

Junnelle Maala
JOUR 411-01; Knap
16 December 2022

Racial Hate Crimes in California

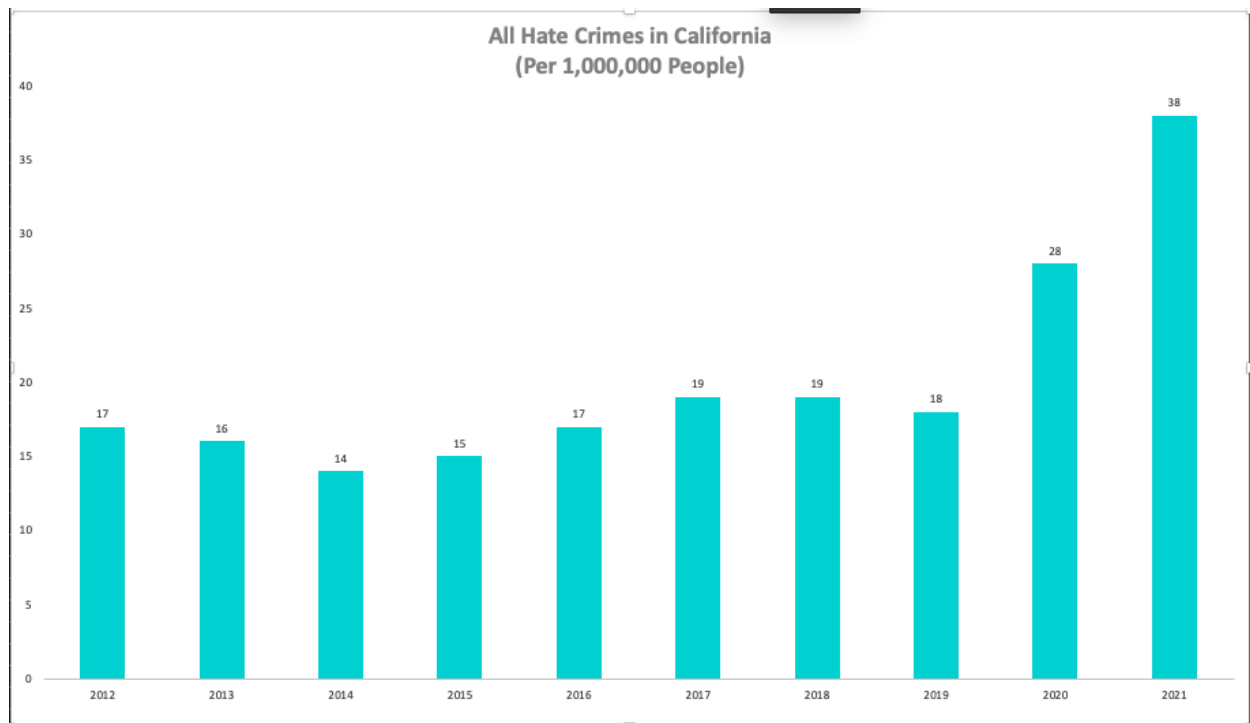
As I reflect on the past decade, there is a myriad of social, political, and economic events that one could say caused a shift, or ripple in society.

I think about the types of events that happen within the United States. I realize how the new age of social media and online news sources have changed the way people treat others in real life. Although many events that have happened since 2012 occurred all around the country, all states are affected by their impact because of how fast news is shared.

This brings me to my interest in researching and picking apart data regarding racial hate crimes in California. I wanted to think about the many events within the decade that have affected the number of hate crimes across the state.

I hypothesized that there was an upward trend of racial hate crimes in the past five years, in comparison to the first half of the decade. I thought of this concept because of the socioeconomic and political shifts that have happened over years. An example is the change of presidency from Obama's second term in 2012-2016 to Trump's term in 2016-2020. Another example includes the Black Lives Matter movement's emergence in 2013 and resurgence in 2020.

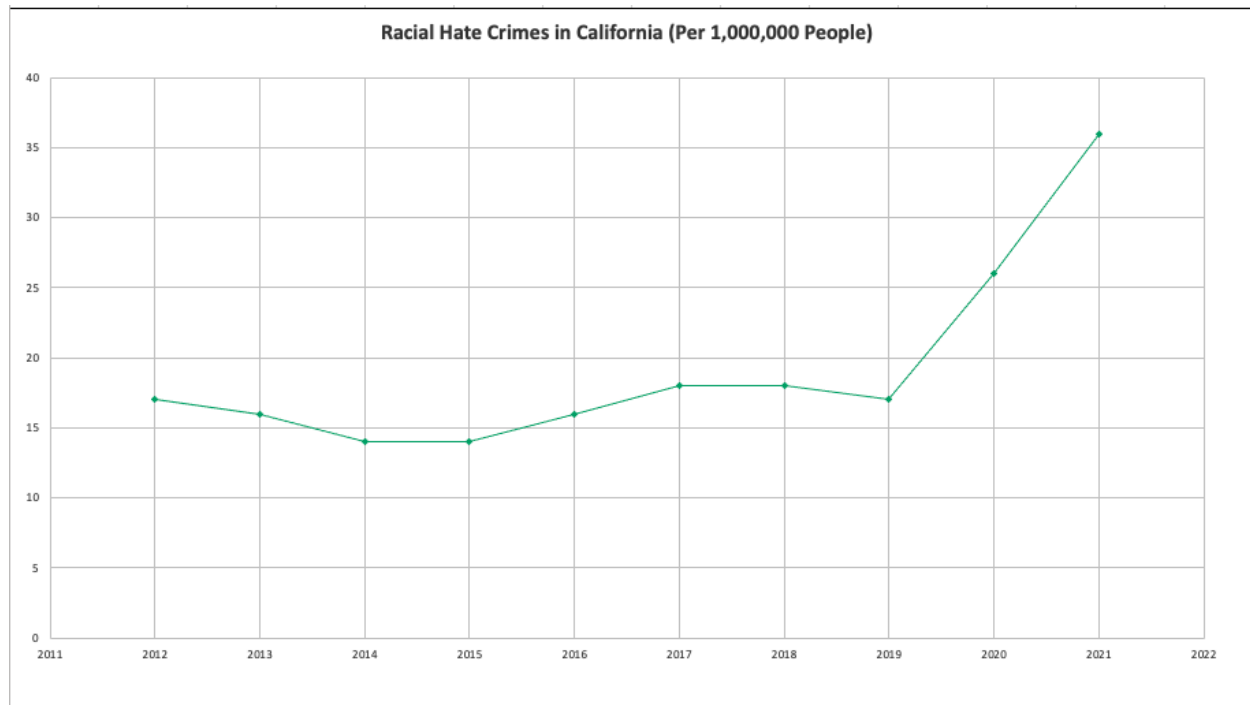
I received data regarding hate crimes in California from the [California Department of Justice's \(CA DOJ\) open data web portal](#). I pulled the data from the years 2012 to 2021. I looked at how many hate crimes were committed by the categories in which the CA DOJ included in their dataset and record layout. The category I focused on was race/ethnicity/ancestry. I sought out how racial hate crimes were occurring and changing over time.



As seen above, from the years 2012-2019, there was an average of 16 hate crimes per 1 million people in California. Meanwhile in 2020-2021, there was a stark change in the average—it being 33 per 1 million people, with a percent change of 106%.

In 2020, as mentioned above, many drastic events took place. Trump's presidency ended, with Biden's preceding him, causing a reemergence in white nationalists. The COVID-19 pandemic erupted and spread like a wildfire, leading to the [Stop Asian Hate movement](#) into 2021. The [Black Lives Matter](#) movement became more widespread across the nation, creating loud discussions of race and politics.

This graph shows all hate crimes established by the CA DOJ, I highlight the major events that revolve mainly around racism, affecting those in California.



Looking at the data above, during Obama's second term of presidency in 2012 to 2016, there was a dip in the number of racial hate crimes committed in the state of California. Seeing as though California is top state with the most cultural diversity, it is interesting to see the change in hate crimes after Obama was president. The numbers go slightly higher in the years 2016-2020 throughout Trump's presidency, but as his term came to an end, there is a distinct jump. In January 2021, the [United States Capitol Insurrection occurred](#). Many supporters of Trump and white nationalists stormed the Capitol in hopes to disrupt the affirmation of the presidential election that Biden won in November 2020. Because of Trump's [lack of disavowal](#) of white supremacy after this major event, white nationalists took note of it.

It's visibly apparent that the January 6th Insurrection had lit a flame of confidence in white nationalists, causing the heightening of racial hate crimes in California.

As the hate crimes skyrocket in 2020-2021, many of those crimes fall under the time where many Asian and Asian-American people were getting attacked in the streets of San Francisco. [People were left scared for their lives](#), because of the toxic concepts of Chinese people that Trump vocalized during the peak of the pandemic. Trump's words and lack of accountability for encouraging such crimes is a leading factor in the increase of racial hate crimes.

In the same couple of years, Black and Pan-African people were literally fighting for their lives in the summer of 2020, because of an unjust shooting of a Black man named [George Floyd](#), a Black woman named [Breonna Taylor](#), a Black woman named [Oluwatoyin Salau](#), and so many more.

From my findings, my hypothesis was correct. There was a drastic change in the number of racial hate crimes in California. It is interesting to think about that although California is the number one state of cultural and socioeconomic diversity, the changing parts of the whole United States greatly affects the conditions of the state.

I think it is important to reflect on how people really value the diversity of California, but in reality, there is still so much work to do in terms of creating safe spaces for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Sources

California Department of Justice's (CA DOJ) Open Data Web Portal:

<https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>

CA DOJ's Record Layout: [https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/dataset/2022-08/Hate Crime Prosecution Survey Context_081122.pdf](https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/dataset/2022-08/Hate%20Crime%20Prosecution%20Survey%20Context_081122.pdf)

California Census: <https://www.census.gov/data.html>