2012): 155-156.

[97] Lopez, "An Essay Examining the Murder of Luis Ramirez and the Emergence of Hate Crimes against Latino Immigrants in the United States," 156; Romero and Zarrugh, "Islamophobia and the making of Latinos/as into terrorist threats," 2238-2239.

5.1 Political xenophobia towards Latinos in 2017

On January 25, 2017, the White House issued an executive order on border security and immigration enforcement improvements.[98] In this executive order, Trump states that "aliens who illegally enter the United States without inspection or admission present a significant threat to national security and public safety."[99] The document emphasizes that the "recent surge of illegal immigration at the southern border with Mexico" has placed a strain on the resources of the state and the border security agencies.[100] The document then elaborates on the immigrants who try to enter the US via the Mexican border and states that among these people, there are those "who seek to harm Americans through acts of terror and criminal conduct," which presents a "clear and present danger to the interests of the United States."[101] The transnational criminal organizations that operate on both sides of the border are, according to the document, "contributing to a significant increase in violent crime and United States deaths from dangerous drugs."[102] The document also presents the aim of the administration to construct a physical wall or barrier on the southern border of the US, which would "prevent illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking, and acts of terrorism."[103] Trump had thus established the plans for building a wall on the Southern border during his first week in office.

In another executive order, also from January 25, the administration emphasizes the same issue. This executive order, however, focuses on safety in the interior of the United States. It states that "tens of thousands of removable aliens have been released into communities across the country."[104] Many of these people are criminals, according to the White House, and their presence in the United States is detrimental to the national interest.[105]

In a fact sheet, issued on the 28th of June, the administration takes its stance towards illegal immigrants from the South even further. It states that, in order to protect the freedom of American citizens, the administration will "go after the criminal gang and cartels that prey

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[98] US Government, Executive Order, *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements*, January 25, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-border-security-immigration-enforcement-improvements/.
[99] US Government, *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements*.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] US Government, Executive Order, *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States*, January 25, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-enhancing-public-safety-interior-united-states/.
[105] US Government, *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States*.

on our innocent citizens."[106] Due to these criminals who have poured into the interior of the US, Trump has ordered the creation of the "Department of Homeland Security's Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE)."[107] This institution would be solely created to support the victims of crimes executed by immigrants. At the end of this document, the White House anticipates on the national sentiment of American citizens, as it states that everyone must now work together to "deliver justice and safety and security for all Americans."[108] This document clearly echoes the us vs. them rhetoric of the Trump administration, in which Americans are victimized and Latinos are villainized.

In a statement on June 29, Trump pronounces his approval of two immigration laws: Kate's Law and the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act. Kate's Law, named after Kate Steinle, who was killed by an illegal immigrant, "increases criminal penalties for illegal immigrants who repeatedly re-enter the country illegally."[109] The No Sanctuary for Criminals Act punishes states or cities which do not turn over illegal immigrants to the police, by restricting their federal funding.[110] Opposing these bills, Trump states, "and allowing dangerous criminals back into our communities, schools and neighborhoods where our children play, puts all of us at risk."[111] This sentiment is reiterated in Trump's Weekly Address on December 9, in which he gives an emotional appeal on the death of Kate Steinle. By citing her last words before her death and then stating that no American should be separated from their loved ones due to the crimes of illegal aliens, Trump emphasizes the emotional burden of the illegal immigrants in the US.[112]

By identifying Latino immigrants with words as illegal, criminal, hunting for prey and aliens, Trump has created a negative social construct surrounding immigrants, and Latino immigrants in particular. By dehumanizing these people, Trump pits the entire American nation up against a mainly innocent and struggling group of people. It is essential to mention that crimes, such as the death of Kate Steinle, obviously ask for punishment and deserve

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[106] US Government, Fact Sheet, *President Donald J. Trump Taking Action Against Illegal Immigration*, June 28, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-taking-action-illegal-immigration/.
[107] US Government, *President Donald J. Trump Taking Action Against Illegal Immigration*.
[108] Ibid.
[109] US Government, Statement, *Statement from President Donald J. Trump on House Passage of Kate's Law and No Sanctuary for Criminals Act*, June 29, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-donald-j-trump-house-passage-kates-law-no-sanctuary-criminals-act/.
[110] US Government, *Statement from President Donald J. Trump on House Passage of Kate's Law and No Sanctuary for Criminals Act*.
[111] Ibid.
[112] US Government, Weekly Address, *President Donald J. Trump's Weekly Address*, December 9, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-weekly-address-26/.

attention. Nonetheless, as was argued in the previous chapter about Arabs as well, it is not fair to call an entire group of people criminal, illegal and alien. Furthermore, the us versus them rhetoric is very strong in these documents, as Trump constantly reiterates the need for saving 'American lives' and standing up to these criminals as a nation. This analysis has thus illustrated Trump's political xenophobia towards Latinos in 2017. The next subchapter will determine whether or not this had direct effects on hate crime towards Latinos in the US.

5.2 Hate crime towards Latinos in 2017

Due to the powerful political xenophobia expressed by the Trump administration towards Latinos, the expected implication is a rise in the number of hate crime with Latino victims. In 2015, according to the FBI's statistics, 392 Latinos became the victim of hate crime in the US.[113] Even though this is already quite a large number of people, it grew even more in 2016, when 483 Latinos were the subject of a hate crime.[114] Unfortunately, this increase in hate crime towards Latinos did not stop there. In 2017, the reported number of hate crime towards Latinos was 552.[115] This drastic increase is problematic and asks for explanations.

There are surely many other factors that have contributed to this increase, like the fear of American citizens to lose their jobs or financial security due to these immigrants. There is, however, no way around the fact that Trump's rhetoric and governmental actions towards Latinos in 2017 have heavily contributed towards the growing number of hate crime towards this group. His construction of Latinos as criminal, illegal and alien has clearly affected how the public sees these people, even though many Latinos are legally living in the US.

Even though it has already been discussed in the previous chapter, it is essential to recognize the many cases of hate crime which were not even reported to the FBI, due to reluctancy of states to report the correct numbers, or even to the police, due to fear of eviction. These cases are thus not counted in the data from the FBI, which results in unrealistic and untrue reports. Even though the 552 Latinos who were victims of hate crime in 2017 are already way too many people, it is essential to keep in mind that this number is, in reality, even higher.

This subchapter has painfully proven the connection between political xenophobia and hate crime, and thus different levels of violence, towards Latinos in 2017. The next chapter will assess whether or not this trend continued during the second year of Trump's term.

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[113] FBI, *2015 Hate Crime Statistics.*
[114] FBI, *2016 Hate Crime Statistics.*
[115] FBI, *2017 Hate Crime Statistics.*

<u>5.3 Political xenophobia towards Latinos in 2018</u>

On the 2nd of February, 2018, the White House issued a fact sheet in which it emphasizes the need for secure borders in order to safeguard the security of the American interior.[116] According to the fact sheet, "most attempts to smuggle illicit contraband into the U.S. occur along the Southern border."[117] Moreover, it states that Mexico is a "major source" of heroin, methamphetamine and, most of al, cocaine.[118] During a roundtable on customs and border protection on that same day, Trump stated that the criminal immigrants are bad people, who "keep pouring into the country from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico."[119] In a fact sheet published on February 13, Trump applies the same technique as discussed in the previous chapter on Arabs. He lists names of criminals, all Latin-American, who have been arrested in the US.[120] By only naming Latin-American names, Trump directly ties Latinos to criminality and violence.

On March 10, 2018, Trump used his weekly address to the nation to discuss the issue of immigration and sanctuary cities. Sanctuary cities, according to the administration, do not hand over the "illegal aliens" who come into their territory. Trump argues that these cities undermine the immigration system of the US and urges them to change their policies. In the weekly address he states that these cities are "releasing thousands of criminal aliens into U.S. communities to prey on innocent victims." Moreover, these cities are "the best friends of smugglers, gang members, drug dealers, human traffickers, killers and other violent offenders", according to the document. Trump ends this address by saying that "it is time to end the bloodshed brought about by reckless sanctuary policies," and save innocent American lives. The words used in this weekly address point to reckless xenophobia, of which especially the accusation that immigrants "prey on innocent victims" is an example.

The Trump administration published a document defending the existence of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on the 5th of July, as Democrats in Congress called for the abolishment of this program.[121] According to Trump, "abolishing ICE

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[116] US Government, Fact Sheet, *Responsible Immigration Reform Will Secure Our Borders*, February 2, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/responsible-immigration-reform-will-secure-borders/.
[117] US Government, *Responsible Immigration Reform Will Secure Our Borders*.
[118] Ibid.
[119] US Government, Remarks, *Remarks by President Trump at Customs and Border Protection Roundtable*, February 2, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-customs-border-protection-roundtable/.
[120] US Government, Fact Sheet, *Criminal Aliens Set Free by Sanctuary Cities*, February 13, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/criminal-aliens-set-free-sanctuary-cities/.
[121] US Government, Fact Sheet, *Abolishing ICE Would Erase America's Borders and Open the Floodgates to More Crime, Drugs and Terrorism,* July 5, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/abolishing-ice-erase-americas-borders-open-floodgates-crime-drugs-terrorism/.

would mean open borders because it would eliminate the agency responsible for removing illegal immigrants, including drug dealers, gang members, child molesters, rapists, and other sex offenders."[122] The fact sheet then goes on to list the numbers of crimes committed by criminal aliens, such as sexual assault, kidnapping, homicide and dangerous drugs offenses.[123]

On the 13th of October, Trump focuses specifically on the role of children in a speech. He states that immigrants coming in from the Southern border use children to enter the US. "These bad people," he says, "grab children they haven't known for 20 minutes and use them to get into our country."[124] Even though I do not want to argue that this practice does not take place at all, Trump makes it seem in this statement as if every Latino immigrant uses innocent children to get into the US, which is, of course, not true and very offensive towards Latinos.

Near the end of the year, on November 1st, the administration issued two documents which, again, show strong xenophobia towards Latinos. First of all, in a fact sheet, it is stated that the country "is facing an urgent crisis as illegal aliens stream across our border, including a caravan of thousands heading here at this moment."[125] In a speech, given on the same day, Trump states that some people might call the recent immigration flow from the Southern border "an invasion," in which immigrants "have violently overrun the Mexican border, the Mexican police and have badly hurt Mexican soldiers."[126] He moves on to state that "this is not an innocent group of people," and that these people have "injured and attacked" others.[127]

This analysis illustrates that the xenophobic sentiments and actions of the Trump administration towards Latinos did not only continue during 2018, but got even worse. The constant repetition of the words criminal, alien, and illegal and their connections to Latinos in general exemplify Trump's consistent attempts to negatively describe this societal group and its behavior.


5.4 Hate crime towards Latinos in 2018

As illustrated in the previous subchapter, political xenophobia towards Latinos did not decrease in comparison to 2017. Even though there are evidently criminal Latinos in the US,

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[122] US Government, *Abolishing ICE Would Erase America's Borders and Open the Floodgates to More Crime, Drugs and Terrorism*.

[123] Ibid.

[124] US Government, Remarks, *Remarks by President Trump before Marine One Departure*, October 13, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-marine-one-departure-16/.

[125] US Government, Fact Sheet, *Confronting the Urgent Crisis at Our Border*, November 1, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/confronting-urgent-crisis-border/.

[126] US Government, Remarks, *Remarks by President Trump on the Illegal Immigration Crisis and Border Security*, November 1, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-illegal-immigration-crisis-border-security/.

[127] US Government, *Remarks by President Trump on the Illegal Immigration Crisis and Border Security*.

this is just as true for any other societal or immigrant group. Trump, however, puts down the entire Latino population in the US as criminal and unsafe. Emphasizing their threat to the US national security and listing the numbers of offenses by Latino people, Trump has constructed a social identity around this specific group of people. The expected implication of this rhetoric is thus a further rise in hate crime towards Latinos in the US.

As seen in chapter 5.2, the difference between the number in hate crime towards Latinos between the reports from 2016 and 2017 was already a great cause for concern. Sadly, the report from 2018 contained more distressing information. Whereas in 2017 552 Latinos became the victim of hate crime, this number rose to 671 in 2018.[128] As the total number of hate crime incidents in the US decreased in 2018, the increase in Latino victims of hate crime is even more alarming.[129] As shortly mentioned in the previous chapter on xenophobia and hate crime towards Arabs, some people argue that a shift occurred from terrorism as the main priority of the administration, to immigration as Trump's showpiece.[130] The rising hate crime against Latinos support these findings.

The expected implication of Trump's xenophobic rhetoric and actions was thus proven by the analysis of the hate crime statistics of 2018. Even though many other factors have surely contributed to this rise in hate crime towards Latinos, there is an indisputable connection between the xenophobic sentiments of the Trump administration and the rising hate crime numbers, and thus a clear connection between these two types of violence.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that there is a clear connection between Trump's political xenophobia towards Latinos in 2017 and 2018, and the numbers of Latino victims of hate crime during these years. A few observations were made during the analyses, which will now be discussed.

First of all, a difference was noticed between the rhetoric in 2017 and in 2018. In 2017, even though immigration was already a priority for the administration, the rhetoric against Latinos was less aggressive. In the course of 2018, however, rhetoric became more aggressive and more powerful. Stating that immigrants 'prey' on innocent victims and abuse children for their own entry in the United States is belligerent and provocative, to say the

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[128] FBI, *2017 Hate Crime Statistics*; FBI, *2018 Hate Crime Statistics*.
[129] Claire Meyer, "Violent Hate Crimes Reach 16-Year High in United States," *Advancing Security Worldwide*, February 1, 2020, accessed on June 1, 2020, https://www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/articles/2020/02/violent-hate-crimes-reach-16-year-high-in-united-states/.
[130] Hassan, "Hate Crime Violence Hits 16-Year High, F.B.I. Reports."

least. Trump's rhetoric became even more hostile near the end of 2018, when he talked about the invasion of immigrants on the Southern border. Using these phrases and characteristics to describe Latino immigrants has implications for the entire Latino population in the US, even though many Latinos are legal citizens of the US.

Whereas chapter 4 illustrated that Trump tries to create a culture of fear surrounding Arabs, it is clear that he has tried to establish a culture of anger towards Latinos. The repetition of the numbers of criminal acts by Latinos and the constant reiteration that, only together, America is able to defeat these criminals, Trump has established a lot of anger in the US towards this population group. In the analyzed documents, it is frequently mentioned that Latino immigrants rob 'real' American citizens' from their money and jobs, which logically gives cause to many Americans to detest, and maybe even be violent to, their Southern neighbors. Furthermore, Trump cleverly uses emotion in, for instance, his weekly addresses to the nation, in which he calls for national cohesion and unity in the battle against the enemy, villainizing anyone who is not American or should not be able to be American.

Another observation I made during the analysis, is the constant use of the word 'alien.' Even though Latinos, immigrant or not, are the exact same people as the average American – non-violent and hardworking – Trump has succeeded to dehumanize Latinos by constantly referring to them as illegal aliens. Even though there are, hopefully, many Americans who can see past this unfair and unjust categorization, there are always people who blindly follow the actions and rhetoric of those in power. The fact that many Americans follow Trump in his xenophobic sentiment towards Latinos, also has other causes. As discussed in the literature review, xenophobia is often fueled by a feeling of superiority and the fear of having to compete over resources with another group. The large immigration flow from the Southern border has made many Americans unsure of their jobs and financial security. Whether or not this feeling is necessary, it has surely added to the culture of anger towards Latino immigrants in the US. Trump has cleverly responded to this fear by constantly emphasizing the strain that Latino immigrants have put on the American economy. Labeling Latino immigrants as illegal aliens was thus more than just xenophobic, it was a tactic. Only by legitimizing hate among his citizens, Trump is able to execute his idiotic and racist plans in American society.

This analysis points to a clear connection between structural violence and direct violence, as hate crime rates rose after periods of clear political xenophobia. Like chapter 4, this chapter has also illustrated the multiple ways in which violence manifests itself in societies. Precisely the influence of political xenophobia on the number of hate crimes points to the relationship between structural and direct violence, and illustrates how these levels of

violence can, and do, influence each other. The next chapter will discuss the implications of this analysis on the academic debate on violence in more depth.

**6 Discussion**

This thesis sought to discuss the existence of multiple levels of violence and their potential underlying connections to each other. Through a case study on political xenophobia and hate crime towards Latinos and Arabs in the US, I have argued that there is an undeniable connection between these two manifestations of violence. This argument will be discussed in more depth after a short reflection on the case study.

Many interesting observations were made during the analyses on political xenophobia and hate crime towards Arabs and Latinos, of which the most interesting ones will now be considered in more detail. The social constructed identities, created by the Trump administration, of both Arabs and Latinos were, although not entirely unpredictable, very interesting. By relentlessly and repetitively labelling Arabs as dangerous terrorists and Latinos as criminal aliens, Trump tried to create a negative social identity around these groups. Even though a large percentage of immigrants, both Arab and Latino, have successfully integrated into American society over the past few decades, these people are never mentioned in the documents of the White House. By willfully leaving out positive information on these groups, Trump has succeeded to scapegoat and discriminate these people during the first two years of his presidency.

Even more interesting is the difference between the social identity Trump constructed around Arabs, and the one around Latinos. The president creates a culture of fear and danger around Arabs, because of their supposed ties to terrorism and the extremism often falsely tied to Islam. By doing so, the administration has abused the already existing fear of Islam and Arabs in the US, which exists due to past terrorist attacks, and has successfully framed the entire Arab population as dangerous. Latinos, however, are framed as criminal and illegal, and as on obstruction of the welfare and prosperity of 'real Americans.' By framing them as such, Trump has successfully built on the already existing anger towards this societal group. Both sentiments, fear for Arabs and anger towards Latinos, are thus easily picked up and integrated by a large part of the American public, because of underlying racial connotations in American society and history.

The fact that precisely the United States has enormous issues with race and immigration, is in itself both ironic and painful. There is no other country in the world, in which such a large part of the population is the offspring of immigrants. Dozens of nationalities, religions and cultures have lived alongside each other for the past four centuries in the United States, only to result in one of the most intolerant Western societies in this day

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and age. Even though there are clear underlying cultural, political and economic reasons for the inflexible and illiberal attitude of many Americans, there also is a direct explanation for the increase in intolerance in the US of the past few years.

The analysis has illustrated that the political xenophobia of the Trump administration has clearly negatively effected the number of hate crimes towards both Latinos and Arabs. By using belligerent and xenophobic language to describe both Arabs and Latinos, Trump has lowered the threshold for Americans to use violence against these people. As a result, this thesis argues with certainty that political xenophobia, as a manifestation of structural violence, can influence hate crime, as a manifestation of direct violence. Even though this research has not presented an indisputable argument, as many other factors have surely influenced the rates of hate crime, there is definitely a connection between political xenophobia and hate crime in the US.

As this case study was embedded in the academic debate on violence and its manifestations, it is essential to discuss the implications of this study on the debate between Galtung, Coady and the scholars in their schools of thought. In his critique on Galtung, Coady argued that the definition of violence should not be broadened too much, as it can have negative implications for the way we see and battle violence in real life.[131] Moreover, Coady contested Galtung's theory on different levels of violence, as he contends that the differences between these levels are too large.[132] According to Coady it is thus impossible to eradicate violence by viewing it in the broad manner Galtung does, and argues that it should be contested by separately addressing the different issues of, for instance, direct physical violence and social injustice.

However, in his argument, Coady overlooks to address the strongest part of Galtung's theory. By presenting the argument that there are multiple levels of violence, which can, and often do, influence each other, I argue that Galtung has actually exposed the real essence of violence.[133] Although Coady might be correct when stating that Galtung's levels of violence differ too much from each other, this does not actually take away the strength of Galtung's argument. It is precisely the manifestations of violence we cannot easily see, such as political xenophobia, institutional racism, and inequality between different societal groups, that keep the concept of violence alive and give it its ability to grow and create hate. This study has illustrated that the combination of different levels of violence can be very dangerous, as they

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[131] Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 27;34.
[132] Ibid., 29-30.
[133] Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 294.

can legitimate each other. Therefore, only by addressing every manifestation of violence, whether its cultural, structural or direct, can we truly contest its existence in societies.

The recent developments in the US in response to the death of George Floyd, an African-American man who was killed without any reason during his arrest, illustrate the social relevance of this subject. Racial divisions have, once again, come to the surface in the United States during the protests, painfully proving the underlying issues in this country, and maybe even in the world. What both this thesis and the current events in the United States have proven, is that only by truly finding the roots of violence, it is possible to contest it. Even though this task will not be easy, it is one that cannot be denied any longer.

**7 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this thesis has sought to research violence and its different manifestations. Through a case study on the political xenophobia of the Trump administration and the numbers of hate crime towards Latinos and Arabs in the United States, I have argued that different levels of violence exist and can, and often do, influence each other. In the analysis of documents from the White House in 2017 and 2018, a clear presence of political xenophobia towards both Arabs and Latinos was observed. By using words such as illegal, alien, terrorist and criminal to describe Latinos and Arabs, Trump has succeeded to construct a negative identity around these societal groups, which has been easily adopted, at least passively, by a large part of the American society, also due to existing prejudice towards these groups. After the analysis of Trump's political xenophobia, I discussed whether or not it had influenced the amount of hate crime towards both of Arabs and Latinos in 2017 and 2018. In all four separate cases, it was observed that, to a larger or lesser extent, political xenophobia influenced the amount of hate crime in the US in 2017 and 2018.

This study has thus illustrated that Johan Galtung's theory on violence and its multiple levels is a good and valuable way to view this concept. I have argued that Galtung's broad definition of violence is, in fact, the only way in which violence can be truly addressed in societies. As different levels of violence clearly influence and justify each other, it is necessary to identify every layer and manifestation of violence, in order to understand how it works and disrupts our societies. Thus, only by seeing violence in its broadest sense, will we be able to truly contest its existence.

Even though this thesis has presented interesting observations and has defined the theoretical implications of its findings, it also has suggestions for further research on this topic. An interesting extension of this research would be to investigate the reversed influence of hate crime on political xenophobia, as Galtung argued that direct violence can also affect the existence of structural violence. Investigating whether or not Trump has used the existing racism in the US and its manifestation in the form of hate crime to consolidate his power and popularity as a president, would add an extra layer to the academic debate on levels of violence. Another interesting extension of this research would be to apply this research design to multiple presidents, to see how much influence can be accredited to an individual in this process. By expanding this research, it would be possible to contribute even more to both the academic debate on violence, as well as the societal debate, which is, now more than ever, of increasing importance in our world.

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