

REVENGE AND IGNORANCE AS WEAPONS OF HATE SPEECH

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Abstract: *The year 2019, among some positive aspects, reflects some worrying aspects. Among them, the most harmful seems to be hate speech. Present at all levels of society, both in Romania and in the world, hatred brings with it the rejection of difference, negativity, violence and aggression. To tackle psychological sources of hate speech, our project Hate's Journey, financed by Erasmus+, 2018-2-ES02-KA205-011733 has designed an online questionnaire composed by some single item research questions, general data collection and tests regarding emotional regulation, internet content awareness and helping attitudes. The hypothesis of this research is that the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech. Research's 206 participants are residents of Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, with an age mean of $m=30$ years, 39.8% males and 60.2% females. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the online hate speech perpetrator pattern. As results show, revenge thinking pattern ($B=0.365$, $SE=0.082$, $Beta=0.317$, $t=4.452$ at a $p < 0.001$) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech ($B=0.233$, $SE=0.076$, $Beta=0.219$, $t=3.076$ at a $p < 0.005$) are significant predictors of hate speech perpetrator pattern. Conclusions and implications are discussed.*

Keywords: *hate speech perpetrator pattern; revenge thinking pattern; ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech;*

4. Theoretical correlates

We still have a surprisingly vague idea of what it really is for all our enthusiasm to fight hatred. After all, one word tells us less, not more. Hate is much less dynamic than racism, or prejudice, or anger, or even mere indifference to others.

There's hate everywhere. Human beings are generalizing about everybody and everything all the time, ahead of time. It can even be hard-wired to a large extent. From a historical point of view, it was a matter of survival. And even now, feeling a loyalty seems unthinkable without feeling a disloyalty, a sense of belonging without a sense of unbelonging similarly. They are beings of a social nature, thus we are all supposed to be collaborating. That is why we are also disassociating. And while it would be comforting to think that one could happen without the other, we actually know it doesn't happen.

Just as there is possessive love and selfish love; family love and friendship; romantic love and unrighteous love; passion and reverence, affection and obsession, so there are shades of hate. There is the hate that fears, and hate that feels nothing but contempt; there is hate that expresses power, and hate that comes from powerlessness; there is revenge, and hate that comes from envy. There's hate that has been love, and hate that's a strange expression of love. There is hate of the other, and fear of something that reminds us of ourselves too much. There is the hate of the oppressor, and the resentment of the victim. There is hate slowly burning, and hatred slowly fading.

We consider that hates are often very different phenomena from one another that they have very different psychological complexities, and by not seeing them as variations of the same phenomenon at all they could be better understood (Citron, D. K., 2014). For example, there is the unfashionable distinction between rational hate and irrational hate. We have become accustomed in recent years to talking about hates as if they were all similarly indefensible, as if some hates could never be legitimate or necessary.

Hate is not rational like many other human emotion, but it typically has its reasons. The hate residing from knowledge is very different from the hate residing from ignorance. It is actually a cliché the fact that prejudice is always rooted in ignorance, and can be overcome by familiarity and sensitivity.

Thus, the term of hate speech encompasses any form of expression that propagates racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, incites, promotes or justifies these manifestations, including intolerance expressed as aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, any discrimination and hostility against a minority, immigrants or refugees (Daniels, J., 2008). In other words, hate speech can be described as a form of speech which involves interpretation regarding other people's religion, gender or ethnicity (Djuric et al., 2015). Usually hate speech can aim to denigrate and marginalize other individuals in front of a group or an entire society (Waldron, 2012).

Freire's (1974) theory brings the concept of literacy as a process of socio-cognitive emancipation, adult's literacy being a complex process of liberation. Therefore many individuals could express themselves and have a subjective opinion. This opinion can sometimes be built on hateful patterns which may result in hateful expressions (i.e. hate speech).

In recent years hate speech had an increasing popularity online, on social media platforms (Schmidt & Wiegand, 2017; Banks, 2010).

Hate speech should not be seen as a phenomenon that occurs exclusively online. The disinhibiting effect and the possibility of addressing a large audience, however, make the Internet a favorite platform for hate speeches.

Hate speech can manifest itself directly, for example through concrete incitement to hatred, and indirectly, for example by spreading untruths. There are several types of content, victim groups, models, and hate speech patterns (Gagliardone, I., Gal, D., Alves, T., Martinez, G., 2015).

Hate speech is expressed through different types of content and language. Content types include the deliberate spread of fake news and conspiracy theories, stereotype confirmation, assimilation (generalizing), but also instigating acts of violence or dehumanization (Cherian, G., 2016). The linguistic models are insulting by derogatory names, a visual language through placid images and the clear opposition we versus them.

Hate speeches are published on different communication platforms. These can be blogs, online forums or social networks or even so-called "hate sites" created specifically for this purpose. They appear more directly in the form of emails and / or private messages. In addition, hate speech can also occur in online games, music or videos.

Words and images are deliberately used to denigrate or marginalize other people. Frequently, certain fears are deliberately amplified, which can particularly intimidate children. This can stimulate fear and rejection. There is a feeling of aggression against those belonging to a group discredited and described through the prism of prejudices.

2. Research methodology

Research's 206 participants are residents of Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, with an age mean of $m=30$ years, 39.8% males and 60.2% females. Regarding sample's educational level, 3.9% finished primary school, 1.9% own a professional

diploma, 29.1% finished high school, 32% own a Bachelor degree, 29.1% have a Master degree and 3.9% have a PhD. As for professional status, 5.8% are unemployed, 43.7% are students, 1% is volunteering and 49.5% are employed.

An important issue we wanted to address also, was the online time spent by respondents, thus 1% responded with never or hardly ever, 8.7% responded with every week, 20.4% responded with daily or almost daily, 46.6% responded with several time each day and 23.3% responded with almost all the time. Thus the frequent users of internet are net superior over the non-users, with 69.9%.

The hypothesis of this research is that the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech.

3. Results

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the online hate speech perpetrator pattern (*Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?*) (**DV**, $m=1.75$, $SD=0.13$) based on their: previous revenge thinking pattern (*It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first*) (**IV₁**, $m=2.01$, $SD=0.98$) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech (*Hate speech online is just words.*) (**IV₂**, $m=1.96$, $SD=1.06$). This function investigates the degree to which selected independent variables (**IV₁** – **IV₂**) predict the dependent variable **VD**, hate speech perpetrator pattern. A significant regression equation coefficient was found ($F = 27.885$, $p < .001$), with an adjusted R^2 of .216. Hate speech perpetrator pattern equals to $0.557 + 0.365(IV_1) + 0.233(IV_2)$ where **VD** is coded as 1=No, 2=Yes, in person (face-to-face), 3=Yes, online, 4=Yes, both in person (face-to-face) and online and **IV₁** and **IV₂** are coded as 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree.

As results show, revenge thinking pattern ($B=0.365$, $SE=0.082$, $Beta=0.317$, $t=4.452$ at a $p < 0.001$) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech ($B=0.233$, $SE=0.076$, $Beta=0.219$, $t=3.076$ at a $p < 0.005$) are significant predictors of youth hate speech perpetrator pattern.

Table 1. Regression analysis results for predicting the hate speech perpetrator pattern

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.464 ^a	.216	.208	1.008	.216	27.885	2	203	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hate speech online is just words., It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.655	2	28.327	27.885	.000 ^b
	Residual	206.219	203	1.016		
	Total	262.874	205			

a. Dependent Variable: 21. Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hate speech online is just words., It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.557	.174		3.198	.002
	It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.	.365	.082	.317	4.452	.000
	Hate speech online is just words.	.233	.076	.219	3.076	.002

a. Dependent Variable: 21. Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?

Altogether, in the computed equation presented in Table 1, selected independent variables IV_1 - IV_2 account for 20% variance of the youth hate speech perpetrator pattern, with both revenge thinking pattern ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech being significant predictors.

4. Conclusions and implications

The present study investigated if the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech. The obtained results confirm the proposed hypothesis. These results suggest that if an individual is enveloped by a thinking pattern built on revenge and if the level of ignorance is high (regarding the negative effects of one's actions), then there is a possibility of the individual to engage in a form of hate speech.

Hatred and hate speech cannot and should not be in a free society. The lines between hate and prejudice and between hatred and opinion and between opinion and fact are so complex and blurred that any attempt to build legal and political firewalls is a futile and illiberal undertaking. We know by now that hate will never vanish from the collective consciousness of mankind. After decades of educational initiatives, it is a fact that hate is not simply induced by ignorance, but a collective inducing aspects (King, R. D., Sutton, G. M., 2014).

Society has made a lot of progress, but after all it is idealistic to expect that hatred, in all its diversity, can be eradicated in an increasingly diverse society. This is perfectly illustrated by the gap between tolerance and toleration. Tolerance is hate eradication and toleration is coexisting with it.

Every manifestation of discrimination in some cases serves a useful social function, it allows natural conflicts to be articulated incrementally; it can steam off conflict by words rather than actions: a human recognition of our need for distinction, without a full capitulation.

Unless a victim can be psychologically injured, a perpetrator cannot wound psychologically. And it can never be given that immunity to hurt; it can only be achieved. Hatred will never be eliminated in spite of all our rhetoric, hate can only be overcome.

People are affected by hate speech in different ways. Raising young people's awareness of this topic may mean keeping an interaction full of respect and appreciation for one another (Waldron, J., 2012). Anyone facing hate speech on the Internet must not only transmit digital competence, but also be informed about discriminatory structures in analogous life.

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