

The causes and motivations of hate crime – implications for criminal justice social work and beyond

The aim of the research is to explore the causes and motivations of hate crime and the implications for Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) policy and practice.

Key details

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Police region	Scotland
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	September 2017
Date due for completion	June 2023

Research context

The overall aim of the research is to explore the causes and motivations of hate crime at individual, societal, and structural levels through offender accounts, and the implications for Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) policy and practice, as well as other key stakeholders such as the police and agencies who work with victims of hate crime.

The research questions

1. What are the micro-level factors contributing to hate crime? For example, 'thrill-seeking', the authoritarian personality, and shame and loss.

2. What are the meso-level factors? For example, perceptions of threat, defending 'in-groups', and community 'profiles' producing contexts for prejudice-related offending.
3. What are the macro-level factors? For example, political climates, the media and the internet, 'toxic masculinity', and socio-economic disadvantage.

From these, I will examine the implications for CJSW policy and practice in Scotland, and draw attention to the wider implications for key stakeholders.

Currently employed as a Criminal Justice Social Worker, I am uniquely placed to gain access to people convicted of hate offences and gather their perspectives first-hand.

Research methodology

The aim is to interview 30 offenders convicted of hate crimes to explore their perspectives on the offence, exploring the micro, meso, and macro-level themes (should these be evident), based on the assumption that these are the levels at which prejudice and hate crime are caused and influenced.

There will be scope for the generation of new data given the unique approach in directly obtaining offenders' views. This will be supplemented by interviewing ten Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) practitioners to discover how they conceptualise hate crime and its influence on their practice. This would aim to determine any similarities, as well as key differences, in perspectives and the implications for policy and practice.

CJSW reports produced on hate offences will be analysed, exploring how perpetrator perceptions and motivations are captured, and presented for use in judicial settings. This data will then be analysed using thematic analysis and Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

Interim reports or publications

?Hate crime: Causes, motivations and effective interventions for criminal justice social work; R Hamad; June 2017; Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice

The role of social work in tackling hate crime; R Hamad; July 2017; Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice

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'Hitting where it hurts'; Rania Hamad; Scottish Justice Matters; V5:1 April 2017

'Hate crime: Causes, motivations and effective interventions'; Iriss.fm, episode 181; May 2017