Rajat Sethi

CPSC 8580

**Paper Summary 12 - Race, Ethnicity and National Origin-based Discrimination in Social Media and Hate Crimes Across 100 U.S. Cities**

In many developed countries, particularly America, the citizenry often uses social media platforms to express their opinions. However, the anonymity and lack of accountability provided by these platforms yields an increase in discrimination and hate crimes. This paper attempts to quantify the discrimination level on a city-level granularity. By data mining comments from Twitter, then using Natural Language Processing to analyze the tweets, the research team could calculate the proportion of hateful opinions in each city.

The key novelty of this paper was the researcher’s data analysis. No new technologies were developed for this study, but rather their application of these data tools was the contribution. One of their main observations was that targeted hate speech had a positive correlation with actual hate crimes, while generalized hate speech had a lesser relationship. In addition, the paper found a correlation between factors like disappointment, money, night, and work and the level of hate crimes.

As mentioned in the Discussion section, the paper does not find causality between the tweets and hate crimes, only a correlation. As such, it will be difficult for policy-makers to apply the findings at this moment since the cause of these hate crimes has not been fully discovered. Future studies should attempt to use the findings of this paper to find causality between these online messages and actual discrimination.

The other criticism of this paper is their sole reliance on Twitter. While Twitter is one of the most popular social media platforms, there are other places on the internet filled with hate speech. This includes, but is not limited to; 4chan, Parler, Facebook, Reddit, and Tumblr. A future study will require an analysis of these websites, along with the effect of anonymity (such as through 4chan).