

# SUMMARY

English summary of Brå report No 2008:15

## Hate crimes 2007

A summary of reports to the police of crimes motivated by xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism and homophobia.

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

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work.

This is a summary of the Swedish report *Hatbrott 2007. En sammanställning av anmälningar med främlingsfientliga, islamofobiska, antisemitiska och homofobiska motiv*, report nr 2008:15 that can be ordered from Fritzes kundservice, 106 47 Stockholm. Phone 46(0)8-690 91 90, fax 46(0)8-690 91 91, e-mail [order.fritzes@nj.se](mailto:order.fritzes@nj.se). The summary can be down-loaded on [www.bra.se](http://www.bra.se)

Production:  
The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)  
Information and Publications Division  
Box 1386, SE-111 93 Stockholm, Sweden  
Tel: +46 (0)8 401 87 00 Fax: +46 (0) 8 411 90 75  
E-mail: [info@bra.se](mailto:info@bra.se)  
Brå on the Internet [www.bra.se](http://www.bra.se)  
Authors: Klara Klingspor, Anna Molarin  
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# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Method</b>	<b>9</b>
Definitions and assessment criteria	9
Collection and processing	10
Accounting for results	11
Reliability	17
Comparability	18
<b>Results</b>	<b>20</b>
Hate crime – all motives	20
Level and development	20
The nature of contact	22
Scene of the crime	23
Relationship	24
Hate crimes cleared up	25
<b>Hate crime motivated by Xenophobia</b>	<b>27</b>
Self-reported exposure to hate crime (Swedish Crime Survey)	27
<b>Islamophobic hate crime</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Antisemitic hate crime</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Homophobic hate crime</b>	<b>32</b>
Self-reported exposure to hate crime (the Swedish Crime Survey)	32
<b>Ideologically motivated hate crime</b>	<b>35</b>
Level and development	35
Links to organizations	36
<b>Injured parties in hate crimes</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Persons suspected</b>	<b>36</b>
Previous criminal convictions	37
<b>Regional distribution</b>	<b>39</b>
Large cities	41
<b>Future possibilities</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>46</b>



# Foreword

Hate crime statistics are in incredibly high demand from the judicial system, the media, interest organizations and the general public. The hate crime publication is one of the most often downloaded publications of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), and the words “hate crime” are some of the most searched words on the Brå website.

Hate crime statistics can be used to study the scope and development of hate crimes reported in Sweden, among other things, which in turn may be of assistance in decisions about measures to prevent and counteract this type of criminality.

Ahead of this year’s hate crime report, Brå has spent much time on developing the existing statistics, and new information is described in the report. Among other things, information about persons who have been subject to hate crimes and also persons suspected of hate crimes is shown. Another innovation is that self-reported exposure to hate crimes from Brå’s Swedish Crime Survey is shown in this year’s report. A future development project relating to the definition of hate crime has also been started. You can read more about this in the concluding discussion.

The authors of the report are Klara Klingspor, Anna Molarin and Tove Sporre, all statisticians/research analysts at Brå. The authors of the English summary are Klara Klingspor and Anna Molarin. Mikael Hänström has also participated in the computing work. The report has been scrutinized for scientific fact by Professor Göran Dahl at Lund University and Research Fellow Anders Nilsson at the Institute for Future Studies. Contact persons and investigators at all police authorities in the counties have been of great assistance in the work.

Stockholm, January 2009

*Jan Andersson*  
Director-General

*Louise Ekström*  
Head of Division

# Introduction

During the 1980s, a marked increase in the number of crimes with xenophobic and racist features was found in Sweden.<sup>1</sup> What was noted, among other things, were attacks on refugee camps, the criminal activities of the so-called “laser man” and the formation of the organization VAM (Vitt Ariskt Motstånd, “White Aryan Resistance”). These were reasons that in the middle of the 1990s caused the government to state that crimes motivated by xenophobia should be prioritized within the judicial system and a background for the judicial system now regarding it as particularly serious if

*a motive for the crime has been to injure a person, a people or any other group of persons due to race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, faith, sexual orientation or other similar circumstance<sup>2</sup>*

## **What is a hate crime?**

Hate crime is not a new phenomenon, but rather a new concept.<sup>3</sup> In Sweden, it was the criminologist Eva Tiby (1999) who first used the concept of hate crime in her research.<sup>4</sup> Within research as a whole, there is no accepted definition of hate crime and the variation between different countries is large.<sup>5</sup> A definition of hate crime can for instance include crimes aimed at people due to their ethnicity, functional impairment, homelessness, sex, religious affiliation, political affiliation, sexual orientation, age or similar.<sup>6</sup> Some countries keep no statistics for hate crime, while other countries only report a motive.<sup>7</sup> In Sweden, hate crimes motivated by xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism and homophobia are accounted for. Although there is disagreement on what should be included in the term hate crime, there is international agreement that the event is a result of lack of respect for human rights and the equal value of persons. A single hate crime can cause double injury by creating insecurity and fear in a person, but also in an entire common group to which the person belongs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Swedish Security Service (1997, p.1).

<sup>2</sup> Increased severity of punishment rule, Chapter 29 Clause 2 Paragraph 7 of the Penal Code.

<sup>3</sup> Hall (2005, p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> See further in Tiby (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Petrosino (2003, p. 10).

<sup>6</sup> Gerstenfeld (2003, p. 2).

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see e.g. ODIHR (2005).

<sup>8</sup> Gerstenfeld (2003, p. 18).

## **Work against hate crime in Sweden**

The government and the judicial system's authorities have since then worked in many ways to promote the work against hate crime. In 2001, the government adopted a national action plan against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination. One stage in this was and is the accounting for reports to the police motivated by hate crime. Since the early 1990s, hate crimes motivated by xenophobia, antisemitism and homophobia have been charted.<sup>9</sup> Statistics have also been published showing other crimes linked to the right-wing extremist white power environment.<sup>10</sup> As from 2006, the government has also wished to make visible Islamophobic hate crimes, with the government commissioning Brå to take over the accounting for hate crime statistics from the Swedish Security Service, and also to report these separately.

In the official document placing appropriations at the disposal of the authorities concerned for 2007<sup>11</sup>, the government also commissioned the National Swedish Police Board (RPS) and the Public Prosecution Authority to ensure that hate crime motives were identified and investigated as soon as possible.<sup>12</sup> The RPS has therefore decided on a number of measures, for instance that staff at the Police Contact Centre (PKC) shall be trained in the issues surrounding hate crime and motives in conjunction with recording reports to the police. In a more long-term perspective, there are several development projects in progress within the judicial system relating to the area of hate crime, such as increasing opportunities for the general public to make reports to the police via Internet. Thus, work of several types has been done to increase the visibility of hate criminality in society.

## **Aim of and information in the report**

The aim of the statistics in this report is to provide information about the level, development and structure of reports to the police with various hate crime motives. Another aim is to contribute knowledge to the research being carried out in the area and to assist the judicial system with background material for following up the measures taken in accordance with the national action plan. Hate crime statistics also constitute background material, which, together with other studies and research, can provide a better picture of what the situation is in relation to hate crime in Sweden. The report is aimed at all who wish to know more about hate crime, both government, parliament and the judicial

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<sup>9</sup> Swedish Security Service (2001, p.1).

<sup>10</sup> Brå does not keep statistics on autonomous movements or crime within the white power environment that is not hate crime related. For a more detailed explanation please see Brå (2007b p. 37)

<sup>11</sup> The Government (2006, p. 8).

<sup>12</sup> The National Swedish Police Board and the Swedish Prosecution Authority (2008). The background of the assignment is, among others, that the increased severity of punishment rule rarely is used.



system as well as the general public, interest organizations, the media and specialist researchers. The report can be regarded as an annual for hate crime statistics.

The report can help to provide answers to

- the most common motive
- the level and development
- the nature of the contact
- the scene of the crime
- the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

The report, which is based on hate crimes reported to the police during 2007, has been developed since last year, and includes the following innovations in this year's report in order to illuminate different parts of hate criminality:

- *Exposure to hate crime*, both information from the Swedish Crime Survey and information about the injured parties from the police reports.
- *Clear-up decisions*, what happens to hate crimes later on in the judicial process, i.e. the decisions taken by the police and the prosecutor, for instance if they have decided to terminate the preliminary investigation because the deed was not a crime or have decided that the perpetrator shall be prosecuted.
- *Previous criminal history* of the suspected persons.

This report is primarily a statistic summary of the crimes reported to the police which have subsequently been identified as hate crimes. Just as in previous years and in order to further illuminate how hate crimes can manifest themselves, many examples from the narratives of the reports to the police are presented.<sup>13</sup> Some are more typical than others and the aim is to spotlight the variation of different types of hate crime.

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<sup>13</sup> In all examples, names and locations have been changed to unidentify authentic cases.

# Method

Hate crimes are not a type of offence that is expressly regulated in regulations of their own in the Penal Code. Nor are there any special offence codes for hate crimes in the police's RAR system<sup>14</sup> for registering crimes. This means that there is currently no opportunity to produce and publish statistics in the usual way regarding hate crimes reported to the police.

## Definitions and assessment criteria

The hate criminality described in this report is based on the victim's feelings about the perpetrator's motive for his/her deeds. Such criminality includes crimes motivated by the perpetrator's attitude towards

- *ethnic background, skin colour or nationality* – in this report, foreign background
- *religious faith* – in this report Islamic or Jewish faith
- *sexual orientation* - in this report, homosexuality.

Furthermore, the primary criterion for an event to be classified as a hate crime is that a majority person is injuring a minority person, a group or a representative<sup>15</sup> of a minority group. What constitutes majority and minority varies according to the motive for the hate crime. In this report, the concept of hate crime refers to:

*Crime against a person, group, property, institution or representative of these, motivated by fear of, hostility towards or hate of the victim on the basis of skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin, faith or sexual orientation, which the perpetrator believes, knows or considers that the person or group has<sup>16</sup>.*

### **What is meant by majority and minority?**

The actual characteristics for being in a *minority position* in terms of hate crime is to be of foreign extraction, a Muslim, a Jew or homo-/bisexual or a person of transgender. The opposite, being in a *majority*

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<sup>14</sup> Rational Reporting Routine (RAR) is the police's computerized system for receiving a report. In 2008, a new field in RAR was introduced nationally at the police authorities. This is mandatory and entails that the receiver of the report must answer the question whether the crime in question is a suspected hate crime or not.

<sup>15</sup> Representatives are, for instance, persons who support the rights of minorities, such as journalists, politicians and spokespersons for organizations.

<sup>16</sup> See older reports for a more detailed reasoning concerning definitions; Brå (2006a) and Swedish Security Service (2005).

*position* is to be of Swedish extraction, a non-Muslim, non-Jew or heterosexual.

### **Determination of whether a report includes a hate crime motive**

When a report to the police is assessed, several different criteria are used to determine a hate crime motive. The assessment is based on *all the information* available in the narrative of the report to the police. If the victim considers or suspects that the motive for the crime is due to her or him being or being considered to be of foreign extraction, a Muslim, of Jewish birth, homosexual or bisexual or a person of transgender, the event is usually considered to be a hate crime. Apart from *the victim's narrative*, the information on which the assessment is based may be:

- *The perpetrators statements, whether oral or written.* An example is when the perpetrator shouts “damn Paki/nigger”.
- *Information via related reports to the police.* Sometimes a victim or perpetrator is mentioned in several reports. This may then be noted in the narrative in question.
- *Contacts with contact persons or investigators.* Some cases may be difficult to assess, as more information may be needed to determine the motive for the crime.
- *Media.* In some cases, the media have drawn attention to hate crimes and this information may be used in the assessment.
- *The name of a victim or perpetrator* is used to assess the origin of the perpetrator or victim.
- *Description.* The perpetrator is described as Swedish, as a skin-head, as a foreigner, etc.

### **Several motives – which one is chosen?**

The motive is not always easy to assess; a report of a crime can include several possible hate crime motives. In these cases, the guideline has been to use the most *prominent* motive and thus to choose *one*. One example is when a person is insulted with invectives relating to both sexual orientation and religious affiliation, such as “*damn lesbo, fucking Muslim, take off that veil*”. The example above could be characterized as Islamophobic as the use of the word “veil” in combination with “fucking Muslim” strengthens the Islamophobic motive. If several motives are equally prominent, chance determines through the drawing of lots.

## **Collection and processing**

In 2006, Brå worked out and built up its own system and interface for searching, coding and scrutinizing reports to the police with a hate crime motive. This method is based on using a search word list for making searches of the narrative text included in reports of crimes.

### **All types of offences are not searched**

All reports to the police are not searched through, but only a selection of offence types. The search is not done in reports relating to, for instance, drugs offences, muggings and sexual offences<sup>17</sup>. In total, around 400,000 reports per year have been searched. In 2007, around 27,000 reports have been read and assessed several times by different persons.

### **Searching is done in the narrative text of the reported crimes**

The free narrative text of the reported crimes consist of anything from a few lines to a longer text, describing the crimes reported and the circumstances, usually called an account of a criminal act. As far as this narrative text is concerned, there are two circumstances that are important to remember. Firstly, there is no structured and laid-down template for what the narrative text should include, which means that it can contain differing amounts of information. Secondly, the narrative text is entered directly at the time of reporting.

### **Search word list**

The automated search for words and terms included in the search word list entails that those reports that include words from the search word list are tagged. The reports identified using the search of their narrative texts have then been scrutinized and assessed. The search word list for 2007 includes 265 words. The terms in the list are based in particular on experiences from work in previous years with the statistics. The idea is that the search word list shall be kept up-to-date in terms of any new language usage and phenomena in society. The following is an example of how words from the search word list are marked in the narrative text of a report:

*Therese thinks that they are the same boys who are bullying her at school, because her aunt is a Muslim and she wears a veil.*

### **Coding is done manually**

When the hate crime reports have been identified, a manual coding of a number of variables described below is carried out.

## **Accounting for results**

### **Accounting units and variables**

In the results section, each hate crime motive (xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism and homophobia) and ideologically motivated hate crimes will be presented. Hate crime statistics are based on offences

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<sup>17</sup> For the crime types agitation against ethnic group and unfair discrimination, the mapping has however been comprehensive, that is all reports of these types of crimes have been scrutinized manually, irrespective of search word matches.

reported, and also show information about persons subjected to hate crimes and suspected persons. The *accounting units* presented are:

- Reports received
- Reports cleared up
- Persons subjected to hate crime (information from the Swedish Crime Survey)
- Injured parties
- Persons suspected.

Information about the groups accounted for is presented on the basis of a number of variables describing the offences reported. In this report, the *variables* presented are:

- Principal offence
- Motive
- Whether the crime is ideologically motivated or linked to an organization
- The nature of the contact
- The scene of the crime
- Relationship between perpetrator and victim
- Sex and age of the victims and suspected persons
- Regional division.

When reading the report, it is important to remember that many of the accounts include figures that are low. The result is that the percentage change can be very large from year to year. It is therefore not unusual with differences of 30 percent or more. For reasons of confidentiality, it is not always possible to show all units or variables separately in the account<sup>18</sup>. According to legislation, there must be no risk of individual persons being identified in the statistics. If this is the case, categories with low figures must be added together, or alternatively hidden with a cross. Low figures in this context are figures below *four*. However, some low figures can be accounted for, if the assessment is that no single individual can be identified.

### **Reports of crimes received**

The number of reports received is the number that the police in particular, but also other hate crime investigating authorities, have registered in their case systems during a calendar year. However, the crimes may have been committed in previous years. In the report, the largest part of

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<sup>18</sup> According to the Official Statistics Act (2001:99), Personal Information Act (1998:204), and Section 9:4 of the Secrecy Act (1980:100).

the statistics is accounted for in the unit *reports*. It is only reports of crimes committed in Sweden that are accounted for here.

### **Reported crimes cleared up**

The number of reports cleared up is a measure of the work done by the police, prosecutor and other crime-investigating authorities in handling and clarifying reports. The account is based on the decisions made in relation to the principal offence in the report and which is considered to be a hate crime. Crimes cleared up are accounted for in two categories:

- *Personally cleared up* hate crimes means that a person has been linked to the crime through a prosecution having been started, that an order of summary punishment has been issued or that a waiver of prosecution has been issued.
- *Technically cleared up* hate crimes mean for example:
  - that it cannot be *proved that a crime has been committed*
  - that the *deed reported is not deemed to be a crime*
  - that the *person suspected is a minor* (less than 15 years old) and under the age of criminal responsibility

The section also shows the proportion of the reports that have not been cleared up at the time the statistics were extracted. A crime is not cleared up when it is:

- *Under investigation*, which means that no decision has been taken in relation to the hate crime reported.
- *Other not cleared up*, which means for instance that there is no person suspected of the hate crime committed, or that there are no leads for investigation.

### **Persons subjected to hate crime (information from the Swedish Crime Survey)**

This report for the first time describes exposure to hate crime based on Brå's Swedish Crime Survey. Of the 20,000 persons aged 16-79 years who were randomly selected to participate in the survey, just over three quarters responded<sup>19</sup>. The sections concerning hate crimes motivated by xenophobia and homophobia present the result from the Swedish Crime Survey 2007. The types of crime accounted for in relation to hate crimes in the survey are muggings, assaults, threats and harassment.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. (p. 16). The survey was carried out in the form of a telephone survey (95 percent of responses), complemented with postal surveys (5 percent of responses) and was directed at a large random sample of the population. Those who responded to the postal survey were not asked any follow-up question about crimes and could therefore not answer questions relating to exposure to hate crime.

### **Injured parties (gross for the year)<sup>20</sup>**

A report may include one or several injured parties. If a person is injured on several occasions during one year, the person is accounted for as an injured party on each reporting occasion. In most cases, the person injured is the person subjected to the hate crime. However, in some cases, a person other than the person subjected to the crime may be the injured party, for instance if a parent reports a crime on behalf of his/her child.

### **Persons suspected (net for the year)<sup>21</sup>**

The number of persons suspected in this account is all who at *some stage of the investigation* are considered as suspects, irrespective of whether or not the suspicion of a crime remains after completion of the investigation. Also persons who are legally incompetent and *minors* (under 15 years old) are included. The definition of suspected persons in the hate crime statistics is thus not the same as for suspects in official statistics, where the suspected person is over the *age of criminal responsibility* (over 15 years old) and the suspicion of crime remains after *completion of the investigation* by the police and prosecutor.

### **Previous criminal history of suspected persons (gross for the year)<sup>22</sup>**

Legal proceedings (during 1997–2006) against persons suspected of hate crimes in 2007 are grouped in relation to whether the persons have been prosecuted before, and if so, how many times. When several persons are included in the same legal proceedings, each individual person is counted as one unit in the statistics. One person who has been suspected of several offences during one year is only accounted for as one person in the statistics of persons suspected, as opposed to one person who has been prosecuted on several occasions during one year, who is accounted for as one person for each occasion prosecuted.

### **Principal offence**

For each hate crime reported, one principal offence is selected and then accounted for. A principal offence here means the offence in the report that has the most severe scale of punishment and where the motive has been assessed to be relevant for this mapping. Keeping statistics in accordance with the principal offence principle means that the figures end up slightly lower than if all offences were included.

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<sup>20</sup> The person was counted several times in the statistics, so-called gross reporting. The reason for this is that personal ID numbers for injured parties were missing.

<sup>21</sup> Persons suspected are only accounted for once per type of crime and year, even if they are suspected of several crimes of the same type during the year.

<sup>22</sup> The person is then counted several times in the statistics, so-called gross accounting.

### **Motive**

A report may include several hate crime motives. In these cases, the guideline has been to use the most *prominent* motive and thus to choose *one*. The motives considered to be behind the crime have been divided up into the following exclusive categories:

Xenophobia  
Islamophobic  
Antisemitic  
Homophobic

### **Ideologically motivated hate crime/link to organization**

Hate crime reports are divided up into the two following categories:

- Reports where a visible ideological motive is missing.
- Reports where there is an expressed ideological motive and where there is a link to Nazi organizations or right-wing extremist groups.

### **The nature of contact**

This category describes the nature of contact of the crime. In 2007, the category *general graffiti* was added. In earlier years, reports of this type were categorized under the heading *other*. The sections showing results also have a more general classification into three categories in order to link similar groups. The nature of contact is divided up as follows:

Physical contact

1. *Direct against person, physical contact*

Vicinity

2. *Direct against person, vicinity*

Distance

3. *General graffiti*
4. *Internet*
5. *Media*
6. *Postal letter*
7. *SMS text message*
8. *Telephone/fax*
9. *Other*

### **Scene of the crime**

The scene of the crime describes the place where the crime took place. This year, the categories *SMS* and *Media* have been added. In earlier years, reports of this type were categorized under the heading *No information*. The scene of the crime is divided up into twelve groups as follows:



1. *Place of work*
2. *Home*
3. *Internet*
4. *Public transport*
5. *Place of entertainment*
6. *Religious location*
7. *School*
8. *Media*
9. *SMS text message*
10. *Public location*
11. *Other locations*
12. *No information*

### **Relationship between perpetrator and victim**

The category relationship describes the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. An innovation for 2007 is the introduction of the category *customer/client*. In earlier years, reports of this type were categorized as *known person/group* or *unknown person*. The sections showing results also have a more general classification into three categories in order to link similar groups. Relationship is divided up as follows:

Close persons

1. *Spouse/partner/co-habitee*
2. *Former partner*
3. *Family member*
4. *Friend/acquaintance*

Distant acquaintance

5. *Colleague*
6. *School friend*
7. *Neighbour*
8. *Known person/group*

Unknown

9. *Customer/client*
10. *Service sector employees*
11. *Unknown person*

No information

12. *No information*

### **Gender and age**

In the sections “*Persons exposed to crime*” and “*Persons suspected*” information about gender and age will be presented based on the following age categories:

- -14
- 15–19
- 20–39
- 40–54
- 55–

### **Regional division**

This year's report accounts for hate crime reports at county level and for Sweden's three largest cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö).

## **Reliability**

In order for an offence to be registered as a hate crime in these statistics, the requirements are that:

- the event has been reported to the police
- the crime is properly labelled
- the police register relevant information in the narrative text of the report
- this text includes words found in the search word list
- the coder interprets and assesses the event as a hate crime.

The report probably only covers a small proportion of actual hate criminality.

### **Report to the police**

An initial precondition for a crime to be included in the statistics for hate crime is that the event has become known to the police. In this respect, these statistics do not differ from other statistics for reported crimes. The propensity to report a crime varies depending of type of offence and over time. Based on earlier studies, it can be stated that the relationship between actual and reported criminality, the so-called obscurity number, is large for hate crimes<sup>23</sup>

In order to identify more hate crimes, any hate crime motives should be noted during all stages of the preliminary investigation by the police and public prosecutor.<sup>24</sup> Factors pointing to hate crime are not always brought up by the victim him-/herself, instead the police must often actively put questions concerning this to the victim.

### **The crime is properly labelled**

As mentioned before, the narratives of all reports to the police are not searched using the search word list. Only certain types of offences are included in the search. It is therefore important that the event is labelled correctly in order to be included in the search.

### **The police register relevant information in the report**

In the identification of hate crime, it is often a question of sensitive information, which the victim may not wish to tell the police. Even if a

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<sup>23</sup> See for instance Living History Forum (2006a). For a more detailed description of these concepts, see Brå (2006b, p. 66f).

<sup>24</sup> Swedish Prosecution Authority (2007a, p.43).

hate crime motive does emerge, the police may instead choose to write this information into the investigation system DurTvå, from which Brå does not get information. For some reports, the investigator is contacted in order to get further information, and then information from DurTvå may be used in the assessment of whether a report concerns a hate crime or not.

#### **The narrative must include words found in the search word list**

A search word list has been used to read the narrative text by computer, but it cannot be excluded that there are narratives describing a hate crime that do not include any of the words found in the search word list. When it comes to the offence types *unlawful discrimination* and *agitation against ethnic group*, all reports are gone through.

#### **Assessment of the coder**

The assessment of the coder of the report is of central importance for the outcome. Most reports are not assessed as hate crimes. In order to achieve as good reliability as possible, the reports have been scrutinized according to clear guidelines several times by different persons. For difficult assessments, the reports have been the subject of joint discussion and have thereafter been coded according to the coding rules worked out.

## Comparability

The following section accounts for the comparability, both between different years and with other relevant statistics. In order to study the development of hate crime or to compare with other statistics, it is important to take the information below into consideration in order to know the conclusions that can be drawn about, for instance, increase or decrease in hate crime statistics.

#### **Comparisons between years**

Every year, the search word list is updated by adding new words and removing old words. It is difficult to say what importance this has to the comparability, as the use of language is changing in general, which means that new words are added and old ones disappear.

During 2004, the Swedish Security Service carried out comprehensive methodology development within computing technology, which affected the collection routines. The methodology changes have affected the possibilities of comparing statistics for the years before 2004 to a different degree for the different motives.

As from 2006, Brå has full responsibility for gathering and assessing all reported hate crimes. Despite close cooperation with the Security Service, it cannot be excluded that the takeover has had consequences for comparability with previous years.

In terms of information about suspected persons, this account includes persons added by prosecutors to the reports at a later stage in crime investigations. The Security Service only included those reasonably suspected persons who were linked to a reported crime at an earlier stage. It is therefore difficult to make any comparisons with years before 2006 in relation to suspected persons.

Islamophobic crimes were not reported separately by the Security Service, but some of them were probably included in the account of hate crimes motivated by xenophobia.

Hate crime statistics for 2007 have been developed and new information has been added. In terms of the nature of contact, general graffiti has been added. For information about the location in which the hate crime took place, SMS text message and media have been added. In terms of information about the relationship between perpetrator and victim, customer/client has been added. This means that it may be difficult to compare individual categories for the nature of contact, the scene of the crime and relationship.

### **Comparisons with other statistics**

Hate crime statistics are not comparable with other official crime statistics in terms of crimes reported. The accounting unit for hate crime is the crime report, and not crimes reported. A report can include one or several offences and for hate crime the principal offence is selected. Official crime statistics for crimes reported account for all crimes in the report.

Nor are the persons suspected in these reports comparable to persons suspected in official statistics. The definitions differ in that in official statistics, persons suspected means that the suspicion of a crime remains after the prosecutor has completed the investigation. In this report, all persons who at some stage have been regarded as suspected of a hate crime are included. Furthermore, this account includes persons suspected under the age of 15, who are not included in official statistics.

For 2007, information about hate crime reports cleared up is also included. This information cannot be compared with official statistics for crimes cleared up either. In official statistics, all clearing up decisions made during e.g. 2007 are accounted for, whether the crime was reported the same year or during a previous year. Hate crime statistics only account for decisions relating to hate crimes reported during 2006.

# Results

## Hate crime – all motives

### Level and development

During 2007, just over 3,500 reports were assessed as concerning hate crime, which is the largest number of identified hate crime reports since the start of the measuring period. Reports have increased by 8 percent since the previous year, and by 20 percent since 2005.

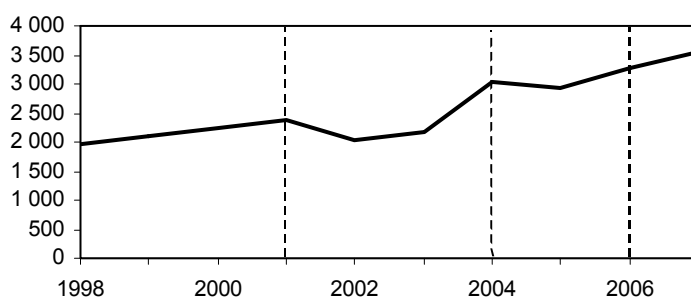


Figure 1. Number of reports with hate crime motives, 1998-2007.

Figure 1 illuminates the development of the number of reports relating to all hate crime motives for the years 1998-2007. The number of reports has increased from around 2,000 to 3,500. An exception from the upwards trend is a small decrease during the years 2002 and 2003. However, it is not entirely easy to compare the number of hate crimes reported over time. Several changes have been introduced since 1998, which affect the comparability of the statistics. In 2004, the Security Service introduced a new method for gathering information from the narratives of reports to the police<sup>25</sup>, which entailed that more reports of statistical relevance could be identified. Apart from the change in methodology, the definition of hate crime motivated by xenophobia has been changed. Ahead of the accounting of hate crime in 2001, the definition was changed back to the current one. Another thing that may have affected the statistics is that a new motive was introduced in 2006, Islamophobia. The introduction of this motive resulted in a slight increase in the number of reports. However, the effect of this on hate crime in total is relatively small, as reports of Islamophobia are relatively few.

### **Hate crime motivated by xenophobia most common**

The description of all hate crime is affected by certain motives being more prominent than others – hate crime motivated by xenophobia (71

<sup>25</sup> Swedish Security Service (2005, p.24).

percent) is the single largest category, which to a great extent affects the general picture. In 20 percent of reports, a homophobic motive was identified. The smaller categories, antisemitism (3 percent) and Islamophobia (6 percent), have no great effect on the general picture, which should be kept in mind when interpreting this section.

Table 1. Number and proportion of reports with hate crime motives, 2004–2007.

Motive	Year							
	2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Xenophobic	2 263	75	2 272	77	2 189	67	2 489	70
Islamophobic	..	..	..	..	252	8	206	6
Antisemitic	151	5	111	4	134	4	118	3
Homophobic	614	20	563	19	684	21	723	20
Total	3 028	100	2 946	100	3 259	100	3 536	100

.. = Information not available

### Unlawful threat/molestation is the most common type of offence

The single most common type of offence (principal offence) in reports of hate crime in 2007 was unlawful threat/molestation (just over 1,200 reports), followed by violent crime (around 730 reports) and defamation (almost 600 reports). The number of reports including agitation against national or ethnic group was just under 420 and the number of reports relating to unlawful discrimination was almost 160<sup>26</sup>. An increase on last year can be seen mainly in the category inflicting damage/graffiti, where the proportion has increased by 4 percentage points. The other types of offence remain more or less at the same proportionate level as in 2006.

<sup>26</sup> The Swedish Prosecution Authority (2008) p.39 also keeps statistics of hate crime that can be identified according to crime codes, which are agitation against ethnic group and unlawful discrimination. In 2007, almost 410 suspected crimes involving agitation against ethnic group and 180 involving unlawful discrimination were received.

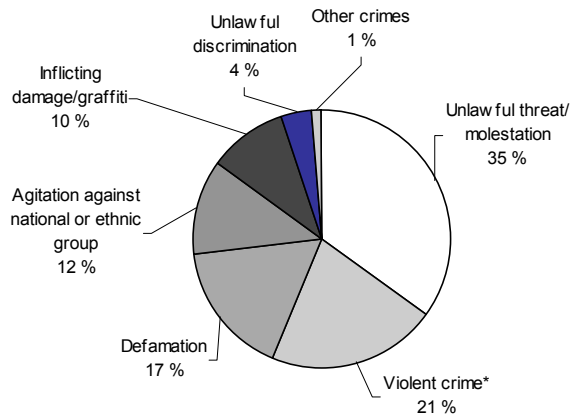


Figure 2: Proportion of reports with hate crime motives according to the principal offence category, 2007 (3,536 reports).

## The nature of contact

### **Vicinity, but not physical contact most common nature of contact**

For all hate crime, it is most common for the perpetrator to threaten, molest or insult the victim in his/her vicinity, but that no physical contact occurs (*vicinity*, 52 percent). Every fifth hate crime is a violent crime, where the perpetrator thus has made a physical attack on the victim. Just over every fourth hate crime is committed at a *distance*. Many different types of line of actions have been used when the crime happens at a distance. A comparison of the years 2006 and 2007 shows that the distribution of the nature of contact has not seen any large changes.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> An innovation for 2007 is that the category general graffiti has been added; these reports were previously categorized as other line of actions.

Table 2. Number and proportion of reports with hate crime motives according to the nature of contact, 2007.

Method	Number	%
<b>Direct against person, physical contact</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Direct against person, vicinity</b>	<b>1 841</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Distance</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>27</b>
General graffiti	125	4
Internet	161	5
Media	12	0
Postal letter	133	4
SMS text message	71	2
Telephone/fax	230	7
Other	231	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 536</b>	<b>100</b>

## Scene of the crime

### Many different everyday locations

There is no characteristic crime scene for hate crime; instead, hate crime occurs in all sorts of places used by people in everyday life. Three common locations (each 16-19 percent) are the scene of crimes where the victim works, lives and moves about outside, such as streets, markets and in parks. The distribution can also be seen from the fact that *other places* is the scene of the crime for one fifth of hate crimes reported. These are places where the victim might be shopping, exercising or having a cup of coffee. The distribution across the scene of the crime is just about the same in 2007 as in 2006.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In 2007, two new categories were introduced, media and SMS text messages.



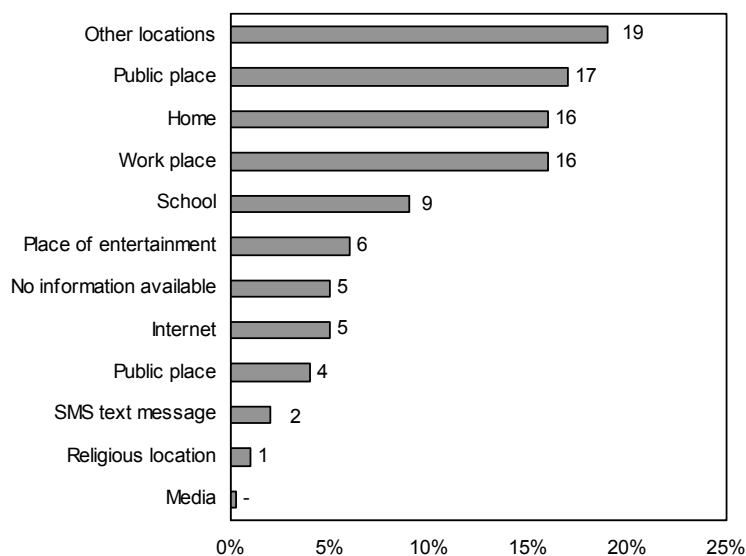


Figure 3. Proportion of reports with hate crime motive according to the scene of the crime, 2007.

## Relationship

### Unknown perpetrator most common

In more than half of all reports of hate crime, the perpetrator is *unknown* to the victim. In just under one third of cases, the perpetrator is a *distant acquaintance*, which includes a neighbour, school friend, colleague or a person or group known by name or appearance to the victim. A comparison with 2006<sup>29</sup> shows an increase of the category *unknown* and a reduction of the category *no information available*.

<sup>29</sup> In 2007, a new relationship category has been introduced, customer/client.

Table 3. Number and proportion of reports with hate crime motive according to relationship between perpetrator and victim, 2007.

Relationship	Number	%
<b>Close relationship</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>5</b>
Spouse/partner/cohabite	10	0
Former partner	66	2
Family	43	1
Friends/acquaintances	52	1
<b>Distance acquaintance</b>	<b>1 087</b>	<b>31</b>
Neighbour	288	8
Colleague	66	2
Known person/group	537	15
School friend	196	6
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>1 952</b>	<b>55</b>
Customer/client	382	11
Service sector employees	331	9
Unknown person	1 239	35
<b>No information available</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 536</b>	<b>100</b>

## Hate crimes cleared up

The concept “cleared up” is a police expression and means either that a person has been linked to the crime through a decision to prosecute, order of summary punishment or waiver of prosecution, or that the crime has been cleared up in some other way. A crime is thus regarded as cleared up even if the accused is freed at a later stage in a trial. The account is based on the decisions made in relation to the principal offence in the report and which is considered to be a hate crime.

Table 4. Number and proportion of cleared up hate crime reports, according to main crime, reported in 2006 and cleared up during the period January 2006–March 2008.

Type of decision	Number	%
<b>Not cleared up</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>28</b>
Under investigation	116	4
Other not cleared up	781	24
<b>Personally cleared up</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>9</b>
Decision to prosecute	270	8
Order of summary punishment	13	0
Waiver of prosecution	7	0
<b>Technically cleared up</b>	<b>2 072</b>	<b>64</b>
Suspects under 15	141	4
Crime cannot be confirmed	586	18
Deed is not a crime	54	2
Other technically cleared up	1 291	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 259</b>	<b>100</b>

**The majority of hate crimes are cleared up, but few are personally cleared up.**

In March 2008, 73 percent of all reports (principal offence) from 2006 with hate crime motives had been cleared up. 64 percent of the reports were cleared up *technically*, which for instance means that a crime could not be confirmed. 9 percent of the reports were *personally cleared up*, of which the majority through a decision to prosecute. 40 percent of crimes are *otherwise technically cleared up*, which is the highest percentage in the category *technically cleared up*. This high proportion of *other technically cleared up* is to a large extent dependent upon the crime types insult and unlawful discrimination<sup>30</sup> being common in this category. Of all hate crime, 4 percent were still being investigated and thus *not cleared up*.

<sup>30</sup> Reports to the police of unlawful discrimination are difficult to investigate and to prove in accordance to the Swedish Prosecution Authority's report (2008) of received, completed and legally actioned suspicions of crime. In practice, a precondition for taking legal action is that the report is made in conjunction with the event and that the police starts the investigation immediately. In addition to this, one reason for the low figures for legal action is that those who make the reports in some cases do not know that the discrimination must have occurred within a business operation in order to be punishable.

# Hate crime motivated by Xenophobia

Hate crime motivated by xenophobia can take many expressions. They can be anything from events that turn out later not to be criminal, to serious crimes of violence. It may be a question of vandalism of refugee camps, damage to cars, insult to and harassment of persons due to their actual, or by the suspect perceived, foreign origin.

## Results in brief

- In 2007, just over 2,500 reports were identified that were assessed to include a principal offence motivated by xenophobia. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase of 14 percent.
- Unlawful threats/molestation is the most common hate crime motivated by xenophobia (34 percent). Violent crime and defamation are the next most common types of crime.
- Places of entertainment as the scene of a crime are the most common for this motive, which can be explained by unlawful discrimination being common.
- The results from the Swedish Crime Survey 2007 shows that 1.2 percent of the population (16–79 years) in Sweden have stated that they were victims of hate crime motivated by xenophobia in 2006.

An illustration of a hate crime motivated by xenophobia, when an unlawful threat is made via telephone is:

*An unknown person has telephoned José and clearly expressed that José is a “fucking immigrant” and a “damn dago” and that he would “kill him, kill his family, burn them so that they end up in Hell by setting fire to the house while they are asleep”.*

## Self-reported exposure to hate crime (Swedish Crime Survey)

In order to get a better picture of the level of exposure to crime, surveys of self-reported exposure can be used. When the results from the Swedish Crime Survey are interpreted, it is important to remember that the number of observations of hate crime is low and that there are consequently large variations from year to year. It should also be noted that the survey only measures exposure among people registered in Sweden, and that thus asylum seekers and persons who are in Sweden without

valid permits are not included in the sample.<sup>31</sup> For the offence types mugging, assault, threats and harassment, the Swedish Crime Survey asked the follow-up question of whether a motive of xenophobia may have been behind the crime. In total, the results from the survey show that 1.2 percent of the population (16-79 years) in Sweden, which corresponds to approximately 86,000 persons, have stated that they were victims of hate crime motivated by xenophobia during 2006.

Table 5. Exposure among the population (16–79 years) to hate crimes motivated by Xenophobia according to crime category and estimated number of events and proportion of events reported to the police in 2006 according to the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS).

N=233	Proportion exposed in %	Estimated No exposed in population	Estimated No of events in population	Proportion of reported events in %
<b>All hate crime motivated by Xenophobia*</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>86 000</b>	<b>200 000</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Muggings</i>	0,2	14 000	20 000	36
<i>Assault</i>	0,3	20 000	44 000	36
<i>Threats</i>	0,6	45 000	104 000	26
<i>Harasement</i>	0,4	30 000	30 000	22

\* In the accounting for all hate crimes, exposed persons are only included once. Thus the total of the accounts of individual types of crime exceeds 1.2 percent.

### **Exposure to threats most common during hate crime motivated by xenophobia**

According to the Swedish Crime Survey, threats (0.6 percent) is the type of offence that the persons subjected to hate crime motivated by xenophobia in 2006 most often stated that they had been subjected to. Being a victim of harassment motivated by xenophobia is the next most common, as 0.4 percent state that they have been subjected to harassment in 2006. Exposure to mugging (0.2 percent) and assault (0.3 percent) are stated to the least extent.

### **Muggings and assaults are reported more often than threats**

In the Swedish Crime Survey 2006, one quarter (28 percent) of the reported hate crimes motivated by xenophobia were stated to have been reported to the police, which is slightly higher than the propensity to

<sup>31</sup> The response frequency among people born outside the Nordic countries is lower (57.8 percent) compared to the estimated proportion of respondents among persons born in the Nordic countries (77.7 percent). Representativity is thus lower, but the weighting of groups does take account of this to some extent.

report in total for the population, which is around 26 percent for the four types of offence. The types of offence stated to be reported to the greatest extent are muggings and assaults. Just over every third mugging and every third assault is reported to the police. Just over one fifth (22 percent) of harassments and one quarter of threats (26 percent) are stated as reported to the police.

# Islamophobic hate crime

Hate crime motivated by islamophobia can take many expressions. For instance, the suspect may have expressed hostility of hatred against Muslims. It may be a case of vandalism of premises linked to Muslims, damage to mosques or Muslim cemeteries and harassment of persons due to their Muslim faith.

## Results in brief

- In 2007, just over 200 reports were identified as including a principal offence with Islamophobic motive. The number of Islamophobic hate crimes reported has fallen since last year by 18 percent (almost 50 reports). This fall can possibly be explained by there being in 2006 certain events that generated a large number of reports.
- Unlawful threats/molestation constitutes the largest proportion of the crimes, 34 percent. One quarter of reports are of the crime type agitation against ethnic group, followed by violent crime and defamation.
- Letters are the most common nature of contact in Islamophobic hate crimes (15 percent), which is a higher proportion than for other hate crime (2–6 percent).

Violent crime is less common, as the hate crime motive is religious, but as with other hate crime, a violent crime here may vary from a slight scratch on the arm and serious displays of violence, as the example below shows:

*The suspected woman has assaulted the injured party by pulling on her veil and hair, hitting the stomach of the injured party and scratching the injured party in the face, causing pain and fear. The suspect has also insulted the injured party by shouting: "I'll hit you. You're a Muslim. You're shit, go back to the bush, you fucking whore."*

# Antisemitic hate crime

There are many types of antisemitic hate crime. There are both serious violent crime and offences where the suspect may have expressed or shown dislike of the Jewish population. It might be a case of vandalism of synagogues or premises linked to Judaism, damage to Jewish cemeteries and molestation, defamation and harassment of persons due to their actual or perceived Jewish birth. The attribute “Jew” may also have been used in derogatory or insulting manner.

## Results in brief

One in three antisemitic hate crimes is ideologically motivated. The proportion is thus higher than for crimes motivated by Xenophobia (13 percent), Islamophobic motives (7 percent) and crimes with homophobic motives (3 percent).

In 2007, just under 120 reports to the police were identified to contain a principal offence with antisemitic motivation. The number of antisemitic hate crimes is 12 percent lower in 2007 than in 2006, and has fallen from 134 reports to 118.

Agitation against ethnic group is the most common type of crime, while violent crime is less common.

In more than half the cases, the perpetrator is unknown to the victim.

The highest proportion of technically cleared up crimes (50 percent) compared to other hate crimes.

Many offences are aimed at synagogues and Jewish congregations, but private persons are also subjected to agitation against an ethnic group. One example of this is:

*The injured party stood in the square shouting anti-racist slogans. The person pointed out has said “We’re going to exterminate all Jewish pigs.” In addition, the person pointed out has pushed the injured party and waved a newspaper in her face, whereupon she felt threatened in conjunction with the event above.*



# Homophobic hate crime

Homophobic hate crime may be expressed in many ways, from expressed derogatory phrases about homosexuals in general, to serious cases of assault. It might be a question of vandalism of RFSL's<sup>32</sup> premises, about speeches expressing hatred in public space, about defamation and damage inflicted. According to one study, about one quarter of victims of homophobic hate crimes report the event to the police.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, studies also show that homosexual men exposed to hate crimes report the offence to the police twice as often as homosexual women.

## Results in brief

- In 2007, nearly 725 reports were identified as including a main crime with homophobic motive, which is an increase of 6 percent compared to the year before.
- Every fourth homophobic hate crime is a violent crime, where a perpetrator makes a physical attack.
- In 7 percent of reports, the person is attacked by a person close to them: a former partner, somebody in the family or a friend, which is a high proportion compared to other hate crime.
- The result from the Swedish Crime Survey 2007 describes the self-reported exposure to crime with homophobic motive as lower than that motivated by xenophobia.

The most common homophobic hate crimes are still unlawful threats or molestation, followed by violent crime and defamation. The least common one is unlawful discrimination. An example of molestation in the home of the victims is.

*During the evening when Titti and her co-habitee were sitting in the sitting room, someone threw a stone through the window into the sitting room. The injured party feels that this may be aimed at her, due to her sexual orientation.*

## Self-reported exposure to hate crime (the Swedish Crime Survey)

There are some earlier studies<sup>34</sup> concerning the exposure of LGBT<sup>35</sup> persons to crime, but this is the first time information is presented about

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<sup>32</sup> Swedish Federation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights.

<sup>33</sup> Tiby (1999, p. 207).

<sup>34</sup> Tiby (1999, p. 171).

<sup>35</sup> The abbreviation LGBT refers collectively to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.

hate crime with homophobic motives from the Swedish Crime Survey, which is done using a representative sample<sup>36</sup> of the population. For the offence types muggings, assault, threats and harassment, the Swedish Crime Survey poses question about whether the victim feels there is anything homophobic about the motive. When interpreting the material, it is important to be aware that the number of observations of hate crime and in particular hate crime with homophobic motives in the survey material is small and that great variations between years consequently are expected. From this measurement event, it is not possible to describe the distribution of offence types for homophobic hate crimes.<sup>37</sup>

### Exposure to homophobic hate crimes in 2006

In total, 0.14 percent of the population (16–79 years), which corresponds to around 10,000 persons, state that they were exposed to hate crimes with homophobic motives during 2006. This can be compared to the Swedish Crime Survey 2007, which states that 10.2 percent of the population was exposed to muggings, assaults, threats and harassment in 2006, corresponding to around 740,000 persons. According to Table 6 below, based on the survey, the number of events with homophobic motives can be estimated at 24,000 criminal events during 2006. In total, according to the Swedish Crime Survey, it is more common to be exposed to crimes motivated by xenophobia compared with crimes motivated by homophobia. One explanation for this is that the demographic population group that can be exposed to crimes motivated by xenophobia is considerably larger than the group that can be exposed to hate crime motivated by homophobia.<sup>38</sup>

Table 6. Exposure among the population (16–79 years) to homophobic hate crime according to crime category and estimated number of events and proportion of events reported to the police in 2006 according to the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS).

N=26	Proportion exposed in %	Estimated No exposed in population	Estimated No of events in population	Proportion of reported events in %
Homophobic hate crime	0,14	10 000	24 000	28

<sup>36</sup> According to Tiby (1999, p. 35) directed victim studies point to sub-groups within the population, such as LGBT persons, often show a significantly higher proportion of persons exposed.

<sup>37</sup> It is not possible to calculate the confidence interval using so few observations. When the Swedish Crime Survey has been carried out a number of times, it may be possible to add several years together and account for sliding averages.

<sup>38</sup> Tiby (2004, p. 87).

### **Homophobic hate crimes are reported to a greater extent**

Finally, it emerges that just over one quarter (28 percent) of homophobic hate crimes stated in the Swedish Crime Survey 2006 were reported to the police. A number of studies have shown that the propensity to report among the group exposed to homophobic hate crimes is low, and that around 25-30 percent of the crimes are reported.<sup>39</sup> The proportion of homophobic hate crimes reported is, however, slightly higher than the propensity to report in total among the population, which is around 26 percent for the four types of offences.

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<sup>39</sup> Tiby (1999, p. 207).

# Ideologically motivated hate crime

The concept *ideologically motivated hate crime* refers to hate crimes motivated by xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism or homophobia caused by the perpetrator's right-wing extremist values or Nazi ideology. For ideological hate crime, there are a number of typical cases. They may be about perpetrators shouting "white power" or make so-called Hitler salutes in town. There may be flyers in schools with ideological messages linked to organizations. It is also common for swastikas and ideological messages<sup>40</sup> such as ZOG<sup>41</sup> or 88 being graffitied on to cars belonging to victims, on letterboxes or doors of victims' houses.

## Level and development

Of all reported hate crimes in 2007, just over 3,500, 12 percent<sup>42</sup> were ideologically motivated. This corresponds to just under 410 reports. This is an increase of almost 105 reports (34 percent) compared to the previous year. The dominant type of offence<sup>43</sup> has during 2004-2007 been agitation against ethnic group, followed by unlawful threats/molestation. Reports relating to the offence type defamation have been less common.

Reports including the offence agitation against ethnic group have been the single most common type of offence in reports involving ideologically motivated hate crimes. Below is an example of an Islamophobic hate crime assessed to be ideologically motivated by the perpetrator shouting "Sieg Heil".

*Gösta walked about in the park, waving a hammer and shouting "Sieg heil" and making Nazi salutes to people who passed him by. He also shouted "Deutschland" and "damn Muslims". When the patrol arrived, he had the hammer stuck into the front of his trousers.*

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<sup>40</sup> See Gestrin (2007, p.85-122) for a description of right-wing extremist movements and their symbols, number symbols, anniversaries and abbreviations.

<sup>41</sup> ZOG is an abbreviation sometimes used during ideologically motivated hate crime, where the abbreviation represents an idea of the world being run by a Jewish conspiracy, called the Zionist Occupation Government.

<sup>42</sup> Compared to last year this is an increase of 3 percentage points.

<sup>43</sup> In comparisons of types of crime over time, very large percentage changes from one year to another may arise due to low absolute figures.

## Links to organizations

In one quarter (just under 110 out of 410) of the ideologically motivated hate crimes reported, a link to a Nazi organization or right-wing extremist group was identified.

## Injured parties in hate crimes

An important part when analyzing hate crimes is to see which persons have reported to the police that they have been exposed to these crimes. In 2007, almost 3,700 persons were identified as having been exposed to hate crime, which is an increase of 9 percent since last year. Around 70 percent of the victims are men and around 30 percent are women.

### **Children and older people underrepresented in exposure to hate crime**

The age distribution of the people exposed to hate crime in 2007 is not similar to the distribution of age groups in the population. Of those exposed to hate crime, the proportion of *children* (0-7 years) is 8 percent, while their proportion of the population is 17 percent. The corresponding proportion for *older people* (55 years and over) is 7 percent, while their proportion of the population is 31 percent. Children and older people are thus underrepresented in terms of exposure to hate crime in relation to their numbers in the population.

## Persons suspected

In 2007, just under 1,115 persons were identified as suspects<sup>44</sup> of crimes in the reports where the motive was assessed to be xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism or homophobia.

### **Most common to find suspects of violent crimes**

The structure of the type of offence of which the perpetrators are suspected differs slightly from the structure for hate crimes reported. In 2007, one third of all suspected persons were suspected of *violent crimes*, which can be compared to violent crime representing one fifth (21 percent) of the hate crimes reported. In 3 percent of cases, people were suspected of *inflicting damage/graffiti*, which can be compared to reports, which represented one tenth (10 percent) of the hate crimes. The reason for this difference is that *inflicting damage/graffiti* is a offence category where a suspected person is relatively rarely found.

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<sup>44</sup> In 2007, the decision about suspicion came in 95 percent of cases (just under 1,050 persons) from the police authorities and in 5 percent of cases (60 persons) from the prosecution authority.

Men are suspected of hate crimes to a considerably greater extent (80 percent) than women (20 percent), which earlier studies have also shown.<sup>45</sup> In the section about injured parties, it is shown that the proportion of men exposed is just under 70 percent and the proportion of women around 30 percent. Thus, the gender distributions for suspects and for exposure differ. There are more men among suspects and among those exposed, but the proportion of men is higher among suspects of hate crimes than among those exposed to hate crime. The relationship is thus different for women; the proportion of women is higher among those exposed to hate crime than for those suspected of hate crimes.

### **Younger suspects overrepresented in hate crimes**

Of the persons suspected identified in 2007, more than one third (just under 400 persons) were *younger* than 20 years, of which almost 125 persons (11 percent) were below the age of criminal responsibility of 15 years, while constituting 24 percent of the population in 2007. In summary, young people are thus overrepresented in the statistics for persons suspected in relation to the population, while older people are underrepresented.

When dividing up the reports according to the hate crime motive identified, it appears that the average age of the suspected perpetrators is relatively high for hate crimes motivated by xenophobia (33 years) and Islamophobic hate crimes (32 years)<sup>46</sup> and lowest for reports relating to persons who, in addition to a hate crime motive, also are ideologically motivated (20 years).

## **Previous criminal convictions**

Questions are often asked about suspected persons' previous criminality. Have they previously been prosecuted for crimes or have they no previous convictions? In this year's report the criminal records of the persons suspected of hate crimes in 2007 are described. The criminal records are assessed on the basis of the number of legal proceedings, that is convictions in a district court or statutory punishments imposed by a prosecutor or waivers of prosecution over the last ten years (1997-2006). Studying legal proceedings is of great value, as they describe what the legal system actually does to people who have been found guilty of crimes. However, it is *not* possible to see whether the legal proceedings have concerned previous hate criminality.

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<sup>45</sup> Living History Forum (2006a).

<sup>46</sup> Swedish Integration Board (2005b, P.58). The result that older persons generally have more Islamophobic attitudes also emerges from the integration barometer.

### **Majority previously without convictions**

More than half the persons suspected of having committed a hate crime in 2007 were *without previous convictions*, in respect of the ten years immediately preceding the current suspicion. This can be compared with people without convictions constituting around 75 percent of all persons suspected in 2007 based on the selection of types of offences studied in the hate crime statistics.<sup>47</sup> Around one quarter of those suspected of a hate crime had been subject to legal proceedings *once or twice* while one in twenty had been subject of legal proceedings *ten times or more*. Just over half of the persons subject to legal proceedings (55 percent) were convicted of crimes in court, while the others (45 percent) were subject to legal proceedings through a decision by a prosecutor.

### **Crimes against persons more common than traffic offences when previously convicted**

The crime structure for the persons subject to legal proceedings give an illustration of the type of criminality determined by prosecutors and courts over the ten year period in question. The account is based on the principal offence in the legal proceedings<sup>48</sup>, which results in less serious crimes being underrepresented in relation to more serious crimes.

*Crimes of unlawful appropriation* are the most common crimes in the suspected persons' previous convictions. Around 22 percent of the suspected persons had previously been convicted of this type of criminality. Shoplifting and theft are the dominant types of offence in this category. During the period, the proportion of *crimes against persons* (Chapters 3–7 of the Penal Code) was around 18 percent of principal offences among the suspected persons. In this category, legal proceedings relating to assault dominate. *Other crimes* is the most common category of crime in conjunction with the legal proceedings. During the period, just over one third (35 percent) were prosecuted for crimes of this type, which include inflicting damage, agitation against ethnic group and unlawful discrimination.

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<sup>47</sup> In a comparison control of the 112,000 persons suspected of this type of crime in 2007, 13 percent had previously been subject to legal proceedings on 1 or 2 occasions over the last ten years. 4 percent each of the suspects had been subject to legal proceedings 3–4 times and 5–9 times respectively. Having 10 convictions or more during the years 1995–2006 was very unusual (2 percent).

<sup>48</sup> The crimes with the most serious sanctions in the scale of punishment.

# Regional distribution

This section accounts for the regional distribution at county level of reported hate crimes. An innovation for 2007 is that information is also presented for Sweden's largest cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Where in the country the most hate crimes are identified is partly influenced by the police and prosecution authorities' campaigns and work against hate crime.

## **Most reports in Stockholm County**

Just under one third (1,100 reports) of all hate crimes in 2007 were identified in Stockholm County. This is an increase of 16 percent on the previous year, when around 930 reports were identified. Even when taking differences in populations into account, Stockholm County has the most identified reports with hate crime motives (56 per 100,000 inhabitants). One explanation may be that in 2007, special efforts were made by the Stockholm county police to make staff aware of whether a crime is a hate crime or not. On the one hand, in June 2007, a hate crime hotline was introduced, where four full-time investigators are working. They are specialists on investigating and receiving reports that are hate crime related. On the other hand, all employees of the county have taken part in a web training course especially about hate crime and LGBT issues. In addition to this, active collaboration has been developed with groups, such as Afro-Swedes, Muslims and Roma. Together, these measures may very well turn out to be one of the explanations for the increase in the number of reports in Stockholm County.

## **Hate crime is not a phenomenon particular to the cities**

Although Stockholm County has the largest number of reported hate crimes, it is not possible to say, on the basis of the results of this report, that hate crime is a type of criminality that exists mainly in large cities. When taking average population size into account, the largest number of reports has been identified in Stockholm, Västmanland and Örebro counties (between 47 and 52 reports per 100,000 inhabitants).



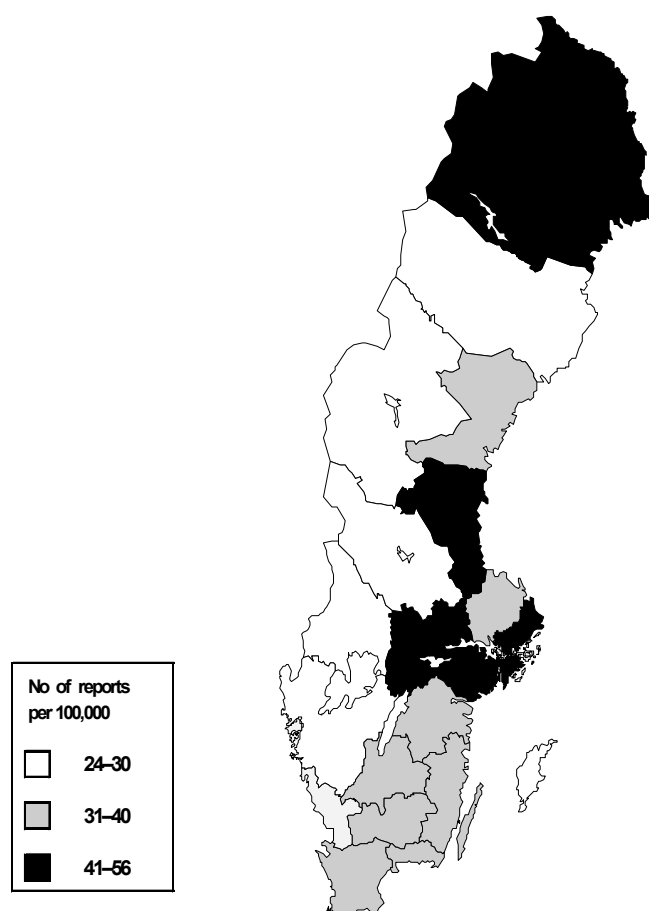


Figure 4. Number of reports with hate crime motives according to county, per 100,000 inhabitants, 2007.

Among the counties in the average category (31 to 40 reports per 100,000 inhabitants) can be found Skåne and Uppsala counties among others, with 36 and 39 reports respectively per 100,000 inhabitants. The lowest number of hate crime reports per inhabitant was identified in Gotland County (24 reports per 100,000 inhabitants). Jämtland, Västra Götaland and Halland counties also had relatively few reports (26 reports per 100,000 inhabitants). The three large city counties, Stockholm, Skåne and Västra Götaland, thus end up in different categories. In Stockholm County, where a number of initiatives have been taken, the number of hate crime reports is also the highest. In Skåne, on the other hand, where special initiatives also have been taken in the work against hate crime, the number of identified hate crimes is lower. Västra Götaland, which has relatively few reported hate crimes, has for instance no-one specifically appointed to work with hate crime.

## Large cities

In 2007, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö counties were responsible for almost a quarter of all hate crime reports (860 reports out of just over 3,500). Two thirds of these reports were identified in Stockholm. After taking differences in population into account, the largest number of reports was drawn up in Stockholm, followed by Gothenburg and then Malmö (72, 53 and 29 per 100,000 inhabitants respectively).

# Future possibilities

This report has accounted for the hate criminality reported to the police in Sweden in 2007. Hate crime statistics are important, because they show *one* picture of the scope and character of this criminality. Other sources and methods can be used to complement the picture.

## **Few hate crimes are personally cleared up**

The statistics for 2007 account for what happens with the hate crime reports (principal offences) later on in the judicial process, the decision reached by police and prosecutors when investigating these crimes. When the reports from 2006 were followed up until the end of March 2008, a perpetrator could rarely be linked to the crimes, but 73 percent of the crimes had been clarified by the police. How many of the hate crimes that later on, in the courts, have a more severe punishment imposed cannot be found from the result, but earlier studies have shown that the rule of increased severity of punishment is rarely used – that hate crimes do not lead to more severe punishments.<sup>49</sup> However, Brå is currently developing a new follow-up instrument which will make it possible to follow reported crimes even further through the legal process and to study how many cases lead to a conviction in court. In this, a comparison with other crimes will also be made to see whether these differ when it comes to the probability of a prosecution and judgement.

## **The police's work with hate crime**

Hate crime statistics is closely linked to the work of the police and the prosecutors<sup>50</sup> with hate crime issues. For this reason, it is valuable to investigate how such issues are prioritized by the different police authorities. A survey was sent out in spring 2008 to all police authorities with questions about their work with hate crime. Some police authorities, such as Stockholm County with the hate crime hotline, have worked very actively against hate crime during 2007, by developing collaboration with other authorities and non-profit organizations in order to publicize, disseminate knowledge and prevent hate crime, among other measures. During 2008, some police authorities will also be training their personnel on hate crime. As mentioned earlier, in order to improve their efforts against hate crime, the police and prosecution authorities have decided upon a number of measures to make hate criminality visible. Among others, the police have introduced a new text field in RAR for registering hate crime with the aim of improving the

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<sup>49</sup> Living History Forum (2006a) and Brå (2002).

<sup>50</sup> Swedish Prosecuting Authority (2008, p. 7 and 2007b, p.2). The development centre in Malmö is responsible for hate crime. In 2007, a legal memorandum was published concerning district court and appeal court judgements handed down since the end of the 1990s in relation to hate crime.

opportunities to follow up such crimes. What the consequences of this will be, and whether this can become a complement to hate crime statistics must be evaluated. In a more long-term perspective, there are several development works in progress within the legal system that will affect the hate crime area; for instance, the police are developing a new system for coding information about crime. Here there will be room for so-called focus areas, of which hate crime could be one. In this way, detailed information about hate crime will be registered already at the time of reporting.

### **Preventative work against hate crime – few evaluated initiatives**

Knowledge about hate criminality is significant to enable active work against fear, hostility and hatred. In Sweden, as mentioned above, there has been particular focus on the legal system's preventative work against hate crime. There is, however, great commitment, and many operations and projects carried out in Sweden disseminate knowledge and counter attitudes. Exposed groups are also working actively to counter this criminality. To mention just a few, in recent years, projects have been carried out nationally and locally within the National Association of Afro-Swedes, victim of crime hotlines, the Centre Against Racism, the Swedish Federation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL) and Young Swedish Muslims.<sup>51</sup> They have worked on encouraging exposed groups to report hate crime and discrimination, have disseminated knowledge through seminars and worked actively to influence decision-makers and those in power.

An important arena for work on preventing crime is the local level. In Sweden, some projects against hate crime have been carried out within the framework for the municipalities' local work on preventing crime, such as the Centre for Crime Prevention in Värmland, the Parent Support Group in Nora, the Alingsås Model, and others. However, few of the Swedish measures have been evaluated. It would be of great importance to get a measure of what is effective against this type of criminality, but there are difficulties in evaluating measures to prevent hate crime. On the one hand, the obscurity figure is great, on the other hand it is difficult to measure changed attitudes and values in people.<sup>52</sup> According to an earlier report, there are a number of components in the above-mentioned projects that have proved to be effective in the preventative work.<sup>53</sup> Measures are included that are both aimed at individual persons and events, but over and above there is also more general support and information efforts aimed at the general public. Furthermore,

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<sup>51</sup> The section only mentioned *some* examples of actors.

<sup>52</sup> Brå (2004a, p. 62).

<sup>53</sup> Brå (2004a).

mapping and problem analysis, which are important in all preventative work, have also been included in the projects.<sup>54</sup>

### **Preventative work with young people in school**

An important arena for preventing hate crime is schools, according to earlier reports.<sup>55</sup> The results of this report also show that young people are overrepresented, both as victims and as suspects of this type of criminality. Through its publications *Du & Jag, Rätt & Fel (You & I, Right & Wrong)*<sup>56</sup> and *Var går gränsen? (Where is the limit?)*<sup>57</sup> Brå has presented an educational material with teacher instructions aimed at pupils at junior and senior high school. The reports include proposals for how teachers can work with issues relating to tolerance and values, racism and xenophobia and harassment due to sexual orientation. Living History Forum, which is a public authority charged with engaging and disseminating knowledge about issues relating to, among others, tolerance and human rights, has also developed educational material for schools.

### **An inclusive definition of hate crime**

Brå has the assignment to further develop hate crime statistics. The view of what is a typical hate crime is affected by how hate crime is defined and construed as a concept. In order for a crime to be regarded as a hate crime, the current definition requires the perpetrator to belong to a majority group and the victim to a minority group.<sup>58</sup> This limitation of which groups can be subjected to hate crime was originally determined by the Swedish Security Service and the result is that only one part of the exposure to offences related to ethnicity, religious faith and sexual orientation are included in the statistics. Brå is now investigating the possibility of expanding the current definition of hate crime.<sup>59</sup>

A more inclusive definition would start from the motive for the crime, such as skin colour, nationality and ethnic background, religious faith and sexual orientation, rather than the groups that may be exposed to the crimes. This concurs with how the legislation in the area, that is the rule of increased severity of punishment, is worded. If the motive of the event had been to offend, then no difference is made in

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<sup>54</sup> Wallace and Carter (2003).

<sup>55</sup> Wallace and Carter (2003).

<sup>56</sup> Brå (2006c).

<sup>57</sup> Brå (2007c).

<sup>58</sup> Petrosino (2003, p. 10). This type of definition focuses on the imbalance of power between the perpetrators (majority groups) and those exposed (minority groups). In particular, it defined any damage that may result from hate crime.

<sup>59</sup> In May 2008, several seminars were arranged to gather views from different actors (the legal system, researchers, interest organizations, etc). Views have also been gathered from the Swedish Prosecution Service and all police authorities in the country also had the opportunity to comment on the proposal for an expanded definition.

terms of group affiliation. It is also important to have an inclusive and extensive definition in order to get a more comprehensive picture of exposure to hate crime from the point of view of the exposed person. The rule of increased severity of punishment is often brought to the fore with crimes aimed at minority groups, but it can also be implemented if persons are attacked by reason of being of Swedish extraction, for instance. Offences linked to a person's religious faith would, similarly, be counted, irrespective of whether the faith was Islam, Judaism or other faiths. In the same way, persons exposed to crime linked to sexual orientation could be exposed due to their homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality. This would provide a comprehensive picture of reported offences based on these three grounds. In order to process and code hate crimes reported in 2008, the definition above will be tested and evaluated, and any results will be presented in the hate crime statistics for next year.

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