

Violence, data, violence data, & US democracy

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Road map

1. Quick definitions
2. How violence data is made
3. Examples
4. Some potential outcomes



Violence data : Violence :: Funhouse mirror : Actual body

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- We have several ways to get data about patterns of violence, all flawed:
 - Surveys
 - Administrative data
 - Other lists
 - Post-violence demographics



Definitions

State strength: A strong state controls all the territory inside its borders and its sovereignty is seldom challenged, either internally or externally.

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Bias: Any systematic error in data, intentional or not.

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	Highly democratic		Fully Authoritarian
Very strong	Sweden		North Korea
	US		Russia
	Costa Rica		Iran
Very weak	Ukraine	India	Venezuela
	South Africa	Bosnia	
			Yemen
			DRC

Newspaper data missed this genocide (Guatemala, 1982-1984)

Why?

- Genocide targeted poor, rural, linguistic minority communities
- Government repression of local journalists
- Government successfully excluded international journalists





All-cause homicide in Colombia, 2003-11

Big question: Did the Uribe government's "tough on crime, tough on rebels" approach actually lower violence?

Key quote (from interviews in 2007): "These guys in the municipios, they know we need to show homicides are going down and they know we can't really check."

Non-lethal violence against civilians during civil war

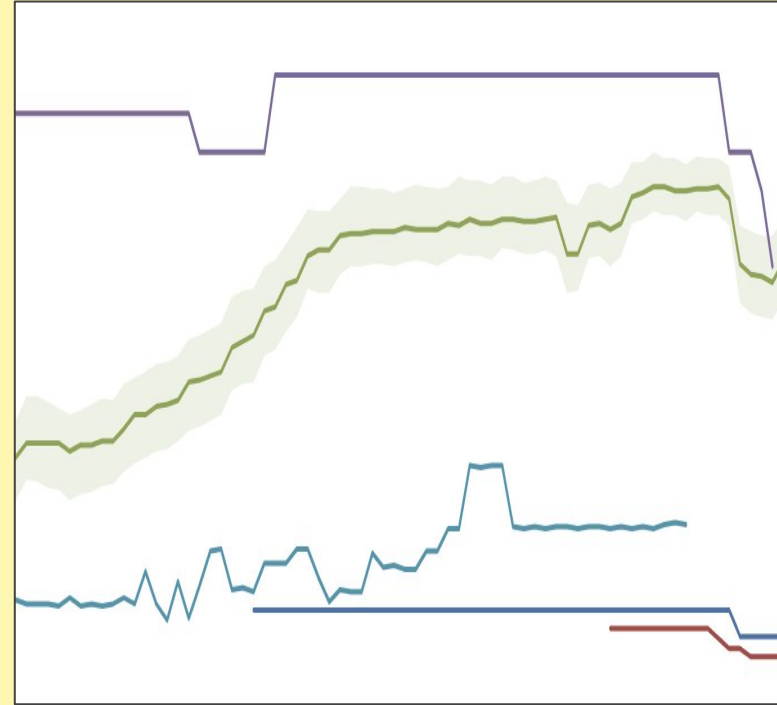
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LESIONES	22/ 2/90	50312	FFAA		
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DESAPARIC	28/ 5/80	60201	FFAA		
TORTURA	1/ 5/80	60900	PH		
TORTURA	28/ 9/82	50311	PARAMI		
LESIONES	23/ 3/89	43000	FFAA		
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LESIONES	30/10/80	42200	FFAA	PARAMI	
DESAPARIC	27/ 7/80	140101	FFAA		
TORTURA	26/ 8/87	60101	PN	FFAA	
VIOLACION	1/ 3/82	41400	ESCUAD		
TORTURA	29/ 9/80	130401	PARAMI		
VIOLACION	8/ 9/81	40201	ESCUAD		
TORTURA	26/ 8/87	60101	PN	FFAA	
LESIONES	13/ 2/83	111610	FFAA		
DESAPARIC	0/ 0/ 0	60000	GN		
LESIONES	11/11/89	61801	FFAA		
TORTURA	19/ 4/89	60101	PH	FFAA	GN
TORTURA	4/10/80	42204	PARAMI		
VIOLACION	0/10/80	71008	FFAA	PARAMI	ESCUA
VIOLACION	0/10/80	71008	FFAA	PARAMI	ESCUA
VIOLACION	8/ 9/81	40201	ESCUAD		
TORTURA	3/ 5/88	60106	PN		
DESAPARIC	5/10/80	41903	FFAA		
TORTURA	25/ 1/81	60101	PH		
DESAPARIC	5/10/80	41903	FFAA		
TORTURA	3/ 6/88	60101	PN		
TORTURA	15/ 9/84	60101	PN		
VIOLACION	0/10/80	71008	FFAA	PARAMI	ESCUA
TORTURA	0/ 0/82	40101	PH		
TORTURA	19/ 4/89	60101	PH	FFAA	GN
TORTURA	19/ 4/89	60101	PH	FFAA	GN
TORTURA	0/10/85	61401	PN		
TORTURA	0/10/85	61401	PN		
TORTURA	15/ 9/84	60101	PN		
TORTURA	19/ 4/89	60101	PH	FFAA	GN
VIOLACION	27/ 8/80	81005	PARAMI		
TORTURA	0/ 5/88	41002	FFAA		
TORTURA	10/ 6/88	60101	PH	FFAA	GN

Two questions for you

- Think about the last time somebody asked you to take a survey. Did you do it? Why or why not?
- Think about the last time you considered calling the police. Did you? Why or why not?

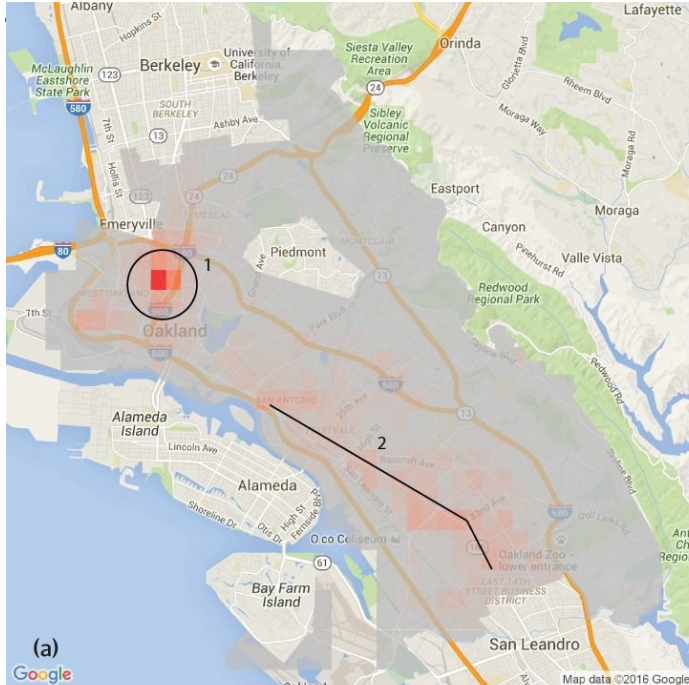
The US context

- Uneven state strength and quality of democracy by geography
- Quite democratic but decreasingly (?) so
- Strong federalism
- Legacies of enslavement
- High-quality statistical infrastructure with key limitations

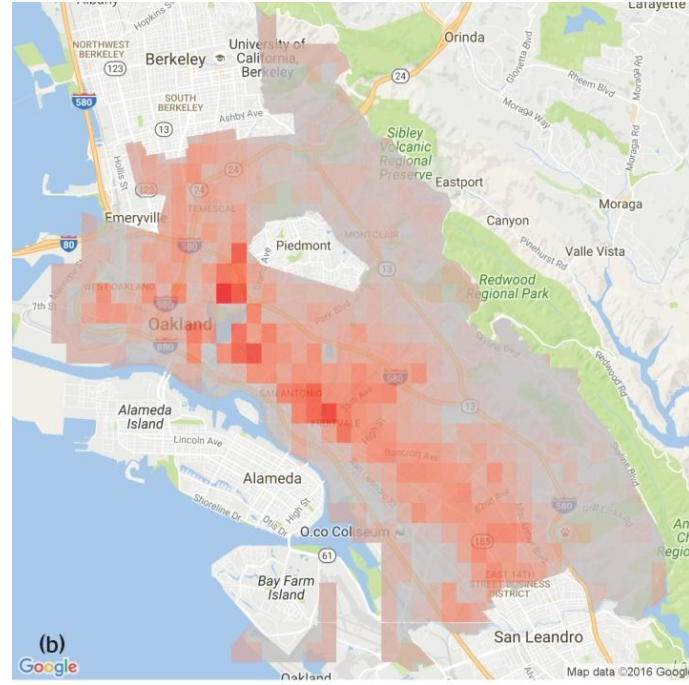


5 measures of US
Democracy, 1950-2023

Predictive policing creates crime



Oakland, CA: Drug arrests



Oakland, CA: Drug use

Compstat erases (some) crime

Table 4: Effect of Compstat on Number of Rapes and Other Crimes Declared Unfounded

	Number Unfounded		
	Rape (1)	Auto Theft (2)	Murder (3)
Compstat	6.251 [†] (3.660)	34.495 (27.224)	-0.954 (0.694)
Demographics	No	No	No
Population	No	No	No
Observations	902	902	902

Note:

[†]p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

All regressions include year and agency fixed effects.

After the election

- Who will control ballot data? Who will trust it?
- Will political violence be reported as political violence? How would we know?
- What will happen to government data infrastructure, and how will that affect democracy?



Thank you

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