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# International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology

## **Sociodemographic and sociopsychological differences between hate crime offenders and other non-bias-motivated criminals: implications for prison rehabilitation programs**

Journal:	<i>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology</i>
Manuscript ID	IJOTCC-22-0050.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Manuscript
Keywords:	Hate crime, Prejudice, Aggression, Prison programs, Criminogenic needs
Abstract:	<p>Hate crimes have severe consequences for the victims and for all members of the victim's social category. Prison programs must address the criminogenic needs of the participants, especially in this kind of crime, in order to prevent recidivism. This study seeks to understand the role of prejudice and aggression in the execution of hate crimes, in order to design effective interventions for hate crime offenders.</p> <p>Sociodemographic, criminological and sociopsychological variables were assessed in a sample of 33 hate crime offenders sentenced to prison or community service and in a group of 38 non-bias-motivated criminals (n = 71). The individuals convicted of hate crimes have higher reactive and proactive aggression, subtle prejudice, homophobia and social dominance orientation. The implications of these results for the Penitentiary Administration programs will be discussed.</p>

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## Introduction

Increased reports of hate crimes against European citizens in the United Kingdom after the Brexit referendum, attacks on Chinese citizens in Germany as a result of anti-Asian sentiment arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, or increased attacks on mosques in France, are some recent examples that show that hate crimes are a worrying phenomenon in Europe and in the rest of the world. Hate crime is a persistent social problem for any nation as it disrupts social harmony. Throughout history, there have always been social conflicts motivated by religion, race, or politics. Unfortunately, acts of violence against people perceived as members of the out-group are still a constant in multicultural and multiethnic communities.

In order to improve and harmonize the response of the police and the criminal justice system in European countries, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has proposed a comprehensive definition of hate crimes as “criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people”. Although there is no universal definition of hate crime and such definitions are not without controversy, they may be described as offences against the victim due to their actual or perceived race, language, color, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin, or other similar characteristics.

This international definition requires subsequent adaptation to the legislation of each state since this term encompasses different forms of incidents and criminal offenses motivated by racist, ideological, religious, ethnic, nationality, family status, sexual orientation, illness or disability.

The amendment made to the Spanish Penal Code by Organic Law 1/2015, has led to the expansion of the catalog of aggravating circumstances contained in Article 22.4 of the Criminal Code. Therefore, within hate crimes, the perpetrator of the crime must act driven by one of the discriminatory motives foreseen in the type of crime included in the Penal Code or within the aggravating circumstances modifying criminal liability (committing the crime for racist, anti-Semitic or other types of discrimination related to the ideology, religion or beliefs of the victim,

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3 the ethnicity, race or nation to which he/she belongs, his/her sex, sexual orientation or identity,  
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5 gender reasons, the disease he/she suffers or his/her disability).

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8 Consequently, hate crimes are not only committed with the intention to cause direct harm to the  
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10 victim, they also fulfil a symbolic and instrumental function by extending the threat to a  
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12 community, neighborhood or group (Berk, 1990). As Perry (2002) explains: "Hate crime is, in  
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14 fact, an assault against all members of stigmatized and marginalized communities". The hate-  
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16 motivated incident may affect the daily routines of members of the victim's social group: they  
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18 may avoid certain places or even move away from their neighborhood, fearing for their own  
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20 safety (Craig, 2002). According to Craig (2002, p. 89), "fear is felt well beyond the geographic  
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22 and temporal locale of the incident to affect all members of the victim's social category".  
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26 Based on the victim's perception of bias in hate crime victimizations (Masucci & Langton,  
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28 2017), hate crimes are motivated in the USA firstly by racial bias (48,1%) and subsequently,  
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30 by the victim's ethnicity (35,4%) and gender (29,3%). To a less frequent but still important  
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32 degree, hate crime victimizations were also deemed to arise from bias against the victim's  
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34 sexual orientation (22%), religion (17%) or disability (16%). In Spain, according to the Hate  
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36 Crimes Report, out of the 1,401 known hate crimes in 2020, 77.7% were related to racism-  
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38 xenophobia, ideology or sexual orientation. Thus, hate crime victims are chosen because of  
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40 their group identity or the groups that they associate with, and this is what distinguishes hate  
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42 crimes from other types of crime. Given the social component of this crime, criminological  
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44 research cannot rely solely on the general literature on crime but must continue to examine hate  
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46 crimes as a unique crime that may be influenced by different variables and therefore explained  
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48 by alternative theoretical models.  
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53 Several factors have been considered in the attempt to better comprehend the process by which  
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55 a person hates or fears another person, and thus to explain offender bias in victim selection  
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57 where the only reason is that the victim belongs to a socially identifiable group. This is  
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3 necessary because hate crimes are remarkably different in terms of perpetrator motivations,  
4 victim characteristics, and cultural ideologies regarding the victim's social group. For this  
5 reason, multiple explanations and theories have sought to account for this diversity of hate  
6 crimes (racist attacks, aggressions against LGBT individuals, or violent religious conflicts).  
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8 Many authors have developed theoretical models from a psychological, sociological and  
9 criminological perspective, to describe hate, prejudice processes and bias (Craig, 2002; Mendez  
10 & Suarez, 2019).  
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### 21 *Prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination*

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24 Hate crime is an illegal act where the victim is intentionally targeted on the basis of the  
25 perpetrator's prejudice against the former's actual or perceived status (Craig, 2002). Social  
26 psychology has demonstrated that prejudices are strongly associated with stereotypes and  
27 discrimination. Although the activation of stereotypes does not necessarily imply the existence  
28 of a negative attitude towards members of other groups or their unfair treatment, stereotypes  
29 can lead to or justify prejudice and discrimination (Dovidio et al., 2010)  
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38 Attitudes are deemed to be evaluations that result in negative or positive responses to people,  
39 issues, or objects. The tripartite theory of attitudes (Katz y Stotland, 1959) suggests that attitude  
40 has three components: 1) the cognitive dimension or stereotype, which corresponds to the  
41 beliefs regarding the characteristics associated with the group, 2) prejudice, which constitutes  
42 affective and evaluative reactions, and 3) discrimination, which refers to behavior.  
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50 For a more in-depth discussion of prejudice, we may state that it consists of a negative attitude  
51 and feeling towards the members of a particular social group (Allport, 1954; Brown, 2010).  
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53 According to the Dual-Attitude model (Wilson et al., 2000), there are two distinctive types of  
54 prejudice: 1) old-fashioned prejudice is explicit, blatant and involves obvious acts of  
55 discrimination, and 2) modern prejudice is still prevalent but it is implicit or automatic, and its  
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3 expressions have shifted to a subtler or implicit form. Subtle prejudice includes aspects such as  
4 the awareness that discrimination is wrong but holding beliefs and acting in ways that reinforce  
5 structural inequality between groups (Nelson, 2006). Despite their differences, previous studies  
6 have demonstrated that classical and modern prejudices are two distinct but highly correlated  
7 constructs (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Swim et al., 1995). Nevertheless, some studies have  
8 found little correlation between explicit (more deliberative or controlled) and implicit (more  
9 automatic) measures of prejudice (Dovidio et. al., 1997). This is because people consciously  
10 claim to hold and endorse egalitarian values, but they still hold unconscious negative feelings  
11 and attitudes towards the out-group (Wilson, et. al., 2000).

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14 According to Tajfel (1981), stereotypes have a social function. They are especially useful to  
15 positively differentiate in favor of the endo-group. When we assign positive stereotypes to our  
16 group as compared to other groups, it contributes to a more positive perception of our group  
17 and consequently affects our self-esteem. Favoring one's own group does not necessarily imply  
18 hostility towards other groups.

### 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 *Intergroup threats*

39 The shift from intra-group favoritism to ex-group hostility is usually marked by threats or fear,  
40 which in many cases is perceived and not real. Realistic threats consist of tangible conflicts of  
41 interest such as perceived competition over jobs, housing, and other resources (Walters et al.,  
42 2016). According to the Realist Conflict Theory, situations where two groups compete for  
43 limited resources stimulate antipathy and prejudice towards out-group members and inter-group  
44 conflict (Sherif, 1967; Sherif & Sherif, 1953). For this reason, our reactions towards other  
45 groups are not dependent solely on our negative evaluation of them. It seems obvious that a  
46 multitude of factors converge with prejudice at the point of origin of intergroup conflicts,  
47 including social and economic deprivation that may elicit specific emotions such as fear or hate,  
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3 which in turn encourage certain behaviors (Cottrell &Neuberg, 2005; Mackie et al., 2000), or  
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5 the perception of injustice that may result in a greater perceived threat (Pauwels & Heylen,  
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9 2020; Williamson, De Buck & Pauwels, 2021).

10 According to the theory of intergroup emotions (Mackie et al., 2000; Mackie et al., 2008) the  
11  
12 behavioral reactions that we display towards groups are derived from our emotional reactions  
13  
14 towards those groups, which in turn depend on our evaluations of these groups based on our  
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16 social identity. Some authors (eg, Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) argue that the specific emotions  
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18 we feel towards members of other groups arise from the perception that they pose a threat in  
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20 issues that are important to us (e.g., our security, values, economic resources). A widespread  
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22 prejudice is that immigrants take away jobs (in a context of high unemployment) from nationals  
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24 and that they commit more crimes than citizens. Based on the perceived threat, different  
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26 emotions such as fear or hate will emerge and these emotions will influence prejudice, even  
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28 precipitating a hostile or aggressive reaction to the out-group (Cottrell et al., 2010).  
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33 Social Dominance Theory (Pratto et al., 1994) also provides some insight into why  
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35 discrimination between groups occurs and the belief in the supremacy of some groups over  
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37 others. This theory is based on the observation that all human societies tend to be structured as  
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39 systems based on hierarchies, in which one group is hegemonic (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999,  
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41  
42 2004).  
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44 From this theoretical framework, an attempt has been made to delimit the mechanisms that  
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46 produce and maintain these social hierarchies. Therefore, Sidanius et al. (2001) propose a  
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48 trimorphic structure of social hierarchies in which there are three differentiated systems: two  
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50 systems corresponding to age and gender, and a third one that they call arbitrary, where social  
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52 hierarchies are constructed through different characteristics of the groups, such as race, culture,  
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54 religion or any distinctive element that may characterize the groups.  
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3 From this trimorphic structure, Sidanius & Pratto (2004) introduce three basic assumptions of  
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5 Social Dominance theory: (1) while hierarchies based on age and sex invariably exist in all  
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7 social systems, there are other hierarchical systems that are arbitrary and emerge when  
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9 economic surpluses are produced in societies, (2) most forms of intergroup conflict and exgroup  
10  
11 oppression such as racism, sexism, nationalism, and others can be conceptualized as  
12  
13 manifestations of the human tendency to form group-based social hierarchies, and (3) social  
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15 systems are subject to countervailing forces that reinforce and weaken the hierarchical structure.  
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17 Ideologies that promote or maintain the existence of hierarchies, and thus group inequality, can  
18  
19 become tools that legitimize intergroup violence. However, the justification of the equality-  
20  
21 inequality system will vary from one individual to another, regardless of their social group.  
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23 Thus, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is proposed as the individual predisposition  
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25 towards hierarchical and non-egalitarian intergroup relations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDO  
26  
27 expresses the degree to which a person desires the group to which he or she belongs to dominate  
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29 and be superior to exogroups (Sidanius & Pratto, 2004).  
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35 The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) establishes that promoting positive contact between  
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37 members of different groups may contribute to reducing prejudice and therefore combating  
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39 social dominance, an idea that is empirically supported (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew  
40  
41 & Tropp, 2006, new recommendations and developments in: Paolini et al., 2021).  
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#### 44 *Prejudice and hate*

45  
46 Allport (1954) points to the importance of prejudice as the point of origin of hate, considering  
47  
48 it as an emotion of extreme dislike or aggressive impulses targeting a person or group. Hate  
49  
50 differs from other emotions such as anger and feelings of revenge. While anger focuses on  
51  
52 changing or restoring the situation caused by another person, feelings of revenge focus on  
53  
54 restoring the self, and hate focuses on eliminating the hated person or group (van Doorn, 2018).  
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56 In his model, Beck (2003) describes how one proceeds from hate to violence: when a perception  
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3 of threat or intense feelings of hate directed at the supposed enemy causes them to react  
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5 violently (reactive or heated violence). On the other hand, there is another type of violence,  
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7 which is planned, instrumental and does not require hostility towards the victim (cold violence).  
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10 Sternberg & Sternberg (2010) propose an integrative theory called the Double Theory of Hate,  
11  
12 which states that hate against people or groups results from different cognitions, feelings, and  
13  
14 behavioral manifestations. Hate may be manifested in very different forms and degrees,  
15  
16 depending on the presence and intensity of its constituents, their individual or collective  
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18 perception, their reciprocity between groups (or people), their social justification or legitimacy,  
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20 in addition to individual and contextual factors that suppress or facilitate its different  
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22 manifestations.  
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#### 25 26 *From hate to aggression*

27  
28 There is a large body of research on the relationship between prejudice, hate and aggression.  
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30 According to the Social Identity Theory, high-prejudiced individuals gain positive identity by  
31  
32 denigrating the out-group members, which may also include aggressions, in order to distinguish  
33  
34 themselves from the victim's social group and to simultaneously achieve in-group identification  
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36 and approval from other like-minded group members (Hamner, 1992). Back in 1973, a classic  
37  
38 study in Social Psychology revealed that high-prejudiced subjects were significantly more  
39  
40 aggressive than low-prejudiced ones (Genthner & Taylor, 1973). More recently, Beal et al.  
41  
42 (2000) found that the same conclusions could be applied to modern racism. Subjects with  
43  
44 modern or subtle prejudices were more aggressive regardless of the target's race.  
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49 Classic research has firmly established that individuals who commit instrumental aggression  
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51 may be distinguished from those who commit hostile aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).  
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53 Instrumental aggression is goal-directed, proactive and has a purpose other than harming the  
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55 victim, and frequently targets strangers and acquaintances as opposed to intimates. Reactive or  
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57 hostile aggression has been deemed as being impulsive, unplanned, and occurs in response to  
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3 frustration and hostility, driven by anger and triggered, for example, by a perceived threat or  
4 provocation (see Geen, 2001, for a review).  
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8 Recently, empirical studies have also found that social prejudices have a positive and high  
9 correlation with intergroup conflict and with individual violent behavior towards the outgroup  
10 (Lyons et al., 2010; Mahaffey et al., 2005; Mange et al., 2016; Parrott, 2008; Piumatti & Mosso,  
11 2017; Thomsen et al., 2008). The results of several studies with young people and adolescents  
12 have revealed that prejudiced beliefs provide the motivational basis for ethnic victimization  
13 (Bayram et al., 2020) and that negative attitudes toward immigrants lead to aggressive thoughts  
14 and violent behavior in general (Piumatti & Mosso, 2017). Prejudices are not only a motivation  
15 for hate crime offenders, but they may also be used to justify their aggression towards their  
16 victims (Craig, 2002). Moreover, negative behaviors and attitudes toward out-groups within the  
17 society may occur more often when individuals experience harsh or frustrating circumstances  
18 in their lives, such as unemployment or low socioeconomic status (Berkowitz, 1981). As a  
19 matter of fact, many convicted perpetrators of hate crimes are career criminals who seek to  
20 aggressively engage with the object of their hate rather than avoid the objects of their disdain  
21 (Dunbar et al., 1999).  
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40 From a perpetrator perspective, there is little understanding in the literature regarding hate  
41 crime offenders and the types of crimes they commit. The published data on hate crime  
42 offenders are severely limited, but the few studies conducted to date present some shared  
43 characteristics of bias-crime perpetrators. Some studies have found that they are mostly young  
44 adults or juveniles (Craig, 2002; Godinet & Stotzer, 2017) who are more likely to be  
45 unemployed or have low socioeconomic status (Walters et al., 2018). Additionally, hate crime  
46 offenders have a lengthy violent criminal record, compared to other non-bias offenders, with  
47 more prior arrests for more serious crimes (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2019), and they tend to be  
48 crime “generalists” rather than specialists (Messner et al., 2004; Roxell, 2011).  
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3 Rehabilitation programs for offenders must focus on their criminogenic needs, that is, on the  
4 causes for committing the crime. It is essential to delve into the psychological processes  
5 responsible for this type of crime and the psychosocial characteristics of these criminals to  
6 design therapeutic interventions based on scientific evidence. This is a pioneering study that  
7 analyzes the role of psychosocial variables in a sample of hate crime offenders and it represents  
8 progress in the awareness of the underlying mechanisms of this type of crime, which has many  
9 repercussions for victims, the groups that experience it, and society in general.  
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### 21 **Current study**

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23 Although hate crime violence is a topic of growing interest in society, there is a need of more  
24 evidence about who commits this type of criminal offenses. Therefore, the main goal of this  
25 study is to delve deeper into this criminal phenomenon, analyzing the sociodemographic and  
26 psychological differences between hate crime offenders and other non-bias-motivated  
27 criminals. Firstly, we will study the sociodemographic, social and criminological characteristics  
28 for a group of hate crime offenders and a second group of offenders of other crime types.  
29 Finally, given the theoretical relevance of prejudice and aggression and another group variables  
30 in this type of crime, we will examine the differences in these psychosocial variables.  
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### 45 **Method**

#### 46 *Participants*

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48 The sample consists of 33 hate crime offenders (HC) sentenced to prison terms or community  
49 service and a group of 38 non-bias-motivated criminals (non-HC). **According to the Spanish**  
50 **penal code,** hate crimes include serious bias-motivated aggressions (24.2% for Homicide,  
51 15.2% for Aggravated Murder and 21.2% for Aggravated Assault) and less serious bias-  
52 motivated violence (6% for Threats of violence or verbal abuse, 3% for Harassment, 6.1% for  
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3 Hate Speech, etc.). The participants in the non-bias-motivated group were selected according  
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5 to the severity of the attack but without bias motivation. These offences were Homicide or  
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7 Aggravated Murder (21%), Robbery (29%), Aggravated Assault (13%), Domestic Abuse  
8  
9 (16%), Sexual Abuse (5%), Sexual Aggression or Rape (6%), Verbal Threats or Harassment  
10  
11 (6%), Resisting Police (3%) and Drug Supply (3%).  
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13  
14 Most of the hate offenders were male (93.9%), but there were also two women in the sample  
15  
16 (6.1%). Similarly, the non-HC group consisted of 94.7% male and 5.3% female participants.  
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19 Only 5.6% of the sample (four cases) had a disability, half being cognitive and the other half a  
20  
21 physical disability. The mean age of hate offenders was 30.4 years (SD = 9.5) and 33.8 years  
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23 (SD = 7.8) for the non-HC group, with no significant difference ( $p = 0.1$ ). Non-HC group  
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25 participants were selected based not only on the severity of the offense but also by age. This is  
26  
27 especially important because hate offenders tend to be younger than other inmates, therefore  
28  
29 the non-HC group participants could not be selected randomly from the prison population as  
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31 the mean age is 41.3 years (Ministry of Interior, 2019), which is higher than the HC group, and  
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33 would have led to an older non-HC group. We had to ensure that both groups were similar in  
34  
35 terms of age, so that possible differences found in the psychological measures (like impulsivity  
36  
37 or aggression) could not be attributed to this age difference.  
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41 Finally, most of the participants were nationals, 75.8% for the HC group and 78.4% for the  
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43 non-HC group. The rest of the sample participants were from Ecuador, Colombia, Morocco,  
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45 Romania, Dominican Republic or Brazil.  
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#### 48 49 50 51 *Procedure*

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53 The HC sample was compiled from the Spanish prison and probation databases. These national  
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55 databases include legal and penitentiary information on all prison inmates and people serving  
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57 community sentences. First, the members of the research team downloaded a national list of all  
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3 the inmates serving a prison or a community sentence due to a hate crime. Subsequently, the  
4 prison and probation professionals contacted the inmates and offered them the opportunity to  
5 participate in the study, voluntarily, and upon signing an informed consent form.  
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10 Within the same prison and community services as the participating hate crime offenders,  
11 offenders with similar sociodemographic characteristics and crime severity, but without the  
12 prejudiced motivation, were offered the same opportunity to participate in the study. For this  
13 group, therefore, a convenience sampling technique was used. These non-HC group participants  
14 also signed an informed consent form prior to participation. The final sample is from 16 prisons  
15 and 6 community services in Spain.  
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24 The research team created a questionnaire with two parts: firstly, a section of sociodemographic  
25 information and risk factors, with categorical and dichotomic variables, related to sex,  
26 education, nationality, marital status, household, employment, family history, intimate partner  
27 relationship, peer group, drug abuse, gang involvement (group involved in organized crime  
28 activity with hate motivated behavior and symbols), police records, etc. The legal information,  
29 gang involvement and criminal records included in this first section were gathered directly from  
30 the sentence. The second part consisted of a battery of tests regarding psychological measures  
31 of interest. The questionnaire was delivered to the inmates by the prison and community service  
32 psychologists, under the direction of the research team. These professionals helped the  
33 participants when needed, especially with the first section if they had any questions about the  
34 variables, according to the definition variable document provided by the research team. Finally,  
35 they sent the questionnaires to the research team members for data introduction, processing and  
36 analysis.  
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### 56 *Measures*

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3 A *Reactive-Proactive Aggression Questionnaire* (RPQ) (Raine et al., 2006; Andreu, Peña &  
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A *Reactive-Proactive Aggression Questionnaire* (RPQ) (Raine et al., 2006; Andreu, Peña & Ramírez, 2009) is a 23-item self-report questionnaire where the participant rates how often a physical or verbal aggressive behavior has occurred in the past, with 12 items for proactive (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ) and 11 items for reactive aggression (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ).

A *Prejudiced Attitude Test* (TAP) (Rojas et al., 2012) was used to measure prejudice towards the out-group, the majority against the minority group and vice versa, based on the three-component model of prejudiced attitude (cognitive, affective, and conative/behavioral). The test consists of 16 items: eight items measure the cognitive component (beliefs about the out-group), seven items measure the affective component (emotions), and one item measures the tendency to action (preferred social distance from the out-group). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .74 to .89 for the three components.

*Subtle and Blatant Prejudice Scale* (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Rueda & Navas, 2009). Subtle prejudice (cold, distant, and indirect) has three components: (1) the defense of traditional values, (2) the exaggeration of cultural differences, and (3) the denial of positive emotions. Blatant prejudice (traditional, direct, aggressive, and evident) is composed of two factors: (1) threat and rejection and (2) anti-intimacy. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is .82 for both scales.

A *Homophobia test* (Oltra et al., 2017) was used to assess prejudice towards homosexuals and other members of the LGTBI community, characterized by the presence of both a negative attitude and discomfort, understood respectively as rejection and fear. The test consists of 33 items and measures the behavioral, cognitive, affective, and emotional components of homophobia (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .99$ ).

The *Attitudes towards people with disability scale* (Verdugo, Jenaro & Arias, 1995) is a 37-item instrument that includes five sub-scales: 1) Assessment of capacities and limitations; 2) Recognition/denial of rights; 3) Personal implication; 4) Generic description and 5) Role assumption (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .92$ ).

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3 *Social dominance orientation* (Pratto et al., 1994; Silvan-Ferrero & Bustillos, 2007) is a 16-  
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5 item scale that comprises statements about general group-based egalitarianism rated on a 1  
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7 'Strongly disagree' to 7 'Strongly agree' scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ). It includes two  
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9 subdimensions of SDO: the first one reflects support for group- based dominance hierarchies,  
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11 and the other may reflect opposition to group-based equality.  
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### 17 *Data analysis*

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19 This study was conducted in two stages: First we assessed group differences between bias-  
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21 motivated offenders and non-bias-motivated criminals at the bivariate level. Student's t-test  
22  
23 was used to compare hate crime offenders and the non-HC group in continuous variables, and  
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25 Pearson's chi-squared test was used to compare proportions of dichotomous variables.  
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27 Bonferroni correction was used to avoid type I errors for multiple comparisons. Effect sizes are  
28  
29 reported in terms of Cohen's d and Phi coefficient, respectively. Secondly, the relationship  
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31 between psychological measures was examined with a correlational analysis. Data analyses  
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33 were conducted using SPSS 26.0 (IBM).  
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## 40 **Results**

### 41 *Hate crimes and non-HC group differences*

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43 Table 1 displays a bivariate comparison of percentages in sociodemographic characteristics  
44  
45 between bias-motivated offenders and other criminals. As may be seen, most hate crime  
46  
47 offenders still lived with their family of origin in comparison to other non-bias- offenders ( $\chi^2(2)$   
48  
49 = 12.371,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Phi = .35$ ). Furthermore, bias-motivated offenders lacked intimate partner  
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51 relationships ( $\chi^2(2) = 9.538$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Phi = .23$ ) or stable employment ( $\chi^2(2) = 3.784$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Phi$   
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3 = .43). Finally, compared to non-bias criminality, hate crimes seem to be highly associated with  
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5 gang involvement ( $\chi^2(2) = 23.860, p < .001, \Phi = .56$ ).  
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9  
10 [Table 1 here]

11  
12 Table 2 presents a bivariate comparison of means in psychological variables between bias-  
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14 motivated offenders and other criminals. Hate crime offenders display significantly higher  
15  
16 reactive aggression ( $t(68) = 2.10; p = .002, d = 0.50$ ) and proactive aggression ( $t(68) = 1.69;$   
17  
18  $p = .004, d = 0.41$ ) in comparison to other criminals. In connection with the prejudiced attitudes  
19  
20 analyzed, hate crime offenders present significantly more subtle prejudice, it is colder, more  
21  
22 distant, and indirect than blatant prejudice, compared to the non-HC group ( $t(68) = 2.75;$   
23  
24  $p < .001, d = 0.66$ ). However, no significant differences are found in blatant prejudice, prejudiced  
25  
26 attitudes towards people with disability or prejudiced attitudes in general (the cognitive or  
27  
28 tendency to action components). In contrast, hate crime offenders report higher prejudiced  
29  
30 attitudes, in the affective component ( $t(68) = 1.99; p = .003, d = 0.48$ ) and higher homophobia ( $t$   
31  
32  $(68) = 1.64; p = .004, d = 0.41$ ) than other criminals. Finally, HC group present significantly higher  
33  
34 social dominance ( $t(68) = 1.67; p = .004, d = 0.40$ ) and social group orientation ( $t(68) = 1.79;$   
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36  $p = .003, d = 0.43$ ) than non-HC group.  
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44 [Table 2 here]

#### 45 46 47 48 49 *Correlational analyses*

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54 Table 3 displays the correlations including hate crime and non-HC offenders between the  
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56 variables that have shown significant differences between the two groups. When it comes to  
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58 psychological variables, hate crime offenders have higher scores in reactive and proactive  
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3 aggression and subtle prejudice and reactive aggression are significantly correlated in both  
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5 groups. However, reactive and proactive aggression are significantly associated with higher  
6  
7 levels of homophobia and social dominance and group orientation only in non-HC offenders.  
8  
9 Higher levels of homophobia and subtle prejudice are associated, in turn, with social dominance  
10  
11 and group orientation in hate crime offenders. Finally, and as expected, the highest correlations  
12  
13 are found between the subscales of the same variable, between reactive and proactive  
14  
15 aggression, and between social dominance and social group orientation.  
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19 With regard to offender characteristics, job stability is negatively associated with reactive  
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21 aggression and subtle prejudice. Gang involvement is significantly related to living with family  
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23 of origin, both reactive and proactive aggression and also to subtle prejudice.  
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28 [Table 3 here]  
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### 32 33 **Discussion**

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35 The main objective of this study was to analyze the differences between hate crime offenders  
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37 and other criminals, in order to adapt rehabilitation programs to their criminogenic needs. Our  
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39 first finding was that most hate crime offenders still lived with their parents at the time of the  
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41 offence and had no intimate partners. Additionally, the majority of the hate crime offenders, in  
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43 comparison to other types of offenders, lacked job stability, making them financially dependent  
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45 on their families.  
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49 There is little information published on the characteristics or profile of hate crime offenders  
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51 (see Jolliffe & Farrington, 2019, as an exception). However, our findings are consistent with the  
52  
53 few available studies that define hate crime offenders as mostly males, young, and unemployed  
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55 (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2019; Levin & Reichelmann, 2015). Youth unemployment has been a  
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57 major concern for European countries since the recent economic crisis. This social problem is  
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3 particularly prevalent in southern Europe, ranging from 38.9% in Portugal to 54.6% youth  
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5 unemployment in Spain, the highest across Europe (O'Reilly et. al., 2015). Young adults in  
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7 Spain not only face high unemployment rate, but also job instability. They usually have  
8  
9 temporary jobs interspersed with bouts of unemployment or economic inactivity that impede  
10  
11 them from achieving residential independence. According to Eurostat (2021), in Spain 64% of  
12  
13 young people (between 25- and 29-years-old) live with their parents compared to the 42%  
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15 European average. These two risk factors (unemployment and living with the parents) are found  
16  
17 in significantly higher proportion in hate crime offenders, compared to other offenders with  
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19 similar social and economic backgrounds. This relationship between hate crime and  
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21 socioeconomic deprivation or lack of job opportunities should be considered and addressed in  
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23 rehabilitation programs for hate crime offenders.

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28 Secondly, the major difference with other types of crime was gang involvement, with half of  
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30 the hate crime offenders participating in hate groups prior to the crime committed (organized  
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32 racist groups, right-wing extremist groups, anarchist extremists, violent football fan groups,  
33  
34 etc.). Previous studies have already established that hate crimes are often committed by multiple  
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36 offenders or hate groups (Craig, 2002; Levin, & Reichelmann, 2015; Ruback, Gladfelter, &  
37  
38 Lantz, 2015) and these group hate attacks are positively associated with more serious injuries  
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40 in victims (Lantz & Kim, 2019).

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44 To understand the connection between unemployed youngsters who become gang-members to  
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46 commit hate crimes, it is important to consider the Realist Conflict Theory. As mentioned  
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48 before, group competition for scarce economic resources such as a job can stimulate prejudice  
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50 and aggression towards out-group members who are perceived as a threat to the economic  
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52 situation of the dominant group. These hate group attacks may be included in thrill-motivated  
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54 or defensive hate crimes, as stated by Levin and McDevitt (1993)<sup>1</sup>. Thrill-motivated hate attacks

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<sup>1</sup> This study was revised due to some methodological issues and an improved version was published in 2002.

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3 are committed by groups of bored young adults who attack people who are different in certain  
4 socially significant ways for fun and excitement, and to gain, in the process, a sense of power  
5 and dominance as well as peer acceptance (Levin & Reichelmann, 2015). But from the  
6 perpetrator's point of view, these hate group attacks can be also a response to a perceived threat,  
7 such as out-group members who compete for their jobs, who threaten the socio-economic  
8 hierarchy of the dominant group.  
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10  
11 It is important to comprehend the hate crime phenomenon to not only examine the in-group and  
12 out-group conflict, but also to analyze the influence of the individual and psychosocial  
13 variables. In terms of psychosocial variables, we found that hate crime offenders differ  
14 significantly in terms of prejudice and aggression from other type of offenders. They display  
15 more subtle prejudices and reactive and proactive aggression. In other words, hate crime  
16 offenders tend to react aggressively when faced with a perceived threat or aggression, and they  
17 also present more hostile cognitive bias. Furthermore, hate crime offenders tend to defend  
18 traditional values, to exaggerate cultural differences between the majority and minority groups  
19 and deny the outgroup positive emotions.  
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37 Our results reveal that subtle prejudices and aggression are strongly correlated in the hate crime  
38 group whereas in the non-HC group aggression is associated with social dominance. As  
39 expected, subtle and blatant prejudices are highly correlated constructs (Pettigrew & Meertens,  
40 1995; Swim et al., 1995). Additionally, hate crime offenders tend to score higher in  
41 homophobia, social dominance and social group orientation than other non-HC offenders, being  
42 those variables highly related and associated, only in hate crime offenders, with subtle  
43 prejudice. In effect, we found a connection between, on one hand, prejudice and, on the other  
44 hand, aggression and social dominance only in the hate crime group, while the rest of  
45 correlations remain similar for both groups.  
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3 These findings have potential implications for the way in which certain types of hate crime  
4 offenders are treated in prison. Since prejudice might account for the fact that hate criminals  
5 show more aggression, working with them should be key to therapeutic intervention. Since it  
6 is specifically subtle biases that constitute the difference, the approach must be both direct and  
7 indirect, as well as transversal throughout the entire program. This is the case in countries such  
8 as the United Kingdom and Scotland, where working with prejudice is at the heart of the  
9 treatment program carried out in prisons (for a review, see Igansky et al., 2011)

10  
11 Additionally, and given that the outgroup's perception of threat due to the resource's  
12 competition may trigger hate, thus leading to aggressions, working with social emotions,  
13 especially hate, should also be an essential part of therapeutic intervention, including actions  
14 that improve the emotional abilities of the participants, and develop strategies to cope with  
15 group pressure and learn pro-social coping skills for inter-group conflicts. On the other hand,  
16 the development of values such as tolerance, equality and respect must be fundamental in order  
17 to try to diminish the tendency towards social dominance of hate criminals. *Diversidad*, which  
18 is the rehabilitation program applied to people convicted of hate crimes in Spain, includes work  
19 with values and the development of tolerance and respect for human rights as key elements  
20 throughout the intervention (Mendez et al.2019). It would also be advisable to include  
21 restorative justice interventions with the objective of developing empathy and promoting  
22 reparation for the harm caused. A large body of research supports the use of restorative justice  
23 for both minor and serious hate crimes (for review see: Gavrielides, 2012; Kayali & Walters,  
24 2021, Walters, 2014) as well as for other types of serious crimes against people such as gender  
25 violence (Mills et al., 2019) or terrorism crimes in Spain (Varona & Soletto, 2014) and others  
26 countries (Staiger, 2010). The results also highlight the need to go beyond psychotherapeutic  
27 interventions when working with these aggressors and develop activities that enable inter-group  
28 contact to reduce prejudice and social dominance and social group orientation. Thus, the reform  
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3 program may be supplemented with sports, cultural activities, etc. that promote the interaction  
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5 of hate criminals with other people belonging to other groups and cultures. **Meta-analytic**  
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7 **studies have robustly established the efficacy of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice ( e.g.,**  
8  
9 **Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008).** Also, previous prison experiences where extremist individuals  
10  
11 **have been encouraged to develop inter-group contact have yielded interesting results: in**  
12  
13 **Indonesian prisons, through perspective-taking activities, reflective thinking, alternative social**  
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15 **identity, intergroup cooperation and development of alternative goals in people convicted of**  
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17 **terrorism, it has been observed that positive contact with exogroup members helps to establish**  
18  
19 **open-mindedness and promote ideological change (Milla et al., 2020).** Finally, given the most  
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21 prevalent sociodemographic profile of this type of criminal (job instability and financial  
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23 dependence on families) and its links to the crime, education and job training must also be  
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25 prioritized in order to improve the employability of those who participate in these programs,  
26  
27 with the fundamental support of the penitentiary administration in the application of these  
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29 activities (Redondo, 2017). **Although there doesn't appear to be any studies that specifically**  
30  
31 **point to the importance that families may play in the recidivism of those who have committed**  
32  
33 **hate crimes, the literature on general delinquency does show that the family may be a protective**  
34  
35 **factor that decreases the likelihood of committing new offences and reduces drug use (Brunton-**  
36  
37 **Smith & McCarthy, 2017; Mills & Codd, 2008).** Based on this premise, it might also be  
38  
39 **interesting to include work with families in treatment programs for hate offenders.**

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42 Based on the results obtained, we can say that reducing the prejudice in hate crime offenders  
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44 should be a central element of the rehabilitation programs. Prejudice and hate towards the  
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46 outgroup in conjunction with certain personal characteristics, may lead certain individuals to  
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48 commit crimes against members of the hated or rejected outgroup. Therefore, conducting  
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50 interventions whose main goal is to reduce prejudice is essential for the rehabilitation of these  
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52 offenders. It is well-known that certain types of contact, interactions, and building relationships  
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3 with members of different cultural groups can reduce the tendency toward stereotypes and  
4 prejudice: the contact hypothesis, (Allport, 1954). Additionally, some authors have proposed  
5 cognitive methods to reduce automatic negative prejudices in people regarding out-groups, by  
6 making them aware of the discrepancies between their real actions (discriminative behaviors)  
7 and their pretended (egalitarian) values (Dovidio et al., 2000). Leippe and Eisenstadt (1994)  
8 suggest that it would be enough to make people speak or write in public about an attitude  
9 contrary to what they actually possess to reduce prejudice. On the other hand, from the  
10 recategorization strategy, the model of common endo-group identity (Gaertner et al., 1993) has  
11 found consistent evidence that the creation of a larger category that encompasses two groups in  
12 conflict can reduce prejudice and discrimination towards members of the former exo-group.  
13 Finally, the role of affection and emotions in reducing prejudice and improving inter-group  
14 relationships has also been highlighted (Devine and Monteith, 1993; Dovidio et al., 1998; Voils  
15 et al., 2002).

## 35 **Conclusions**

37 This study makes an important contribution to the body of literature on hate crimes, providing  
38 empirical results on the characteristics and psychological differences of a sample of convicted  
39 hate crime offenders. Our findings highlight the role of prejudices and another psychosocial  
40 variables in this type of offenders. But if we are to fully understand hate crimes, other socio-  
41 demographic and criminological variables must also be taken into account. These prejudiced  
42 beliefs appear in young people who are unemployed and are drawn into hate groups. Therefore,  
43 their bias-motivated aggression is fueled by a perceived threat to their economic status and out-  
44 group members are used as a scapegoat, or sometimes it is due to the inner dynamics of peer  
45 pressure or saving face with like-minded friends or peers who reinforce their prejudice, their  
46 social dominance orientation and encourage their aggressive behavior.

### *Limitations and future research*

This study has two major limitations which may be addressed in future research. Firstly, the relatively small sample size is problematic, as applied research requires large samples in order to quantify significant effects. Possibly with a larger sample size, a significant difference will be found and its relationship with prejudice and aggression may be examined. A large sample would also allow to differentiate within hate crime offences, within those motivated by racial bias, victim's ethnicity, gender, victim's sexual orientation, religion or disability.

Despite their high prevalence, hate crimes are still notoriously underreported to the police, so only a small number of hate crime offenders are sentenced. Encouraging hate crime reporting is still a challenge for police and law enforcement agencies (Pezzella, Fetzer, & Keller, 2019). Furthermore, despite our efforts to have a sample size large enough to be representative of hate crime offenders, the reality is that few prison files are labeled as hate crimes. In many cases, the sentence describes the psychological or the physical attack with the bias motivation, but the prison database identifies the subject as a threat or physical aggression instead of a hate crime. This made the sample selection process very difficult, forcing us eventually to read each sentence directly to distinguish bias-motivated aggressions. In addition, in future studies the compared non-hate group should be carefully selected, with same base crimes but without the biased motivation, to ensure that hate, and not the typology or severity of the offence, is responsible for the differences found between the two groups. In this study, some of the offenders included in the non-hate group, for example those sentenced for sexual offences, may not be the best match for the hate crime offenders. Females also need to be considered in future studies with larger samples to analyze any differences with men. Another limitation of the research is the way in which the sample was collected. Given the complexity of this criminal phenomenon and the multitude of definitions of hate crimes, the

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3 results obtained should be taken with caution and generalizations should be avoided until these  
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5 analyses have been replicated with other samples of hate offenders.  
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8 The third limitation concerns the measurement of prejudice. As a psychological construct,  
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10 prejudice has been measured predominantly via psychological tests. Dunbar (1995)  
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12 summarized the pros and cons of psychological testing when assessing prejudice as an attitude  
13  
14 or trait. The author pointed out that many of the measures generally used, in this case the blatant  
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16 and subtle prejudice test (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995), are vulnerable to self-presentation bias.  
17  
18 In other words, the purpose of the questions may be transparent to the test taker, who may  
19  
20 modulate their responses to be more socially acceptable. This is a general phenomenon in  
21  
22 Criminal Psychology, but it is especially significant when measuring stereotypes or prejudice,  
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24 where there is a social pressure to present oneself as not racist or not holding prejudiced beliefs.  
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28 Finally, since it is a correlational study, in which there is no manipulation of the independent  
29  
30 variables, it is not possible to establish a causal relationship between the variables. However,  
31  
32 the results apparently do indicate the importance of prejudice, which can be reduced with  
33  
34 appropriate interventions. Other more social and structural variables cannot be modified. As a  
35  
36 line of future research, it could be interesting to focus on variables which are possible to  
37  
38 influence, and design experimental studies to test the effect of prejudice on aggressiveness.  
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41  
42 These limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the results of this study. Future  
43  
44 research should address these limitations and make a more detailed analysis of the  
45  
46 characteristics and different profiles of hate crime offenders, analyzing how the variables are  
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48 related, exploring other psychological and criminological variables and identifying the different  
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50 reasons behind bias-motivated crimes.  
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3 **Conflict of Interest**  
4

5 The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship,  
6 and/or publication of this article.  
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For Peer Review

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Table 1. Bivariate Comparison of Percentages Between Bias and Non-Bias Motivated Offenders

Offender characteristics	Bias motivated	Non-Bias motivated	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	$\Phi$
	%	%			
Living with family of origin	69.7	34.2	12.371	*	0.35
No intimate partner	40.6	18.4	9.538	*	0.23
Job stability	28.6	71.4	3.784	*	0.43
Gang involvement	54.5	2.7	23.860	**	0.56

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .001.

Table 2. Bivariate Comparison of Means in Psychological measures Between Bias and Non-Bias Motivated Offenders

Psychological measures	Bias	Non-Bias	t test	df	<i>p</i> (one-tailed)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	motivated	motivated				
	M (SD)	M (SD)				
Reactive aggression	10.8 (3.8)	8.8 (4.1)	2.10	68	*	0.50
Proactive aggression	5.7 (4.3)	4.0 (4.0)	1.685	68	*	0.41
Subtle prejudice	32.6 (5.9)	28.6 (6.1)	2.75	68	**	0.66
Blatant prejudice	24.4 (7.3)	22.3 (5.1)	1.543	68	ns	
Prejudiced attitudes	7.7 (2.2)	6.9 (2.2)	1.006	68	ns	
Cognitive component	21.9 (5.8)	21.1 (4.7)	0.611	67	ns	
Affective component	20.0 (6.6)	17.0 (6.1)	1.985	68	*	0.48
Homophobia	71.9 (28.9)	62.1 (20.9)	1.644	68	*	0.41
Prejudiced attitudes towards people with disability	10.1 (4.1)	9.4 (4.1)	0.734	68	ns	
Social dominance orientation	46.5 (18.1)	40.3 (12.6)	1.670	68	*	0.40
Social group orientation	25.2 (9.8)	21.5 (7.6)	1.798	68	*	0.43
Equality opposition	21.3 (10.6)	18.9 (9.3)	1.015	68	ns	

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .001.

Table 3. Correlational analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Reactive aggression	1	.800**	.453**	0.59	.274*	.234*	.343**	.007	-.015	-.279*	.262*
2. Proactive aggression		1	.320**	0.70	.304**	.222*	.245*	.006	.031	-.236	.291*
3. Subtle prejudice			1	.152	.391**	.386**	.423**	.135	-.033	-.381**	.411**
4. Prejudiced attitudes				1	.222*	.262*	.363**	.143	.030	-.184	.202
5. Homophobia					1	.631**	.594**	.212	-.037	-.166	.145
6. Social dominance orientation						1	.807**	.153	.025	.034	.165
7. Social group orientation							1	.056	-.017	.016	.197
8. Living with family of origin								1	-.203	.249*	.347**
9. No intimate partner									1	.120	-.139
10. Job stability										1	-.242
11. Gang involvement											1

\*  $p < .005$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .