



# **Self-reported exposure to hate crime**

Analysis of data from the Swedish Crime Survey,  
Politician's Safety Survey and School Survey on Crime

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) --- centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

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# Summary

Hate crime constitutes crime where the motive can be attributed to fear of or hostility or hate towards a certain nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity or expression. Hate crime can target not only individuals, but also associations, institutions or representatives<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, hate crime is an umbrella term and can encompass different types of crime as the perpetrator's motive for the crime is of central importance (Brå 2019).

The purpose of this report is to further our knowledge of self-reported exposure to hate crime by presenting previously unpublished data from the *2019 Swedish Crime Survey (SCS) (Nationella trygghetsundersökningen, NTU)*, which looks at exposure among individual citizens aged 16–84 years in 2018, the *Politician's Safety Survey (Politikernas trygghetsundersökning, PTU)*, which looks at exposure among elected representatives in municipal councils, regional councils and parliament in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018, and the *School Survey on Crime (Skolundersökningen om brott, SUB)*, which looks at exposure to crime among students in year 9 in Sweden in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

## Swedish Crime Survey (SCS)

The data from the SCS presents the percentage of persons who, as victims, have stated a hate crime motive for an assault, threatening behaviour, sexual crime, mugging, harassment or online harassment. It is not possible to present the percentage of the entire survey population who have been exposed and, accordingly, the results from the SCS concerning exposure to hate crime cannot be compared with the results from the PTU and the SUB, which present exposure as a percentage of their survey populations (all elected representatives and all students in year 9).

Among those persons in the 2019 SCS stating that they had been exposed to one of the aforementioned crimes, a total of 22 per cent of the men and 18 per cent of the women stated a hate crime motive. The most common motive for the crime was related to the victim's skin colour, nationality or ethnic background (14 per cent), their religious belief or their sexual orientation (6 per cent each).

Among assault victims, a larger percentage of the men stated a motive related to skin colour, nationality or ethnic background, while a larger percentage of women than men stated a motive related to religious belief.

Among the men who reported that they had been victims of crime, the percentage who stated a hate crime motive was largest in the age group 25–44 years (26 per cent of victims). Among the women, the largest percentage was in the age group 65–84 years (21 per cent). The results also show that among the victims, the presence of a hate crime motive is most common among those born in Sweden with at least one parent born abroad (28 per cent). It is least common among victims born in Sweden with both parents born in Sweden (16 per cent).

The largest percentage of victims stating a hate crime motive was in Police Region East (23 per cent of those exposed), while the percentage of victims is lowest in Police Region North (16 per cent).

In this further study, it is impossible to use the SCS to examine exposure to hate crime over time as the 2019 SCS saw the introduction of a new method for follow-up questions (including

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<sup>1</sup> Such as a representative of an association that works with integration.

questions on exposure to hate crime) following the implementation of major changes to the method and the selection criteria.

## Politician's Safety Survey (PTU)

In the Politician's Safety Survey (Politikernas trygghetsundersökning, PTU), 8 per cent of the female elected representatives and 7 per cent of the male elected representatives stated that they had been victims of hate crime during the 2018 election year. The percentages were roughly the same for the 2014 election year. Exposure was lower during the interim years of 2012 and 2016. The same pattern over time is seen for both female and male elected representatives. The difference between the sexes has increased somewhat over time, but the trends are very similar.

Like the results from the SCS, the most common hate crime motive is related to skin colour, nationality or ethnic background (7 per cent), followed by religious belief (3.5 per cent).

Exposure to hate crime is more common among younger than older elected representatives. The percentage exposed is largest among those aged 29 years or younger (15 per cent) and smallest among those aged 70 years or older (2.5 per cent). The percentage of elected representatives stating that they were exposed to hate crime in 2018 is largest among those who were born abroad (14 per cent) and smallest among those born in Sweden with both parents also born in Sweden (7 per cent).

During the 2018 election year, the percentage of elected representatives exposed to hate crime was largest in parliament (12 per cent), followed by regional councils (10 per cent). The percentage was smallest in municipal councils (8 per cent). In 2018, the percentage exposed was largest within the Green Party (12 per cent) and smallest within the Moderate Party (3.2 per cent). In a comparison between the police regions, the percentage of exposed elected representatives was largest in Police Region Stockholm (10 per cent) and smallest in Police Region East (6 per cent).

## School Survey on Crime (SUB)

In 2019, 10 per cent of the students in year 9 stated that they had been exposed to some kind of hate crime, which is a drop from 2017 (11 per cent) but a rise from 2015 (8 per cent). The percentage exposed in 2019 was the same among both girls and boys. The percentage exposed in 2015 and 2017 was also roughly the same among both girls and boys.

In the School Survey on Crime, as in the SCS and the PTU, the most common hate crime motive is related to skin colour, nationality or ethnic background. A larger percentage of boys than girls state that they have been exposed to hate crime with such a motive. At the same time, a somewhat larger percentage of girls than boys state that they have been exposed to hate crime with other types of motive. For all hate crime motives, it is roughly equally common for exposure to have occurred once as it is multiple times.

The percentage stating that they have been exposed to hate crime is largest among students born abroad (22 per cent) and smallest among students born in Sweden with both parents also born in Sweden (6 per cent).

## Exposure to different hate crime motives

In all three surveys, it is common for the victims to state that there was more than one hate crime motive. Most common is the combination of skin colour, nationality or ethnic background with religious belief. In the 2019 SCS, roughly every fourth victim (24 per cent) stated that there were several motives behind the incident. In the 2019 PTU, slightly more than half (52 per cent) of the elected representatives exposed to hate crime stated that there was

more than one motive. In the 2019 SUB, roughly one third (35 per cent) of the students in year 9 who had fallen victim stated this.

## References

Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå (2019). *Hate crime 2018*. English version of the report 2019:13. Stockholm: Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå).