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**Dissertation Abstract**

Despite significant progress towards equal protection under the law for women, LGBT individuals, and people of color in the United States, hate crime remains a pervasive problem, and rates appear to have increased in recent years. Bias-motivated homicide – arguably the most serious form of hate crime – is statistically rare, but may have far-reaching consequences for marginalized communities. Data from the Uniform Crime Reports and the National Crime Victimization Survey have suggested that, on average, fewer than 10 bias-motivated homicides occur in the United States per year; however, data from open sources indicate that the rate of bias-motivated homicide is much higher when utilizing different criteria. In addition to this lack of clarity about prevalence, the dynamics of bias-motivated homicide remain understudied. The present study explores a non-random U.S. sample of 58 closed, adjudicated case files provided by the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit for research purposes. The utility of the leading hate crime typology by McDevitt, Levin, and Bennett (2002) is examined by applying the typology to this sample of bias-motivated homicides, and interrater reliability of the typology is considered. To address weaknesses in the typology, this study explores observable expressive and instrumental crime scene behaviors and their relationship to victim identity group membership, provocation, and victim-offender relationship. Results provide preliminary support for a bias-motivated homicide typology based on victim identity and victim-offender interaction preceding the offense. Implications for prevention, offender rehabilitation, and law enforcement are discussed.