

Characteristics and Targets of Mass Casualty Hate Crime Offenders

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The **Bias Incidents and Actors Study (BIAS)** is a multi-method project that examines the characteristics, motivations, and behaviors of a sample of individuals who committed hate crimes in the United States from 1990-2018. The project includes a dataset of 689 violent and 277 non-violent bias crime offenders who were motivated by bias based on (1) race, ethnicity, and nationality, (2) religion, (3) sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity, (4) age, or (5) disability. Individuals were selected at random for inclusion in the dataset from a pool of potential subjects that are reviewed according to the project's inclusion criteria and minimum information requirements. Hate crime charges or hate crime sentencing enhancements were not requirements for individuals to be included in the database. The BIAS dataset was coded entirely from open-source materials and contains more than 100 variable fields with information on hate crime events, victim characteristics, and offender motivations, demographics, and personal histories.

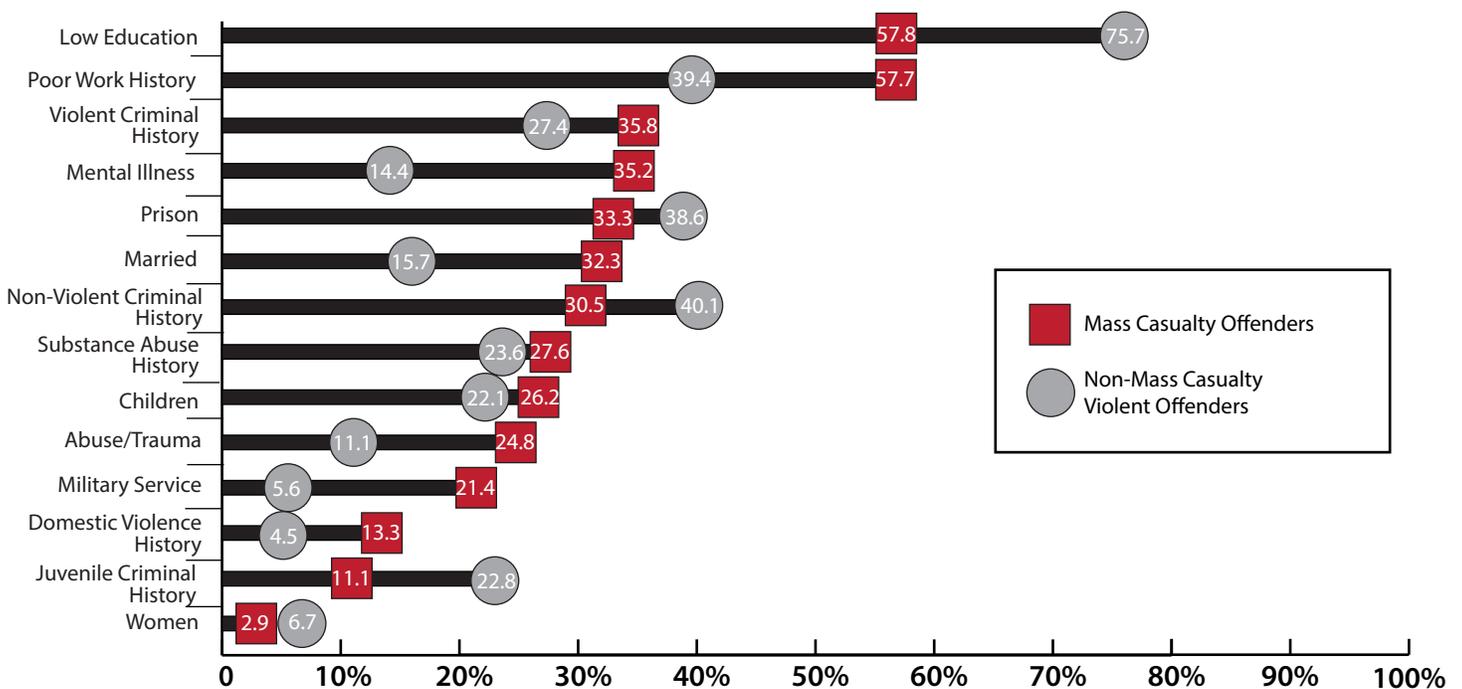
OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

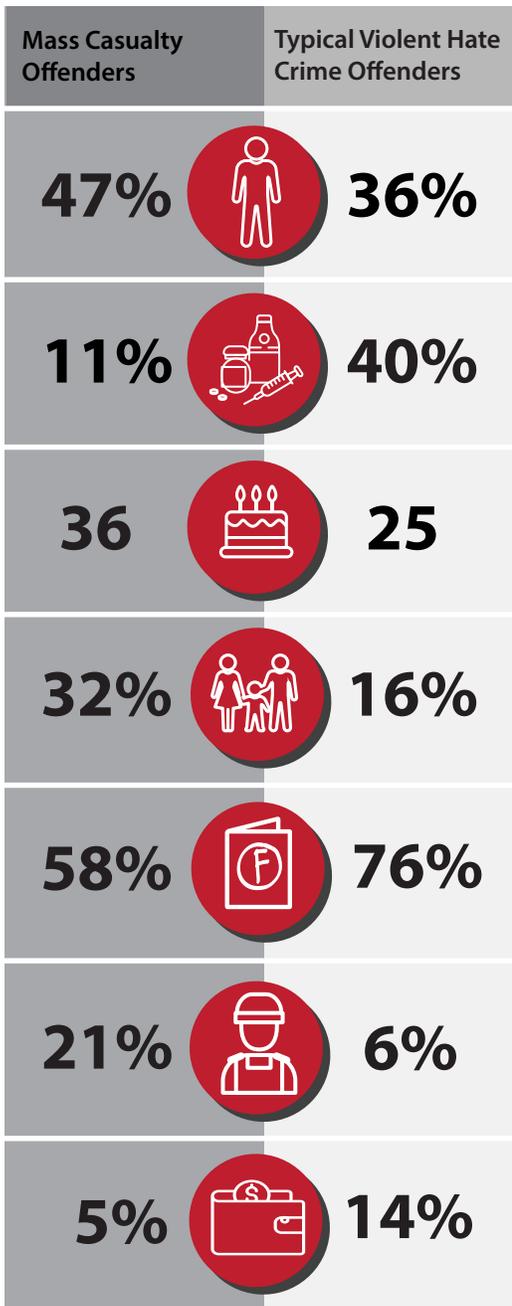
Among violent hate crime offenders, those with the highest public profiles are individuals who commit, or intend to commit, mass casualty attacks. In BIAS, we define a “mass casualty” offender as an individual who perpetrated, or attempted to perpetrate, an attack with the intention of killing or injuring four or more people. BIAS data show that the situational characteristics of mass casualty attacks, as well as the profiles of the perpetrators themselves, differ from other violent hate crimes in important ways.

Mass Casualty Offender

An individual who perpetrated, or attempted to perpetrate, an attack with the **intention of killing or injuring four or more people.**

Characteristics of Mass Casualty vs. Non-Mass Casualty Violent Offenders





Lone Actor

Although the majority of violent hate crimes are perpetrated by more than one individual, this is less common in mass casualty attacks, where lone actors make up 47 percent of offenders (vs. 36% among other violent hate crime offenders).

Influence of Drugs/Alcohol

Typical violent hate crime offenders are nearly four times as likely to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their attacks compared to mass casualty offenders (40% vs. 11%).

Age

According to the BIAS data, mass casualty offenders tended to be substantially older (median age is 36 vs. 25) than typical violent offenders when they committed the crimes that led to their inclusion in the database.

Family Life

This median age difference may explain why mass casualty offenders are also more likely to be married (32% vs. 16%) and to have children (26% vs. 22%).

Education and Work

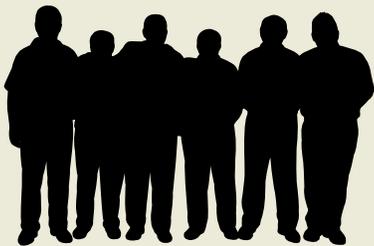
Although both groups have high rates of low educational attainment, mass casualty attackers are slightly better educated (57.8% low educational attainment vs. 75.7%) but they tend to have worse employment histories (57.7% poor work history vs. 39.4%) than other types of violent offenders.

Military Service

Mass casualty attackers are also nearly four times more likely to have served in the United States military (21.4% v. 5.6%).

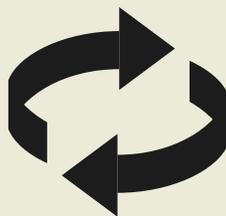
Mixed Motives

13.9 percent of typical violent offenders had mixed-motives that included theft. Only 4.8 percent of mass casualty offenders had similar motivations.



Group Affiliation

Mass casualty attacks involving more than one offender are more likely to be carried out by hate group associates (19% vs. 9%) than unaffiliated peers.



Previous Disputes

18.5 percent of typical violent offenders were responding to a preceding non-bias altercation, while only 3 percent of mass casualty crimes occurred after previous disputes.



Knew Victim

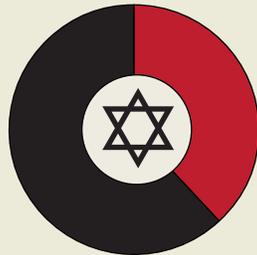
7 percent of mass casualty offenders knew at least one of their victims versus 17 percent of other violent offenders.

MASS CASUALTY TARGETS

The victims who are targeted in mass casualty events differ significantly from those who are targeted in typical hate crimes (violent and non-violent).

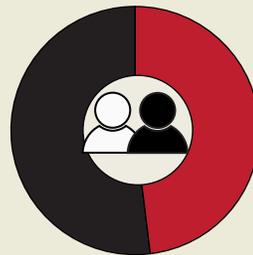


Anti-Semitic Offenders

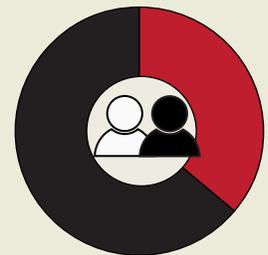


Mass Casualty Anti-Semitic Offenders

While anti-Semitic perpetrators account for only 10.4 percent of all offenders in the BIAS data, **anti-Semitic perpetrators comprise over a third (38.1%) of the offenders who planned or committed mass casualty attacks.**



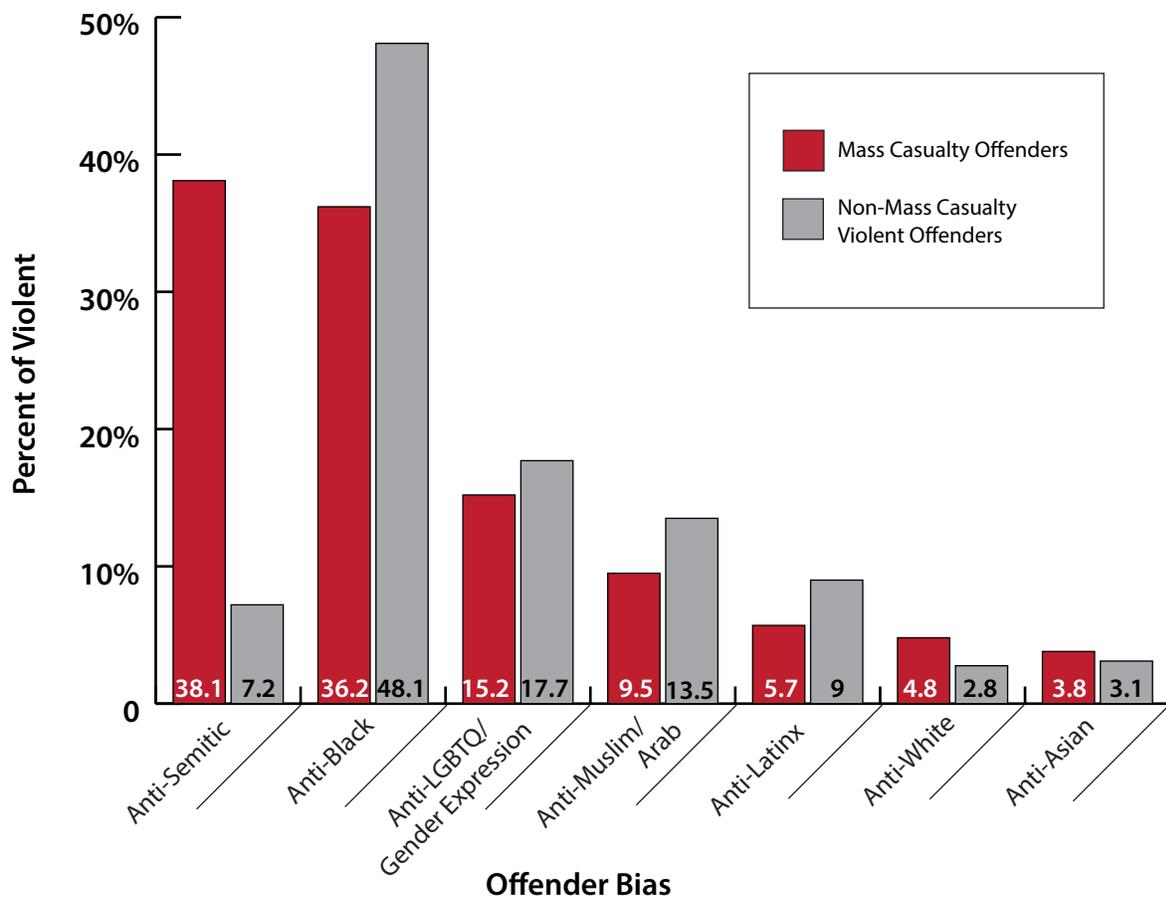
Anti-Black Offenders



Mass Casualty Anti-Black Offenders

And while **Anti-Black offenders comprise the largest percentage of typical hate crime perpetrators (48.1%)** in the database, they make-up fewer (36.2%) of the mass casualty offenders in BIAS.

Targets of Mass Casualty v. Non-Mass Casualty Violent Offenders



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BIAS

The subjects in BIAS were identified through a review of more than 35,000 news articles on hate crimes in the U.S. since 1990, as well as searches of crime databases and other publicly available information. To be included in the dataset, individuals must meet the following inclusion criteria:

1. The subject was arrested or indicted for committing a criminal offense in the United States from 1990-2018;
2. The subject was 18 years of age or older at the time of engaging in the criminal act;
3. The subject was residing in the United States at the time of engaging in the criminal act;
4. There is substantial evidence that the subject committed or escalated the criminal act because of bias against the victim or target's real or perceived identity characteristics (e.g., race, nationality, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc.);
5. There is enough information about the subject in open-source materials to code the relevant details of their crimes and, at a minimum, the majority of their demographic traits.

Given the nature of source deterioration over time and news coverage, the BIAS data over-represent cases from the second decade of the 2000s and high-publicity attacks, which are often cases that are violent and involve the most explicit expressions of prejudice. BIAS was not designed as a comprehensive accounting of all hate crime activity in the United States. Users interested in aggregate hate crime trends should consult data sources that are designed to capture such metrics, like those generated by the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics Program.

www.start.umd.edu/bias

PROJECT TEAM

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START ▶▶ The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a university-based research, education and training center comprised of an international network of scholars committed to the scientific study of terrorism, responses to terrorism and related phenomena. Led by the University of Maryland, START is a Department of Homeland Security Emeritus Center of Excellence that is supported by multiple federal agencies and departments. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and effects of terrorism; the effectiveness and impacts of counterterrorism and CVE; and other matters of global and national security. For more information, visit www.start.umd.edu or contact START at infostart@umd.edu.

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