

Crime and Perceived Crime: The Power of Perceptions in Estimating Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Our research differentiates between actual crime rates and perceptions of crime to determine how each one may impact perceptions of external efficacy. We use data from the 2017 Race and the Carceral State Survey to examine the relationship between individuals' perceptions of crime in their municipalities, actual crime rates drawn from the FBI Uniform Crime Report, and feelings of external efficacy. Our findings show that perceptions of increasing crime exert more influence over individual perceptions of efficacy than actual crime rates do.

METHODS

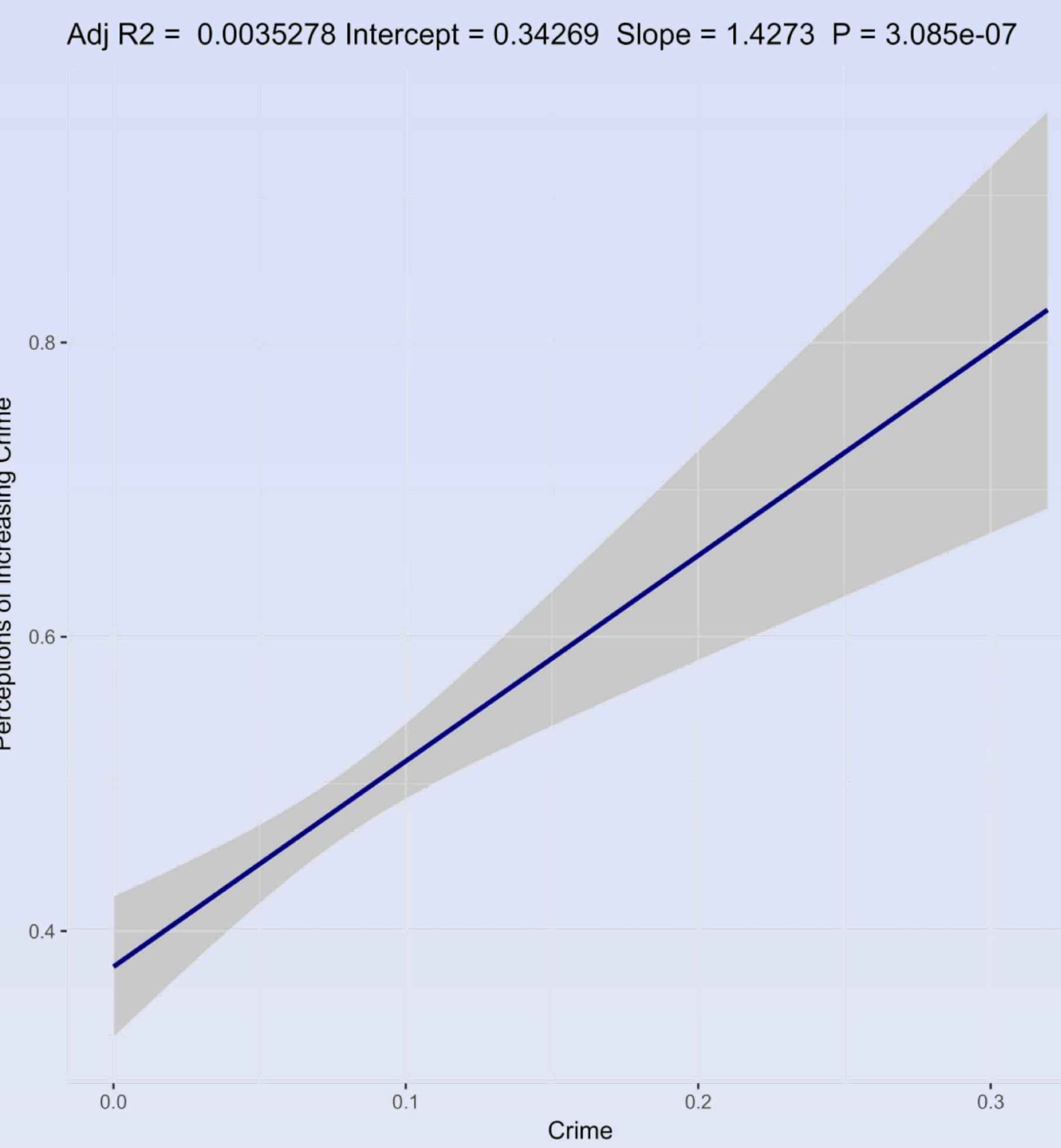
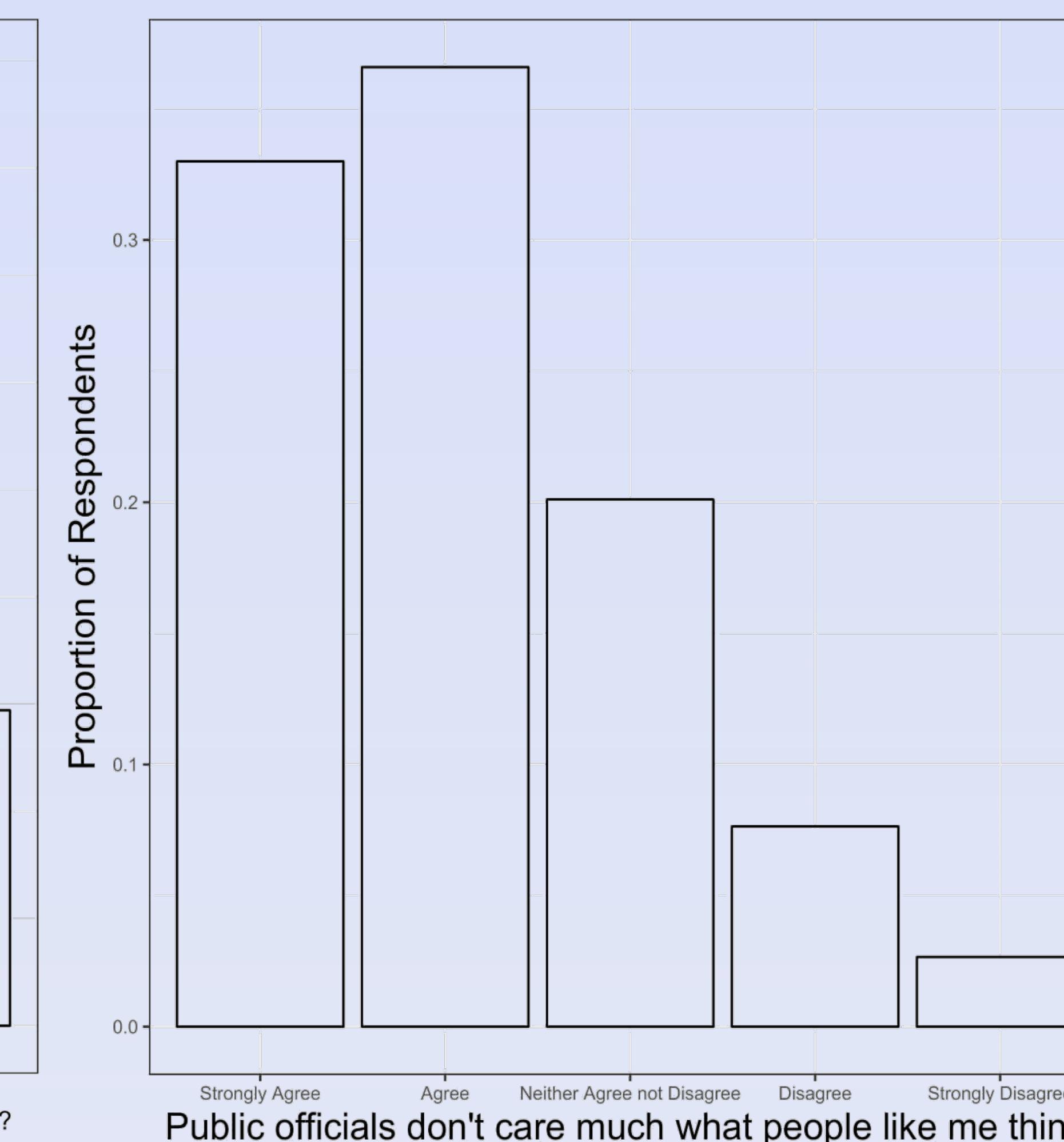
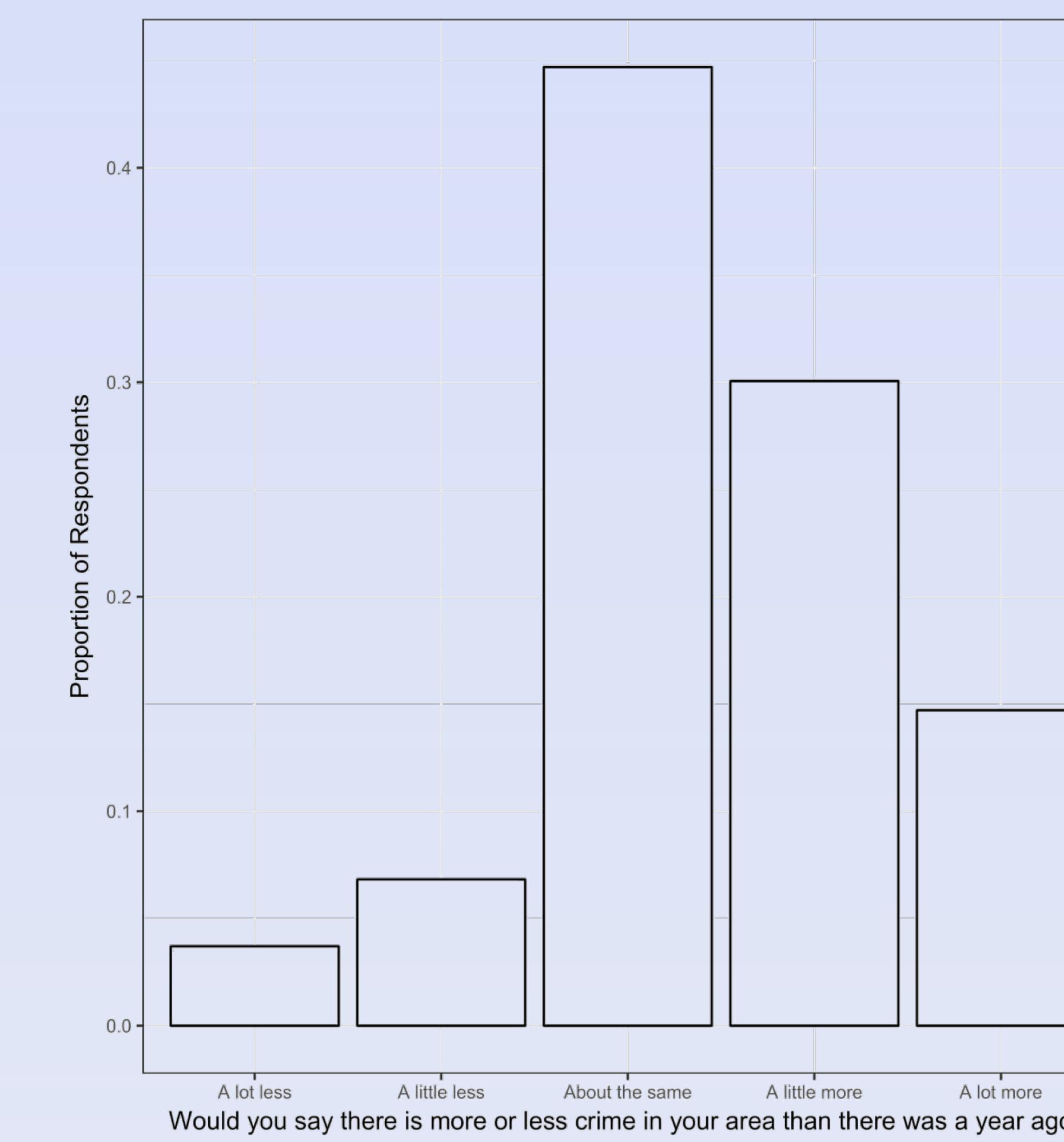
- Used nationally diverse survey of 5,399 White Americans and 2,171 Black Americans
- Merged data with crime data from the FBI UCR to link respondents to the crime per person ratio of their municipal
- Excluded respondents without FBI UCR data

DATA AND RESULTS

- Crime and perceptions of crime are positively correlated
- There is a statistically significant relationship between perceptions of increasing crime and perceptions of efficacy
- There is not a statistically significant relationship between actual crime rates and perceptions of efficacy

DISCUSSION

Actual crime rates and one's perception of increasing crime differ. Most importantly, they impact one's perception of external efficacy differently. One's perception of increasing crime is a statistically significant predictor of external efficacy for Black and White Americans: the higher one's perception of increasing crime, the lower one's perception of external efficacy. This has practical significance for the effects of the carceral state, as efficacy drives political participation.



DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1: Predicting Efficacy by Crime and Perceptions of Crime

	1: Without Controls	2: With Controls
(Intercept)	-0.84 (0.03)**	-1.13 (0.08)**
Perceptions of Increasing Crime	-0.09 (0.02)**	-0.10 (0.02)**
Crime Ratio	-0.24 (0.36)	0.00 (0.37)
Past Income		0.04 (0.02)**
Gender		0.04 (0.03)
Education		0.02 (0.01)
Present Income		-0.00 (0.01)
Party ID		0.03 (0.01)**
Age		0.00 (0.00)*
Num. obs.	7124	7114

**p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

INFERRENTIAL RESULTS

Table 2: Predicting Efficacy by Crime and Perceptions of Crime, Subsetted by Race

	1: White	2: Black
(Intercept)	-1.12 (0.10)*	-1.06 (0.15)*
Perceptions of Increasing Crime	-0.12 (0.02)*	-0.08 (0.03)*
Crime Ratio	0.08 (0.42)	-0.38 (0.80)
Past Income	0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)
Gender	0.04 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.06)
Education	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Present Income	0.00 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)*
Party ID	0.04 (0.01)*	0.01 (0.02)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)*
Num. obs.	5137	1977

*p < 0.05