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Hate Crimes Reported in NIBRS, 1997-99

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Over the past decade, Federal and State legislation has mandated the identification and reporting of offenses known as hate crimes. Today nearly every State and the Federal Government have laws which require sentencing enhancements for offenders who commit hate crimes. These incidents, also referred to as bias crimes, are criminal offenses motivated by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity (FBI, 1999). Bias crimes are not separate types of offenses but are crimes against persons, property, or society identified by a specific motivation of the offender.

The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-275) required the establishment of a system to provide information on the nature and prevalence of hate crimes. This responsibility was given to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, which began compiling hate crime statistics reported to law enforcement departments in 1990. The UCR data reflected aggregate counts of incidents, victims, suspected offenders, and categories of bias motivation.

In recent years a growing number of law enforcement agencies has reported incident-level crime data to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

Highlights

NIBRS hate crime data from 1997-99 showed that —

• In 60% of hate crime incidents, the most serious offense was a violent crime, most commonly intimidation or simple assault.*

• In nearly 4 out of 10 incidents the most serious crime was a property offense, 73% of which were damage, destruction, or vandalism of property.

• Sixty-one percent of hate crime incidents were motivated by race, 14% by religion, 13% by sexual orientation, 11% by ethnicity, and 1% by victim disability.

• The majority of incidents motivated by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability involved a violent offense, while two-thirds of incidents motivated by religion involved a property offense, most commonly vandalism.

• Of incidents motivated by hatred of a religion, 41% targeted Jewish victims and 31%, unspecified religious groups.

*Intimidation, defined as verbal or related threats of bodily harm, is one of the additional offenses collected in NIBRS.

Ages of victims of violent hate crimes

Percent of victims of violence

Age of victim
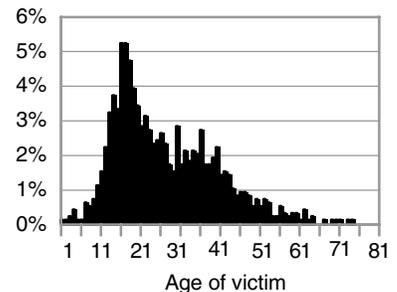
• Racially motivated hate crimes most frequently targeted blacks. Six in ten racially biased incidents targeted blacks, and 3 in 10 targeted whites.

• Younger offenders were responsible for most hate crimes. Thirty-one percent of violent offenders and 46% of property offenders were under age 18.

• Thirty-two percent of hate crimes occurred in a residence, 28% in an open space, 19% in a retail/commercial establishment or public building, 12% at a school or college, and 3% at a church, synagogue, or temple.

NIBRS represents a more comprehensive and detailed crime reporting system, with the ability to capture a wide range of information on specific incidents. In 1997, 1,878 agencies from 10 States submitted NIBRS data to the FBI, representing 6% of the U.S. population. In 1999, 3,396 agencies submitted NIBRS data, from 17 States (Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia) representing 13% of the total population.

This report analyzes those NIBRS cases identified by law enforcement agencies as hate crimes from 1997 to 1999. Overall, bias crimes accounted for a relatively small percentage of all criminal incidents reported in NIBRS during this period. Of the nearly 5.4 million NIBRS incidents reported by law enforcement agencies between 1997 and 1999, about 3,000 were identified as hate crimes.

Bias motivation

NIBRS reporting requirements dictate that hate crimes be categorized according to the perceived bias motivation of the offender. Due to the difficulty in determining an offender's motivations, law enforcement agencies record hate crimes only when investigation reveals facts sufficient to conclude that the offender's actions were bias motivated. Evidence used to support the existence of bias could include oral comments, written statements, or gestures made by the offender at the time of the incident or drawings or graffiti left at the crime scene. Other factors, including victim reporting and law enforcement procedure, can also impact the quality and accuracy of hate crime reporting. (See *Methodology*.)

Among those bias incidents reported by NIBRS-participating States from 1997 to 1999, 61% were motivated by racial bias, 14% by religious bias, 13% by sexual orientation bias, 11% by

Table 1. Hate-bias incidents, by type of bias motivation, 1997-99		
Type of	Hate crime incidents	
bias motivation	Number	Percent
Total	2,976	100%
Race	1,820	61.2%
Anti-black	1,059	35.6
Anti-white	561	18.9
Anti-multiracial	92	3.1
Anti-Asian	60	2.0
Anti-American Indian	48	1.6
Religion	431	14.4%
Anti-Jewish	177	5.9
Anti-other religious group	132	4.4
Anti-Catholic	29	1.0
Anti-Protestant	30	1.0
Anti-Islamic	30	1.0
Anti-multireligious group	28	0.9
Anti-atheist	5	0.2
Ethnicity	329	11.1%
Anti-Hispanic	199	6.7
Anti-other ethnicity or national origin	130	4.4
Sexual orientation	379	12.7%
Anti-male homosexual	167	5.6
Anti-homosexual	103	3.5
Anti-female homosexual	65	2.2
Anti-bisexual	32	1.1
Anti-heterosexual	12	0.4
Disability	17	0.6%
Anti-physical disability	12	0.4
Anti-mental disability	5	0.2

Note: Unit of count is incidents (n = 2,976).

Table 2. Most serious offense committed during hate-bias incidents, 1997-99		
	Hate crime incidents	
Most serious offense	Number	Percent
Total	2,976	100%
Violent offenses	1,785	60.0%
Homicide	3	0.1
Forcible rape	6	0.2
Robbery	38	1.3
Assault, aggravated	385	12.9
Assault, simple	651	21.9
Assault, intimidation	687	23.1
Kidnaping/abduction	4	0.1
Other sexual assault	11	0.4
Property offenses	1,139	38.3%
Arson	21	0.7
Burglary	88	3.0
Larceny/theft	153	5.1
Motor vehicle theft	13	0.4
Forgery/fraud	18	0.6
Vandalism	832	28.0
Other	14	0.5
Other offenses	52	1.7%
Drugs	22	0.7
Weapons	26	0.9
Other	4	0.1

Note: Data reflect the most serious offense that occurred in the incident. Overall, 95% of incident reports include a single offense. See *Methodology* for details. Homicide includes murder and negligent and nonnegligent manslaughter. Other sexual assault includes all forcible sex offenses except for forcible rape. Other property includes embezzlement, extortion, and stolen property.
Unit of count is incidents (n = 2,976).

ethnicity or national origin bias, and 1% by disability bias (table 1).
• Among racially motivated hate crimes, 6 in 10 targeted blacks and 3 in 10 targeted whites.
• Among crimes motivated by bias against a religion, the majority were anti-Jewish crimes or crimes against unnamed religious groups.
• Almost all incidents resulting from bias against a sexual orientation were committed against male or female homosexuals.
• Crimes motivated by hatred of an ethnicity or national origin most frequently targeted Hispanics.

Offense committed during hate crime incidents

The majority of offenses committed during NIBRS hate crimes were violent. This compared to all NIBRS offenses

reported between 1997-99, of which about 1 in 5 involved a violent offense. In 60% of hate crime incidents, the most serious offense was a violent crime while property crimes were the most serious offenses reported in 38% of incidents (table 2). In about 2% of hate crime incidents the most serious crime reported was a drug, weapon, or other type of offense.

Intimidation, simple assault, and aggravated assault were the most commonly reported violent hate crime offenses, representing the most serious offense in nearly 6 in 10 of all bias incidents combined. Intimidation, which refers to verbal or related threats of bodily harm, was the most serious offense reported in 23% of incidents. Simple assault, which defines physical attacks without a weapon or serious victim injury, was the most serious offense recorded in 22% of incidents.

Aggravated assault, which refers to attacks in which the offender uses or displays a weapon and/or the victim suffers serious injury, was the most serious offense reported in 13% of incidents. In an additional 1% of hate crime incidents, the most serious offense was robbery, and in less than 1%, murder and nonnegligent or negligent manslaughter.

Property crimes were the most serious offense recorded in nearly 4 in 10 hate crime incidents, most commonly involving the damage, destruction, or vandalism of personal or public property. Overall, damage, destruction, or vandalism of property was the most serious offense recorded in 28% of all bias incidents. Arson was the most serious crime reported in nearly 1% of bias incidents.

Offense type by bias motivation

While hate crimes predominantly involved assault-related or vandalism offenses, the type of offense differed by bias motivation (table 3). Racially and ethnically motivated incidents were the most likely to be violent. Overall, 66% of race-related incidents and 69% of ethnic-related incidents involved a violent crime. In a quarter of racial or ethnically motivated incidents, intimidation was the most serious offense.

Table 3. Most serious offense, by type of bias motivation, 1997-99					
Most serious offense	Type of bias motivation				
	Race	Religion	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Disability
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Violent offenses	66.1%	29.9%	69.3%	56.2%	70.6%
Homicide	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forcible rape	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0
Robbery	1.0	0.7	3.0	1.3	5.9
Assault, aggravated	14.3	3.9	18.5	11.9	11.8
Assault, simple	24.1	8.4	22.8	24.8	41.2
Assault, intimidation	25.9	16.5	24.6	16.4	11.8
Kidnaping/abduction	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Other sexual assault	0.2	0.2	0.0	1.6	0.0
Property offenses	31.8%	68.9%	30.1%	42.2%	23.5%
Arson	0.5	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.0
Burglary	2.4	4.4	3.6	3.4	5.9
Larceny/theft	4.5	8.4	4.3	5.8	0.0
Motor vehicle theft	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.0
Forgery/fraud	0.4	1.2	0.6	0.5	5.9
Vandalism	23.1	52.7	20.7	30.3	11.8
Other	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0
Other offenses	2.1%	1.2%	0.6%	1.6%	5.9%
Drugs	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.0
Weapons	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.8	5.9
Other	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0
Number of incidents	1,820	431	329	379	17

Note: Unit of count is incidents (n = 2,976).

Among crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias, 56% were violent and 42% were property offenses. Simple or aggravated assault was the most serious offense recorded in 37% of these incidents, intimidation in 16%, and rape or sexual assault in 2%. Violent crimes were reported in 12 of the 17 incidents motivated by disability bias recorded in NIBRS between 1997 and 1999.

In contrast to other bias crimes, the majority of crimes motivated by religious bias involved property offenses. In 53% of these incidents the most serious offense reported was damage, destruction, or vandalism of property.

Measuring hate crime victimizations not reported to the police

In general, the majority of crimes experienced by the public are not reported to the police. To examine both reported and unreported crime, BJS has collected data through its National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) since 1972. In the NCVS, representative national samples of the population are interviewed, with each victim of a crime queried about whether the victimization they experienced was reported to a law enforcement agency. In 2000 just under half of violent crimes and just over a third of property crimes were brought to the attention of the police.

NIBRS hate crime data reflect only those incidents in which a law enforcement agency was notified and properly recorded the event (see *Methodology* for further discussion). On July 1, 2000, BJS initiated the addition of new items to the NCVS designed to uncover hate crime victimizations which go unreported to law enforcement agencies. The NCVS hate crime questions ask victims about the basis for their belief that the crime they experienced was motivated by prejudice or bigotry, as well as the specific behavior of the offender or evidence which may have led to the victim's perception of bias.

Preliminary data from the first 6 months of fielding these questions indicate that the majority of hate crime victims, like victims of many other crimes, do not report the incident to law enforcement.

For the list of questions used in the NCVS to measure hate crime victimization see p. 21 of <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ncvs2.pdf>.

Table 4. Type of hate crime victims, 1997-99

	Hate crime victims	
Victim type	Number	Percent
Total	3,534	100%
Individual	2,962	84%
Business/financial institution	215	6
Government	155	4
Religious organization	74	2
Society/public	62	2
Other/unknown	66	2

Note: NIBRS allows for the reporting of multiple victims per incident. Unit of count is victims (n = 3,534).

Victim characteristics

Type of victim

The targets of hate crimes were most commonly individuals (84%) as opposed to targets such as businesses or religious organizations (table 4). Businesses or financial institutions represented 6% of bias victims, governments 4%, religious organizations 2%, and society or the general public represented 2%.

Victim demographics

Overall, victims of bias crimes were relatively evenly distributed by age, with slightly smaller percentages reported among victims age 45 or older (table 5). The age of hate crime victims varied according to the nature of the offense, as a larger percentage of victims of violent hate crime were young (figure 1). More than half of victims of violence were age 24 or under, and nearly a third were under

Table 5. Victim characteristics, by most serious offense type, 1997-99

		Most serious offense	
Victim characteristic	All offenses	Violent	Property
Total	100%	100%	100%
Age			
0-12	6%	8%	1%
13-17	17	21	7
18-24	21	23	17
25-34	21	21	19
35-44	19	17	24
45 or older	16	10	32
Gender/race			
White male	40%	40%	41%
Black male	20	23	12
Other male	2	2	2
White female	25	22	33
Black female	12	13	10
Other female	1	1	1

Note: Male (3%) and female (1%) victims of unknown race not included. Victim age was missing in 4% and gender in 1% of cases. Unit of count is person victims (n=2,962).

18. In comparison, of all violent crime victims reported in NIBRS between 1997-99, about 2 in 10 were under age 18 and more than 4 in 10 were under age 25.

Among hate crime victims of aggravated assault, 30% were under 18, as were 34% of victims of simple assault (not shown in table). Victims of intimidation tended to be older, as nearly 40% were age 35 or over. About 3 out of 4 property crime victims were 25 or older, and nearly a third were 45 or older.

Forty percent of all hate crime victims were white males, 25% white females, 20% black males, and 12% black females. An additional 2% of victims

Ages of victims of violent hate crimes

Percent of victims of violence
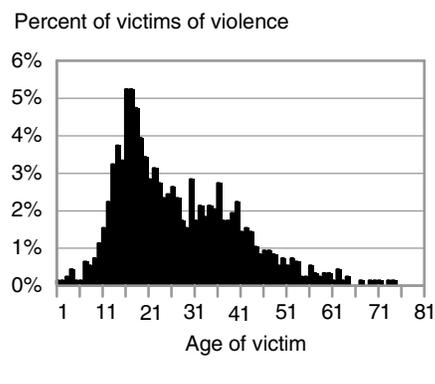
Figure 1

were Asian, and nearly 1% were American Indian. Overall, blacks represented 36% of violent hate crime victims and 22% of property crime victims. Whites represented 62% and 74%, respectively.

Victim-offender relationships

NIBRS allows specification of the relationship between the victim and offender for violent offenses and nonviolent sex offenses. Among victims of violent hate crimes, 38% listed their attackers as acquaintances, 26% as strangers, and 7% as intimates, relatives, or friends (table 6). The victim-offender relationship remained unknown or unreported for 30% of bias victims. Among cases in which the victim and offender were acquaintances, 82% provided no additional information other than the offender was known to the victim, 16% reported that the offender was a neighbor, and 2% that the offender was an employer or employee (not shown in table).

Younger victims were more likely to be victimized by persons known to them (not shown in table). Of violent victims age 12 or younger, 67% were victimized by an acquaintance, 19% by a stranger, and 3% by a relative or friend. For the remainder, the victim-offender relationship was unknown. Among victims age 13 to 17, 46% were victimized by an acquaintance, 18% by a stranger, and 4% by a relative or friend. In comparison, 21% of victims age 21 or older were victimized by an acquaintance, 20% by a stranger, and 6% by an intimate, relative, or friend.

Table 6. Relationship of victim to offender, by most serious offense committed during incident, 1997-99

		Primary victim-offender relationship			
Most serious offense	Number of victims	Total	Intimate, relative, or friend	Acquaintance	Stranger	Unknown
All violent incidents	2,204	100%	7%	38%	26%	30%
Homicide	3	100%	0%	33%	33%	33%
Forcible rape	6	100	0	50	50	0
Robbery	42	100	0	12	48	40
Assault, aggravated	504	100	7	32	34	27
Assault, simple	815	100	10	45	25	19
Assault, intimidation	819	100	2	36	21	41
Kidnaping/abduction	4	100	25	0	25	50
Other sexual assault	11	100	36	45	9	9

Note: See *Methodology* for coding of victim-offender relationship involving multiple offenders Unit of count is victims of violence (n = 2,204).

Table 7. Group victimization patterns among violent incidents, by most serious offense, 1997-99

Most serious offense	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents with — Single victim	Percent of incidents with — Multiple victims
Total	1,785	83%	17%
Homicide	3	67%	33%
Forcible rape	6	100	0
Robbery	38	87	13
Assault, aggravated	385	77	23
Assault, simple	651	83	17
Assault, intimidation	687	86	14
Kidnaping/ abduction	4	75	25
Other sexual assault	11	82	18

Note: Unit of count is violent incidents (n = 1,785).

Table 8. Offender characteristics, by most serious offense type, 1997-99

Offender characteristic	Most serious offense All offenses	Most serious offense Violent	Most serious offense Property
Total	100%	100%	100%
Age			
0-12	4%	4%	6%
13-17	29	27	40
18-24	29	29	25
25-34	17	18	12
35-44	13	13	11
45 or older	9	9	6
Gender/race			
White male	62%	60%	69%
Black male	20	21	12
Other male	2	2	1
White female	11	10	15
Black female	5	6	2
Other female	1	1	1

Note: Unit of count is known offenders (n = 3,072). Offender age was missing in 19% and gender/race in 14% of data. In an additional 812 incidents the offender was listed as unknown.

Table 9. Group offending patterns among violent offenses, by most serious offense, 1997-99

Offense type	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents with — Single offender	Percent of incidents with — Multiple offenders
Total	1,582	75%	25%
Homicide	2	100%	0%
Forcible rape	6	100	0
Robbery	32	34	66
Assault, aggravated	352	67	33
Assault, simple	602	70	30
Assault, intimidation	575	85	15
Kidnaping/ abduction	2	50	50
Other sexual assault	11	91	9

Note: Unit of count is violent incidents with a known offender (n = 1,582).

Group victimization patterns

More than 4 out of 5 violent hate crime incidents reported in NIBRS involved the victimization of a single individual within a single incident (table 7). Two or more victims were involved in nearly a quarter of incidents in which the most serious offense was aggravated assault (23%). Violent incidents in which the most serious offense was rape (0 cases out of 6), robbery (13%), or intimidation (14%) were the least likely to involve multiple victims.

Offender characteristics

Offender demographics

Similar to characteristics of the victims, the characteristics of hate crime offenders varied according to offense. Among all NIBRS hate crime incidents, 33% of known offenders, which implies only that some characteristic of the suspect was identified, were age 17 or younger; 29%, age 18 to 24; 17%, age 25 to 34; and 21%, age 35 or older (table 8). Violent offenders were generally older than property offenders (figures 2 and 3). Of violent offenders, 31% were age 17 or younger and 60% were age 24 or younger. Of property offenders, 46% were age 17 or younger and 71% were age 24 or younger.

The majority of persons suspected of committing hate crimes were white males (table 8). Among those suspected of violent hate crimes, 60% were white males, 21% black males, 10% white females, and 6% black females. Whites also represented a larger share of persons suspected of committing property-related hate crimes, as 69% of property offenders were white males and 15% were white females.

By bias motivation, whites represented the majority of offenders suspected of committing hate crimes: religious,

(88%), disability (85%), sexual orientation (84%), ethnic (82%), and racial (66%) (not shown in table). Among racially motivated incidents, 56% of suspected offenders were white males, 25% black males, 11% white females, and 6% black females.

Group offending patterns

About 3 in 4 violent hate crimes involved a single offender in a single incident (table 9). Two or more offenders were involved in 66% of robbery incidents, in 33% of aggravated assaults, in 30% of simple assaults, and 15% of intimidation incidents.

**Suspected age of violent hate crime offenders**

Percent of violent offenders

Age of suspected offender

Figure 2

Suspected age of property hate crime offenders

Percent of property crime offenders

Age of suspected offender
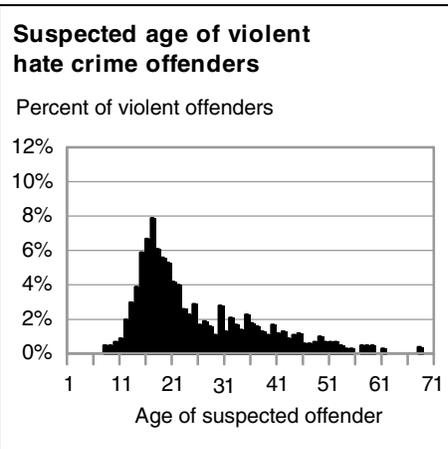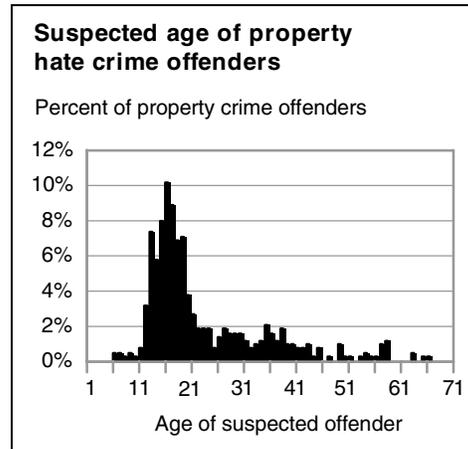
Figure 3

Incident characteristics

Location of hate crime incidents

Of all bias incidents reported in NIBRS, 32% were committed in a residence, 28% in an open space, 19% in a commercial/retail business or public building, 12% in a school or college, 7% in another or unknown location, and 3% in a church, synagogue or temple (table 10). (See *Methodology* for definitions.) Open spaces primarily refer to roadways and parking garages or parking lots. Thirty percent or more of racial, ethnic, and disability-biased incidents were committed in an open space. Among incidents motivated by sexual orientation bias, 41% occurred at a residence, 23% in an open space, 16% at a school or college, and 15% at a commercial/retail business or public building. A third of religious-biased crimes occurred at an educational or religious institution.

Weapons in hate crimes

Weapons were reported to have been used in about 18% of all violent hate crimes. Firearms were used or brandished in 4% of violent incidents, knives or sharp objects in 4%, and a blunt object in 4% (table 11). By specific offense, homicides (3 out of 3 incidents) and aggravated assaults were the most likely to involve the use or presence of a weapon. Firearms were used or brandished in 17% of aggravated assault incidents, knives in 17%, and blunt objects in 19%.

The differences in weapon use and offense type correspond to victim injury, with aggravated assault victims the most likely to sustain a serious injury (not shown in table). Among all hate-related violent cases that provided information on injury outcome, 47% reported no injury to the victim, 45% a minor injury, 3% a severe laceration,

Table 10. Location of hate crime incidents, by type of bias motivation, 1997-99

| Location | All incidents | Bias motivation | | | | |
		Racial	Religious	Ethnic	Sexual	Disability
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Commercial/retail	19%	20%	16%	20%	15%	12%
Open space	28	31	17	34	23	41
Church/synagogue	3	0	16	1	1	0
School/college	12	10	16	9	16	6
Residence	32	30	29	31	41	41
Other/unknown	7	8	6	5	4	0

Note: Unit of count is incidents (n = 2,976). Commercial/retail category includes public buildings.

Table 11. Violent hate crime incidents, by type of weapon, 1997-99

| Weapon type | All violent incidents | Most serious offense reported in incident | | | | | |
		Homicide	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault	Intimidation
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Weapon used in incident	18%	100%	17%	24%	70%	8%	0%
Firearm	4	67	17	3	17	0	0
Knife/sharp object	4	0	0	8	17	0	0
Blunt object	4	33	0	13	19	0	0
Motor vehicle	1	0	0	0	5	0	0
Other weapon	5	0	0	0	11	8	0
Personal weapon	35%	0%	83%	63%	27%	74%	0%
No weapon/not reported	47%	0%	0%	13%	4%	18%	100%

Note: Personal weapons refers to cases in which offenders used hands, feet, or fists. Unit of count is violent incidents (n = 1,789). For small number of incidents in which multiple weapons were reported, the most lethal weapon was selected, such as firearm or knife.

2% broken bones, and 3% some other type of major injury. In comparison, more than half of aggravated assault victims sustained some type of injury and 1 in 5 reported a more serious injury such as broken bones, an internal injury, or a severe laceration.

Time of day of hate crime incidents

The time of day at which violent hate crimes were reported to have occurred was related to the age of the victim. Victims age 17 or younger were most likely to be victimized during the day, as nearly two-thirds of these incidents occurred between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., with a peak between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Other research has also reported this afternoon period as a peak time for juvenile victimization.*

In comparison, violent hate crimes involving victims age 18 to 24 were more likely to occur in the late evening, with a peak around midnight. More than a quarter of violent incidents involving victims age 18 to 24 occurred between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.

*For additional information see Howard N. Snyder, *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics*, BJS, 2000, NCJ 182990; and Howard N. Snyder and Melissa Sickmund, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999, NCJ 178257.

Table 12. Hate crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means, by most serious offense, 1997-99

Offense type	Percent of incidents — Cleared*	Not cleared
Total	25%	75%
Violent offenses	32%	68%
Homicide	67	33
Forcible rape	67	33
Robbery	32	68
Assault, aggravated	40	60
Assault, simple	39	61
Assault, intimidation	21	79
Kidnaping/abduction	50	50
Other sexual assault	36	64
Property offenses	12%	88%
Arson	10	90
Burglary	15	85
Larceny/theft	14	86
Motor vehicle theft	23	77
Forgery/fraud	39	61
Vandalism	10	90
Other	29	71
Other offenses	56%	44%
Drugs	59	41
Weapons	58	42
Other	25	75

*Includes cases cleared by arrest or exceptional means when some element outside law enforcement control precludes arrest. Unit of count is incidents (n = 2,976).

Law enforcement response

Clearance rates

NIBRS data indicate that 1 in 4 hate crime incidents were cleared either by arrest or exceptional means (table 12). Overall, an arrest was made in about 20% of hate crime incidents. An additional 5% of cases were cleared by exceptional means, which most commonly refers to cases in which either the victim refused to cooperate or prosecution was declined because of a lack of evidence.

Table 13. Arrestee characteristics, by arrest offense type, 1997-99

Arrestee characteristic	All offenses	Arrest offense Violent	Property
Total	100%	100%	100%
Age			
17 or under	34%	28%	56%
18-24	27	29	20
25-34	18	21	13
35-44	14	15	8
45 or older	6	7	2
Gender/race			
White male	66%	63%	78%
Black male	18	20	8
Other male	1	1	1
White female	9	8	11
Black female	5	7	1
Other female	1	1	2

Note: Thirty-two arrestees were arrested for multiple incidents. Unit of count is arrestees (n = 808).

Crimes in which the most serious offense was homicide (67% of cases cleared), forcible rape (67% cleared), kidnaping (50% cleared), aggravated assault (40% cleared), simple assault (39% cleared), or forgery/fraud (39% cleared) were the most likely to be cleared through arrest or exceptional means. In comparison, cases in which the most serious offense was intimidation (21%), vandalism (10%), arson (10%), or burglary (15%) were the least likely to be cleared.

Arrestee characteristics

In NIBRS, more than a third of persons arrested for hate crimes were under 18, and over a half were under 25 at the time of arrest (table 13). Younger persons were more likely to be arrested for property-related offenses. Fifty-six percent of persons arrested for property offenses were age 17 or younger compared to 28% of persons arrested for violent hate crimes.

Offenders under age 18 comprised sizable proportions of persons arrested for simple assault (29%), intimidation (33%), and damage, destruction, or vandalism of property (66%) offenses. Three-fourths of hate crime arrestees were white. Eighty-five percent were male, including 66% white males and 18% black males.

The vast majority (93%) of persons arrested for hate crimes were not armed at the time of arrest. About 2% of arrestees were armed with a firearm, 2% with a knife, and 3% with another type of weapon such as a blunt object (not shown in table).

About 38% of hate crime arrests reported in NIBRS were listed as on-view arrests, suggesting that the officer caught the offender during or shortly following the incident (not shown in table). An additional 25% of arrests involved the issuance of a citation or summons in which the offender was not taken into custody, and 37% involved apprehensions in which suspects were taken into custody in connection with warrants or earlier crime incidents.

Of cases providing data, two-thirds indicated that arrestees were residents of the locality in which the crime occurred. Among persons under 18 at the time of arrest, nearly 3 out of 4 were residents of the locality where the incident took place.

Methodology

To analyze the characteristics of hate crime incidents four files were constructed from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 NIBRS master files. Cases with incident dates prior to 1997 were excluded, as were incidents from States that had not yet been officially certified by the FBI to report NIBRS data. The first file constructed was an incident-level file that included characteristics of the 2,976 hate crime incidents reported in NIBRS, including offense type, time of day, incident location, use or presence of weapons, and the proportion of crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means. The second file was a victim-level file containing information on the 3,534 hate crime victims reported in NIBRS over the 3-year period. The third file was an offender-level file that contained information on 3,072 known hate crime offenders, which implies that some characteristic of the suspect was identified distinguishing him/her from an unknown offender. The fourth file was an arrestee-level file that contained records on the 808 persons arrested for hate crime offenses.

Variable recoding

Victim-offender relationship was based on calculations from the victim-level file. For cases involving multiple offenders, the victim-offender relationship reflects a hierarchy from best known to least known to the victim. For example, if two of the offenders were coded as strangers and one as an acquaintance to the victim, the victim-offender relationship was coded as acquaintance.

Certain incident locations were recoded into more general categories. Open spaces includes offenses committed at construction sites, field or woods, highway/road/alleys, lakes or waterways, and parking lots or garages. The category retail/commercial establishments and public buildings includes incidents that occurred in air/bus/train terminals, banks, bars or nightclubs, office buildings, convenience stores, department or specialty stores, grocery stores or supermarkets, drug stores or hospitals, liquor stores, rental storage, government or other types of public buildings, gas stations, hotels or motels, and restaurants. Incidents occurring in jails or prisons

were recoded into the other/unknown category.

Multiple offenses reported for single incident

The NIBRS reporting structure allows for two or more offenses to be recorded for a single incident. Overall, multiple offenses were reported in about 5% of all NIBRS hate crime incidents. For those incidents in which multiple offenses were reported the "hierarchy rule" was used to determine the most serious Part I offense in the incident (See *Effects of NIBRS on Crime Statistics*, BJS Special Report, NCJ 178890, July 2000, for details). The only exception to this rule was for arson. If arson was committed in an incident along with other property crimes, arson was considered the most serious property offense. For Part II offenses the following hierarchy was used: violent, property, drugs, and weapons offenses.

Of those secondary hate crime offenses that occurred during an incident in the 1997-99 period, nearly 2 out 3 were damage, destruction, or vandalism offenses. In cases in which

vandalism was reported as a secondary offense, the most serious offense in the incident was most frequently burglary (31%), intimidation (30%), simple assault (19%), or aggravated assault (11%).

Limitations of NIBRS hate crime statistics

At present the NIBRS data reported by law enforcement agencies are not a nationally representative sample of hate crimes incidents throughout the country. In particular, large urban areas are underrepresented in NIBRS. One city with a population of 500,000 or more and 12 cities with a population of 200,000 or more participated in the reporting system as of yearend 1999 (see appendix table). Despite these limitations, the total number of hate crime incidents in the NIBRS universe and the detailed characteristics provided in this reporting system represent a unique opportunity for a better understanding of hate crime incidents.

A number of factors can impact the quality and accuracy of national hate crime statistics. Many of these factors are summarized in the BJS-funded report, *Improving the Quality and Accuracy of Bias Crime Statistics Nationally: An Assessment of the First Ten Years of Bias Crime Data Collection* (September 2000), available at <http://www.dac.neu.edu/cj/crimereport.pdf>.

This report suggests that the barriers to hate crime reporting can be separated into two general categories: (1) victim-related reporting factors and (2) factors that effect police recording bias incidents or reporting them to the FBI. The report identifies 7 decision-making points necessary for accurate national reporting:

1. The victim acknowledges a crime was committed;
2. The victim recognizes that hate bias was a motivating factor for the crime;
3. The victim or another party contacts police about the incident;

4. The victim or another party communicates to police that bias was a motivating factor;
5. Law enforcement recognizes the element of hate;
6. Law enforcement documents the type of bias, which could lead to the suspect being charged with a civil rights or bias offense;
7. Law enforcement records the incident and submits the information to the FBI's UCR Hate Crime Reporting Unit.

Selected NIBRS offense definitions

Arson: To unlawfully and intentionally damage, or attempt to damage, any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device.

Assault, aggravated: An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.).

Assault, simple: An unlawful attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury.

Assault, intimidation: To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

Destruction/damage/vandalism of property: To willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface, or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.

Appendix table. Population covered by agencies reporting NIBRS hate crime incidents, 1997-99		
Population group	Number of incidents	Percent distribution
Total	2,976	100%
Cities		
500,000-999,999	36	1.2%
250,000-499,999	109	3.7
100,000-249,999	198	6.7
50,000-99,999	310	10.4
25,000-49,999	431	14.5
10,000-24,999	609	20.5
2,500-9,999	436	14.7
Less than 2,500	236	8.3
Non-MSA counties		
25,000-99,999*	90	3.0%
10,000-24,999	93	3.1
Less than 10,000	43	1.4
MSA counties		
100,000 or more	200	6.7%
25,000-99,999	145	4.9
10,000-24,999	11	0.4
Less than 10,000	19	0.6

*Includes one incident in 1999 from a county with a population greater than 100,000.

(Note: This offense is reported only if the reporting agency deems that substantial injury to the property has occurred. The offense includes a broad range of injury to property, from deliberate, extensive destruction to less extensive damage. It does not include destruction or damage to property caused by the crime of arson.)

Forcible sex offenses: Any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly and/or against the person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling are included in this category.

Forcible rape: The carnal knowledge or a person, forcibly, and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (or because of his/her youth).

Homicide: The killing of one human being by another.

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter: The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

Negligent manslaughter: The killing of another person through negligence.

Kidnaping/abduction: The unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian.

Robbery: The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

This report and others from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available through the Internet — **http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/**