

Good example of research paper on hate crimes: violence due to prejudice

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Hate Crimes: Definitions and Introduction

A “ hate crime” are “ criminal actions intended to harm or intimidate people because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or other minority group status,” as listed in the works of Herek (1989) and Levin and McDevitt (1993). In the 1990s, the issue of hate crimes, or “ bias crimes,” has generated rising attention from activists, policy makers, and social analysts. Much of the amplified concern has displayed an inference in that all criminal activities have adverse impacts for the victim, bias crimes must be considered as a unique case owing to their heightened effects on the victim of the crime and the group or marginalized sector where the victim belongs to (Herek, Gillis, Cogan, 1999, pp. 1-2).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definitions for “ hate crimes” will embrace not only cruelty against persons or sectors, but also against property that are directed at that group. “ Transgendered” individuals have been targeted for hate-fueled acts of violence, and often times have led to the death of the victim/s. in 2004, at least 30 states as well as the District of Columbia have adopted bias crime laws that integrated sexual preference as one of the safeguarded sectors protected by law (Altschiller, 2005, p. 31).

Compared to the factor of race, ethnic origins, and religious pursuits, sexual preference does not fall within the protective mandate of prevailing Federal civil rights statutes. However, in the wake of the 1969 Stonewall civil disturbances on gays in Greenwich Village, one of the central goals of the gay and lesbian movement has been gaining protection against bigotry in

the areas of employment, housing, and in other sectors of society. More often than not, homosexuals are faced with violent and ambivalence, and at times lethal violence, on the sole factor of their sexual preference (Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, 2001, p. 1).

Figures released by the FBI display a rising incidence of hate crime commission in the United States. In the FBI report, there were increases in homophobic crimes across the board; however, crimes against gays as well as hate crimes for other groups such as those against religious minorities. Majority of the cases disclosed the fact that the crimes were perpetrated against the victim owing to the sexual preference of the victim (Green, 2014, p. 1).

Reports for hate crimes given by the FBI from 1995 to 2005 steadily display the fact that victims increasingly are subjected to threats of physical harm or actual beatings compared to the destruction of their private property. The FBI report can be divided into three parts in terms of criminal acts done to gays and lesbians-“ crimes against persons,” “ crimes against property,” and “ crimes against society.” More than 60 percent of bias crimes are “ crimes against persons,” which are inclusive of “ non-negligent manslaughter,” aggravated assault, harassment, and rape (Perry, 2009, p. 23).

Many Americans would never act on feelings of suspicion against those whom much is unknown. However, there is a small section in American society that has engaged in actions ranging from name-calling to complete “ hate crimes.” Dr. Edward Dunbar of the University of California-Los Angeles conducted a study to determine the factors that fuel those that commit these hate crimes.

For example, those that attack or stalk gays and lesbians were wont to travel long distances, even on public transportation, just to be able to attack their victims. This funding suggests a robust intention drive to the consummation of these crimes. Moreover, the perpetrators will display a pattern of these actions, starting with minor incidents and then graduating to more serious, lethal ones (DeAngelis, 2001, p. 60).

Savage bias crimes against gays and lesbians are also noteworthy for the extreme cruelty that the act was done. In one study, it was noted that the attacker was driven by an excessive rage in majority of the cases involving homosexual males. In these cases, it was significantly rare for the victim to die from a single gunshot. Oftentimes, the victim was stabbed multiple times, suffocated, and asphyxiated. In the statement of one hospital personnel, gay victims of attacks were often cut, slashed, and subjected to acts that were designed to dehumanize the victim (Altschiller, 2005, p. 28).

The results of the "threat evaluation" factors proffer that the perpetrators of bias crimes will pose management and probationary problems similar to those discovered in mentally unstable criminals. The ramification of the study is that hate crime actors will pose a threat for violence founded on transitional and permanent factors. In essence, perpetrators of hate crimes were discovered with issues that are commonly found in persons with a behavioral issues-work problems, failed relationships, norm-deviating tendencies, and impulse driven inclinations.

The link between behavioral disorders, particularly narcissism, and cathartic displays of hate has been addressed by Bell (1979; 1978). Autonomous of the significant issues of day to day living that is seen in these perpetrators is

their expression of belligerent behaviors in the context of interactions in a group setting. In the research of Dunbar (2003), it has been proffered that re-offense risk for hate crime offenders may be amplified when a palpable ideology of bigotry can be evidenced. These two factors can significantly raise the possibility for bias crime offenders to recidivate. Additional study of the part of bias impetus as a separate threat raising component for this sector of criminals is an area that must be studied further (Dunbar, Quinones, Crevecoeur, 2005, p. 15).

Research question

- 1). Determine the drivers of hate crimes;
- 2). the research literature related to the crime, and;
- 3). Establishing trends and possible resolutions.

The Federal government adopted the Hate Crime Statistics Act in 1990. The law mandates the gathering of statistics on bias crimes, inclusive of criminal acts with the sexual preference of the victim coming in as a factor. Owing to the moderate wing in Congress, the law prevents authorities taking action on criminal actions on bias crimes involving the sexual preference of the victim as a factor. The first version of the law was obstructed by Senator Jesse Helms; Helms blocked the law in its primary form as investigating hate crimes against homosexuals is a critical step to attaining the grant of civil rights and acceptance in the United States. However, even to this day, there is no law that will act to prevent the commission of hate crimes and to raise the penalties against perpetrators of bias crimes in the United States (Stewart, 2003, p. 49).

The existing literature has been filled by emotional and socio-psychological records crimes driven by bigotry. Here, the focus of the works has been confined to the evaluation of the actions of the singular entity rather than on one sector acting against another. Such findings strive to comprehend the psychological triggers that drive people to commit bias crimes. At times, these triggers are seen in continuing psychological inclinations or impulses. In other instances, bias crimes are said to crop up as people with a specific belief system and hostilities will often see themselves in situations where these emotional tendencies will be fully acted out (Perry, 2003, p. 16).

Allport (1954) and other analysts comport to the fact that sheer bias will, given the appropriate situation, will graduate to belligerence and hostility. However, sexual bigotry, by itself, will not motivate people or groups to omit bias crimes on sexual fringe groups. Majority of the members of the fringe sectors go about their day to day existence without a public condemnation of the sexual preference of those around them. However, there are those in society, composed of young Caucasian males, persistently commit brutal crimes against members of the LGBT community to establish their masculinity and station in society.

The “ social identity theory” thus was constructed to help in comprehending “ intergroup” prejudice. Here, various “ social units” or societal sectors develop “ qualifying criteria” that support dominant groups and disparage fringe sectors in society. To differentiate between the groups, the “ society identity” premise assigns a point of dominance compared to the other groups in the society, such as religion, ethnicity, and sexual preference. In the operation of this premise, there is a desire for people to digress our

identity from other sectors that motivates people to commit hate crimes against those in other sectors (Guittar, 2013, p. 165).

THEORY

Studies in victimology will often turn on assignment of blame towards the victim. In Blame attribution as a moderator of perceptions of sexual orientation-based hate crimes (2009) and in other collaborative works, Cramer et al (2013) states that the “ attribution of blame” will be leveled on the victim, in this case towards gays and lesbians, even though there is an absence of accord on the parameters of definition and range of the concept. Using simulated samples from sample juries, the studies showed that there was a strong adverse negative comprehension against homosexuals and unbending social rejection. In addition, there were no findings for characteristic belligerence playing a factor as well as no elements for social acceptance and integration (Cramer, Nobles, Amacker, Dovoedo, 2013, p. 1).

With its concerns and linkages to instances of disparagement and vilification, the “ labeling” thesis would be expected to offer a number of observations into this specific criminal conduct. From this viewpoint, divergence is a social concept that arises from a “ tagging” procedure or “ labeling” by the community as deviant or defective. To the society, the divergent is the one to whom the label has been attached successfully. Tannenbaum (1938), in citing the view of society on the understanding of a deviant, states:

“ The process of making the criminal, therefore, is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making

conscious and self-conscious, it becomes a way of stimulating, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained.” (19).

In this premise, criminality and divergence are interpreted as a “ social process” which an adverse identity is enforced and simulated. Here, the social public as well as the newly crafted “ divergent” are identified in relation to the “ master status” that is connected with the transgression of the norm. “ Social control”- whether official or informal-results in the effect of improving the commitment to being deviant; this is due to the substantive labeling procedure reinforces a divergent self-understanding.

In essence, these records have studied the ways where “ socially marginalized” sectors have been forcibly placed in their position. For example, the characteristics that are inherent to sectors such as Jews, African-Americans, Hispanics, and members of the gay community actually fuel their isolation from the mainstream community. One can extend this understanding and aver that the blemish-the “ label”-which makes them exposed to sanctioned as well as criminal acts against them.

However, this understanding is even less satisfactory, as this only argues for the “ secondary deviance” of the marginalized sectors and not the perpetrators. In addition, bias crime offenders may be subjected to lesser amounts of adverse castigation compared to those that will be inflicted on the victim/s. The criminal tendencies of the perpetrator fueled by hatred of the “ other” traditionally generate respect instead of condemnation.

For example, when the “ secondary victimization” of homosexuals is backed by a “ homophobic” police and law enforcement organization, and when a “ supremacist” lynches a Jew. Though “ labeling” discusses the ‘ power’ factor,

it accomplishes this in a pluralist view; it deals society as composed of various sectors. In this light, it neglects to address the complicated constructions of gender, race and class, which is integral to attaining an accurate understanding of hate crime (Perry, 2002, p. 41).

One of the most heinous bias crimes ever seen was the killing of Matthew Shepard. On the 7th of October 1998, two individuals Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, kidnapped Matt and then took him to an isolated area in Laramie, Wyoming. Matt was a student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie where he took courses in foreign relations, languages, and political science. Upon reaching the scene, the two tied Matt to a split-rail fence. After securing Shepard to the fence, the two proceeded to viciously pummel their victim with a pistol's stock. The two conducted a savage beating on Matt all through the night, and then after satisfying their bestial inclinations, left Matt to die still tied to the fence. After 18 hours, the beaten body of Matt was found by a cyclist who thought Shepard's course to be a scarecrow. Matt was taken to Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he passed away on the 12th of October. The wide ranging and massive media focus on the case, the story, and the service for Shepard bought society's spotlight on the struggle against bias and prejudice. The Shepard murder changed society's lens in the manner that America debates, discusses, and addresses acts and crimes of bias in the United States. In the wake of Matt's unnecessary death, his memory has called for and motivated millions to eliminate all forms of bias and prejudice in the United States (Matthew Shepard Foundation, 2014, p. 1).

CONCLUSION

Assessing the impacts of the “ social identity” premise, there are individuals that emphatically restate their dominant position over the members of fringe groups on some prized dimension. In this case, the dimension deals with “ correct” sexual preference. However, the premise does not explain away the reasons sexual preference has been chosen as the digressing factor. It can be suggested that homosexuals and lesbians contest common notions on gender and family establishment. Here, sexuality can be seen as the most viable factor that heterosexuals compare their groups to fringe sectors. Current research has yielded little by way of discovering the actual reasons why people commit hate crimes. Though there are theories that seek to explain the triggers, empirical research is needed to justify the archetype. Subsequent studies on bias crimes can integrate the development of indicators that would validate the veracity of the model (Guittar, 2013, pp. 167-168).

There must be initiatives that would dramatically decrease threat or aggravating factors for belligerence for hate crime perpetrators. These include marginalization, diminished capacity and appreciation at work, dysfunctional family settings. Extensive “ wrap-around” interventions are imperative to decrease the recidivist tendencies of hate crime perpetrators. Interpositions such as the “ Multi-Systematic Therapy” as mentioned in the study of Hengeller, Melton, Brondino, et al (1997) have proven effective in cases of at-risk youths. In addition, creative justice programs such as “ specialized probationary monitoring” and “ drug courts” must be implemented in the field of bias crime perpetrator management. Lastly,

extensive risk evaluation is required to establish the rehabilitation needs of hate crime perpetrators (Dunbar, Quinones, Crevecouer, 2005, p. 15).

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