

Learning Activity #4

Bridget Squires

Introduction to Sociology/SC101

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Professor Hardgrove

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A hate crime is a crime of violence against an individual that has been targeted specifically for their race, religion, gender, or sexual preference. A hate crime may also occur for any other reason where the offender is acting on hate or disgust for the victim. Hate crimes do not always have to be violent, these crimes can include harassment and property damage as well as other means of intimidating the victim. A hate crime differs from other crimes because it is based solely on hatred of the victim or their way of life. Unlike regular crimes that may be random or committed for different reasons, hate crimes are always committed as a means of hurting the victim specifically for their beliefs. As mentioned above, hate crimes also include violence against the victim, which also differs from other crimes like theft or blue-collar crime which do not harm the victim physically or mentally.

I believe that hate crimes deserve a category simply because of the thought process behind the crime. The criminal is targeting someone out of hatred for the victim's beliefs and in a way to physically or mentally abuse the victim for those beliefs. In my opinion, this specific targeting makes hate crimes unique. I feel like hate crimes are much more personal and violating than most other crimes as well. A majority of crimes do not seek to hurt the victim directly nor do everyday crimes seek to stalk and punish the victim, in my opinion. If hate crimes are grouped with other crimes, I feel like the punishment will not be as appropriate as it should be. There is also an increased chance the offender will receive a slap on the wrist and reoffend if the punishment is not unique to the crime. I also feel strongly that without specific hate crime laws and punishments, hate crimes have a chance of flying under the radar so to speak. The offender may become emboldened by the lack of punishment or attention the crime receives and therefore may escalate to more violent crime

against the victim or victims. It is for these reasons that I believe that a separate category for hate crimes is required in order to garner the appropriate amount of attention and correct punishment to deter future hate crimes from occurring.