Since 1750, African Americans were documented into slavery in all the English colonies. African Americans were considered as an inferior race, forced to work in the farmland, and not allowed to own any property. Even though the civil war abolished slavery, African Americans experienced all kinds of discrimination and injustices for the recent two hundred years. In 2013, three Black females — Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — organized a Black-centered movement called Black Lives Matter. This movement started with a social media hashtag, #BlackLivesMatter, after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for fatally shooting a black teenager. Then this movement intensified after the death of George Floyd in 2020. People from all over the world called on social justice for African Americans and to investigate police brutality. One of the initiatives that African Americans are trying to expand is K-12 history education. They believe that the current history class is white-centered, while racial oppression towards minorities, such as the enslavement of African Americans, is deliberately excluded. Less than 10% of class time is devoted to Black history, and only 8% of the seniors can identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War (O'Kane, 2020). However, this process of incorporating Black history education is not smooth. Many parents are against this idea because they think that this is to brand people born white as racists. Terms like critical race theory (CRT) have been misused as anti-white and hijacked to become a political flashpoint across the country.

Although accounting for 13% of the total population in the U.S., African Americans only hold 4% of total household wealth, much lower than the 84% of the white households (Moss, McIntosh, Edelberg, & Broady, 2020). By combining public state-level data from various sources, Sociologist Evan Cooper of Farmingdale State College and Sociologist Beth Ann Whitaker of the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor constructed this dataset together. Based on the calculations from the dataset, 46% of the total population in U.S. supports BLM movement and 41% of that opposes BLM movement. 54% of the national population resides in a state that is actively proposing legislation that opposes CRT being taught in school. By analyzing statistics and graphs, this report aims to answer the question of how and why states differ on their opposition to activities focused on addressing race in the U.S. Specifically, is there an association between level of opposition to BLM and state differences in education, economy, policing, political ideology, and diversity? And is there an association between states that actively engage in legislation against race education in schools and state differences in education, economy, political ideology, and diversity? The answers to these questions will help us form a better understanding about how certain factors affect people’s attitudes towards minorities from different states, especially African Americans, in the U.S.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Compare views on Black Americans by states**

The first question to answer is how opposition to BLM differ by states.

[[2]](#footnote-2)

For all fifty states, the mean percentage of population against BLM is about 44%, almost half of the population in each state. The standard deviation is 11%, which means about two thirds of the states have 33% to 55% of population in opposition to BLM movement. Maryland has the lowest percentage of population against BLM – 25%, and Wyoming is the highest – 72%. As seen from graphs above, south and mid-west states, such as Arkansas, Alabama, South Dakota, etc., are more likely to have over half of the population against BLM movement. States from more northern areas, such as Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, etc., have less than 50% of the population against BLM.

![Map

Description automatically generated]()

The second question to answer is how opposition to race education differ by states. This report uses a variable called anti-CRT legislation active or in-process as an indicator. 21 states have anti-CRT legislation active or in process, and the other 29 states currently do not. States who have anti-CRT legislation active or in-process accounts for 42% of the total states in U.S, slightly lower than the rest 58% states that do not have anti-CRT legislation active or in-process. Many south and mid-west states have passed anti-CRT legislation. Some northeast states, such as New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, etc., have anti-CRT legislation active or in-process as well.

**Compare variables in relation to race attitudes by states**

In order to further analyze the state differences in opposition to BLM or education, this report includes the following factors to be considered in relation to views on race: education, economy, racial and ethnic diversity, political ideology, and police activity.

For education, percentage of people who are 25 years old and older with a 4-year college degree or higher is analyzed. Higher levels of education are more likely to have better critical thinking ability about social issues because in college, they have more exposure to discuss related topics. In U.S., in average there is 30% of the state population having such an education level. The standard deviation is 5.1%, meaning that two thirds of the states have about 25% to 35% of people who are 25 and older with a 4-year college degree or higher. As shown by the graph above, Massachusetts has the highest proportion of people who are 25 and older with a 4-year college degree or higher – 42.1%, and West Virginia has the lowest – 19.9%. Notably, the top few states, such as Maryland, Connecticut, New Jersey, etc., locate in the east coast. The last few states, such as Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, etc., are southern states.

For economy, two variables are analyzed – state per capita GDP and median income. The two things reflect how financially secured a person is. For example, people who are doing the most basic job – which are highly replaceable – and do not have many savings are most insecure of getting unemployed due to labor force from another race. So they might be less welcoming towards another race. For median income, the mean is $63,984 in 2018, and standard deviation is $10,005. Two thirds of the states have a median income ranging from about $54,000 to $74,000. Massachusetts has the highest median income and Mississippi has the lowest. Their median income difference is as large as over $40,000. The lowest few are the southern states, such as Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, West Virginia, etc.

Among the 50 states in 2019, New York state has the highest per capita GDP, $91,057, while Mississippi has the lowest, $38,940. The mean state per capita GDP in 2019 is about $61,150. The standard deviation is $1,656. About 68% of the states have a per capita GDP ranging from $59,494 to $62,806. As seen from the graph, states that have relatively high per capita GDP are in New York, Massachusetts, California, and Washington. States that have relatively low per capita GDP are southern states and mid-west states such as Montana, Idaho, West Virginia, etc.

For racial and ethnic diversity, Diversity Index is used, which is the likelihood that 2 people chosen at random will be from different racial and ethnic groups based on US census. This variable is considered to be related to people’s attitudes to African Americans because if a place is more inclusive, there will be more minorities willing to live there. The local community will be more diverse and therefore larger diversity index. The average is 49% and standard deviation is 15%. When choosing 2 people at random, two thirds of the states will have a likelihood ranging from 34% to 64% that the two people are from different racial and ethnic groups. The lowest likelihood is in Maine, 18.5%; the highest is in Hawaii, 76%. States that have relatively low diversity index are mainly in mid-west states, such as Wyoming, Montana, and Iowa. The northeast states, such as Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, have even lower diversity index, which is in average about 20%.

For political ideology, percentage of state population voted for Trump is also a factor related to people’s opinions towards racial issues, because Donald Trump has publicly discriminated minorities for many times. During the time he was a president, he initiated several policies that were not favorable towards minorities. Therefore, whether people vote for him or not is an important indicator of their attitudes towards racial issues. In average, 50.1% of state population voted for Trump in 2020. The standard deviation is 10.3%. 68% of the states have 39.8%-60.4% population voted for Trump in 2020. Vermont has the lowest and Wyoming has the highest, 30.7% and 69.9%, respectively. As seen from the graph, east coast and west coast have relatively less people voting for Trump. But people from pat of the west, mid-west, and south are more likely to have over half of the state population that voted for Trump.

The ratio of percentage that police kill black victims divided by the percentage of African Americans in the state is a stronger indicator that whether the local polices are biased and therefore kill more black people. If the number exceeds 1, it means there is a disproportionately large number of black victims being killed. This directly reflects the local polices’ attitudes towards racial issues, especially African Americans. Among the 50 states, the average ratio is as high as 2.52. The standard deviation is 1.75, which means two thirds of the states have this ratio ranging from 0.77 to 4.27. The highest ratio is in Rhode Island, which is 8.95. African American victims are eight times more likely to be killed than expected based on their percentage of population in the state. In general, the southern states tend to have a lower ratio compared to other parts in the U.S. The lowest ones include Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming. They all have a ratio 0. But for the six states, the percentage of African American only ranges from 0.00 to 0.03, which might explain why they have such a low ratio.

Policing and corrections per capita spend is also an important factor affecting people’s attitudes towards African Americans. The funding dedicated to incarceration, corrections, and policing has come at the expense of infrastructure spending, mental health services, housing subsidies, youth programs, food benefits programs, and other basic services that all communities need. The higher funding on policing and corrections, the less invested to African Americans who are in need. The mean amount of money spent on policing and corrections per capita is 579.2, and the standard deviation is 135.2. Two thirds of the states have this money ranging from about 444 to 715. The highest policing and corrections per capita spend is in Alaska, $986; the lowest is in Kentucky, $387. The western states, such as California, Wyoming, New Mexico, etc., and some northeastern states, especially New York, Maryland, and Delaware, have more per capita spending on policing and corrections than south and mid-west states.

**Regression Analyses**

Finally, linear regression and logistics regression analysis are included to further explore the association between the variables and percentage of state population in opposition to BLM or whether a state has or is actively pursuing legislation to limit race education.

But before running the linear and logistics regression analyses, a correlation is run to explore the relationship between median income and the percentage of the state population that voted for Trump. The correlation coefficient is -0.63. Normally, if the absolute value of correlation coefficient is greater than 0.75, the two variables would be excluded from regression analysis because 0.75 represents that there is a strong relationship between the two variables, and they might represent the same thing. The concept multicollinearity explains this situation that multiple explanatory variables in a model are highly linearly related. So if the absolute value of correlation coefficient is greater than 0.75 for two variables, and they are included in the regression analyses, it will very possibly affect robustness of the whole regression analysis model. In this case, the two variables are kept in the regression analyses.

For the linear regression, seven variables in education, economics, diversity, political ideology, and policing are included to explore their association with % in opposition to BLM.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Variable* | *B* | *p* |
| % 25 & older with 4-year college degree or higher | 0.03639 | 0.78 |
| 2019 per capita GDP | 0.00002 | 0.64 |
| Median Income 2018 | -0.00002188 | 0.71 |
| diversity index 2020 | -0.01046 | 0.66 |
| % Vote Trump 2020 | 1.077 | 0.00 |
| ratio % victims Black to % population Black | -0.3892 | 0.02 |
| Policing & Corrections Per Capita Spend | 0.005895 | 0.04 |

The model containing the variables “% of 25 and older with 4-year college degree or higher”, “2019 per capita GDP”, “Median Income 2018”, “diversity index 2020”, “% Vote Trump 2020”, “ratio of % victims Black to % population Black” and “Policing & Corrections Per Capita Spend” is statistically significant, so the model is useful for explaining the percentage of state population that is against BLM movement. (model p-value = 0.00). Among the seven variables, percentage of state population voting Trump in 2020 is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p=0.00). Percentage of state population voting Trump 2020 is associated with an increase of percentage of state population against BLM. So does Policing & Corrections Per Capita Spend, which is also statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p=0.04). The more policing and corrections per capita spend, the higher percentage of state population in opposition to BLM. Ratio of percentage of Black victims being killed by police to percentage of Black population in the state is also statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p=0.02). But in opposite, the increase of the ratio is related to decrease of percentage of state population against BLM.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Variable* | *B* | *OR* | *p* |
| % 25 & older with 4-year college degree or higher | 0.1145 | 1.12 | 0.44 |
| 2019 per capita GDP | -0.00002966 | 1.00 | 0.52 |
| Median Income 2018 | -0.00002175 | 1.00 | 0.75 |
| diversity index 2020 | 0.0069 | 1.01 | 0.79 |
| % Vote Trump 2020 | 0.08928 | 1.09 | 0.10 |

Five variables are included in the logistics regression analysis – “% of 25 and older with 4-year college degree or higher”, “2019 per capita GDP”, “Median Income 2018”, “diversity index 2020”, and “% Vote Trump 2020”. The coefficients on “whether a state has or is actively pursuing anti-CRT legislation” are not statistically significant. The model is not statistically significant (p = 0.236), so the five variables are not useful for explaining the odds that a state has anti-CRT legislation active or in-process.

**Main Takeaway**

* In conclusion, there are slightly higher percent of U.S. population supporting BLM than against it, but over half of the national population resides in a state that actively proposed legislation opposing race education. States from the mid-west and south are more likely to have over half of the state population against BLM movement and have anti-CRT legislation active or in-process. Wyoming has the highest percentage of people against BLM and Maryland has the lowest, 72% and 25%, respectively. Moreover, states that have passed the legislation against race education is already over a half.
* For the seven variables related to education, economy, policing, political ideology, and diversity, there is a clear trend that southern and part of and mid-western and western states have lower percentage of people who are 25 years and older with a college degree or higher, lower median income and lower state per capita GDP. They also have a higher percentage of state population that voted for Trump in 2020. All of these explain why they have higher percentage of state population against BLM movement and pass anti-CRT legislation.
* For the other four variables, the trend is not clear. Some far northeast states have the lowest diversity index, about 20%. The ratio of percentage of Black victims being killed by police to the percentage of Black people of state population is lower in the southern states. Moreover, northeastern and western states have higher policing and corrections per capita spend.
* Linear regression analysis shows that the model containing the variables “% of 25 and older with 4-year college degree or higher”, “2019 per capita GDP”, “Median Income 2018”, “diversity index 2020”, “% Vote Trump 2020”, “ratio of % victims Black being killed by police to % population Black” and “Policing & Corrections Per Capita Spend” is statistically significant, and the model is helpful to explaining the percentage of state population against BLM movement. Among the seven variables, “% Vote Trump 2020”, “ratio of % victims Black to % population Black” and “Policing & Corrections Per Capita Spend” are statistically significant. The percentage of state population voting Trump in 2020 and per capita spend of policing and corrections have a positive relationship with percentage of state population against BLM, while ratio of percentage of Black victims being killed by police to percentage of Black population in a state has a negative relationship with percentage of state population against BLM, which seems hard to be explained by common sense and needs further analysis. Logistics regression analysis shows that there is no clear association between “% of 25 and older with 4-year college degree or higher”, “2019 per capita GDP”, “Median Income 2018”, “diversity index 2020”, and “% Vote Trump 2020” and states that have passed anti-CRT legislation.
* Overall, this study gives a short analysis of how and why state differences on certain factors that are considered as related to views on race. Some findings are straightforward, while some findings are difficult to explain. Further analysis should be done to analyze more variables and see their association with views on African Americans.

**References**

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1. To be consistent, this report categorizes states based on Census Bureau-designated regions and divisions. More information can be found in this link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_regions\_of\_the\_United\_States [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. To show more exact numbers on the map, Alaska (48%) and Hawaii (26%) are excluded in this map. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)