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Project Proposal

The question I will be asking in my project is, "How does the percentage of the local population that is black/hispanic/white/other in a city where there was a police shooting affect the incidents of police shootings in that city?" I am interested in seeing if the percentage of the overall population that is a certain race drives police shootings more, or if places with a larger disparity in these demographics (for example, if there is a relatively small Hispanic population in the city compared to white people) is a primary driver for police shootings. Gun violence and especially police brutality has been at the forefront of American news media for quite a few years, and it is worth researching further how, when, and why these shootings occur and if there is a way to predict these incidents.

The data I plan to use for this analysis is a combination of data from The Guardian news source, which combines media coverage, open-sourced police-killing trackers such as Fatal Encounters and Killed By Police, and data added by the analyst group Five Thirty-Eight which links American Community Survey (Census) data to create a database of each individual who has been killed by police in 2015. This dataset includes each victim's name, demographic information, the city/district/tract where they lived, details on how the individual was killed, which department killed them, and demographics of the geographical tract where they lived. This dataset also allows me to look at more data from the ACS and join it with existing data to add more variables to control if necessary.

For the analysis, I plan to run an OLS regression on the various variables that I can collect through the ACS. I will create additional variables that show the demographic disparities to see if those variables have any affect on the explanatory power of the model.