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Stavros Assimakopoulos
Fabienne H. Baider
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Online Hate Speech in the European Union

A Discourse- Analytic Perspective



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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Hate Speech in the EU and the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. Project

Fabienne H. Baider, Stavros Assimakopoulos and Sharon Millar

Migration phenomena characterised by a large influx of populations can question our conception of territories and social relations. Since this conception is part and parcel of our identity, migration has the power to trigger political discourses on identity issues. One such occasion has indeed been unravelling lately, especially since the summer of 2015, with the arrival in the European Union (henceforth EU) of migrants from a variety of places, and in particular from regions in conflict, such as Syria, Libya or Iraq, countries under totalitarian regimes, such as Erythrea, as well as countries with high levels of poverty, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. As a result, Europe has been politically and socially shaken: photos of thousands of migrants roaming across Europe have made the news, and such media images have been instrumentalised to serve different, often far-right, political agendas.

The question of refugees—and more broadly migrants—and their integration in Europe has been in the spotlight, with media discourse being on the whole alarmist, with an iteration of expressions like a ‘*huge migration crisis*’, ‘*waves of migrants flooding the EU*’ and a focus on violence and threat as the main outcome of such arrivals (cf. UNHCR 2016). In turn, Europe is witnessing the growth of nationalism, with violent reactions being related to the feelings of insecurity, fear or anger, and several xenophobic political parties, such as Golden Dawn in Greece or AfD (Alternative for Germany) in Germany feeding these feelings of anxiety and resentment to attract voters. Finally, recent reports still indicate that the migration issue continues to be one of the major preoccupations of European citizens (cf. European Commission 2016a).

Indeed, the 2016 report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance observed a sharp increase in hate crime while also noting that “racist insults have become increasingly common and xenophobic hate speech has reached

unprecedented levels” (ECRI 2017: 9, italics our own). At the same time, both researchers and NGOs have repeatedly noted how Web 2.0 has facilitated the global spread of hate. For example, the latest Shadow Report by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR 2016) has pointed out a rise in racist discourse both on social media and the internet. In response to the situation, the EU has encouraged several initiatives with a view to containing both hate speech and hate crime within its remit. Legal provisions (cf. Sect. 1.1) foresee penalties for those publicly inciting to racial hatred, while the European Agency of Fundamental Rights has defined within the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia the following priorities:

- the identification of hate crime,
- the increasing use of the internet as a tool of hate and propaganda,
- the under-reporting of hate crime,
- the rise of extremist groups and political parties in the EU.

(FRA 2013).

The C.O.N.T.A.C.T.¹ project (2015–2017), which was co-funded by the Rights, Equality & Citizenship Programme of the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (JUST/2014/RRAC/AG), sought to address the above priorities by combining complementary expertise from academics and experienced NGOs working in the area across a number of EU member states, namely Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom. To this end, under the central coordination of the University of Cyprus and, more specifically, Professor Fabienne H. Baider, C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partners have engaged in a number of activities, which to a great extent follow Ramalingam’s (2012: 11–13) categorisation of measures that would effectively target far-right extremism. These include:

- *up-stream preventative measures*, such as the collection and scientific analysis of data that will help better understand the context of hate speech online, as well as the development of training sessions targeted at relevant stakeholders (police, youth and media) with a view to building a stronger civil society.
- *reactive measures and response mechanisms*, such as the establishment of a dedicated web platform and phone app for reporting hate incidents.
- *intervention* through the training of the relevant stakeholders and the organisation of awareness-raising events.²

Against this background, the present volume is an attempt to collectively report on some research that several C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partners undertook as part of their involvement with the project. Even though hate speech is a hotly debated topic in

¹C.O.N.T.A.C.T. stands for ‘Creating an On-line Network, monitoring Team and phone App to Counter hate crime Tactics’.

²For more information about the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project, visit our website at: <http://www.reportinghate.eu>.

legal and policy-making circles, the relatively little attention it has received by researchers of linguistic pragmatics and discourse analysis is arguably disproportionate to its social relevance and importance. In this respect, the main aim of this volume is to showcase that an implementation of certain research methodologies that linguists, and more specifically discourse analysts, have at their disposal can fruitfully contribute to the better understanding of a phenomenon that, as we saw, is becoming increasingly widespread these days. In light of this, the contents of the present volume should be approached as more of a ‘proof of concept’ demonstration, rather than an exhaustive analysis of hate speech in the EU. The reason for this is simple: as McGonagle (2013: 3) points out even though the term ‘*hate speech*’ is often incorporated, at least as a notion, into legal and policy documents, there is still no universally accepted definition for it, which on its own warrants further investigation into the ways in which hate, in the relevant sense, is both expressed and perceived.

Generally speaking, hate speech could be described as the expression of hatred towards an individual or group of individuals on the basis of *protected characteristics*, where the term ‘protected characteristics’ denotes membership to some specific social group that could, on its own, trigger discrimination (cf. OSCE/ODIHR³ 2009: 37–46). What these protected characteristics are, however, remains open to interpretation, with different states including different categories under this rubric, as will be discussed in more detail in the following section of this introductory chapter. Just to give an example, the EU definition of hate speech that is put forth in the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 2008 confines hate speech to “all conduct publicly inciting to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin” (Council of the European Union 2008), essentially leaving out of the equation such characteristics as sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

As Baider (2017) notes, however, in an attempt to define ‘hate speech’ more broadly, one could follow the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* which does not single out any particular protected characteristics and instead proposes that hate speech essentially amounts to an “advocacy of *discriminatory hatred* which constitutes *incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence*” (UN General Assembly 1966, our italics; see also OHCHR 2013). While the question of how to exactly interpret the words ‘*hatred*’, ‘*discrimination*’, ‘*violence*’ and ‘*hostility*’ in this definition still remains open, it manages to express more concretely the forms that the expression of hatred, in the relevant sense, may take. What is more important here, however, is the word ‘*incitement*’, which takes centre stage and renders the *intention* to trigger potential actions against members of protected groups a precondition for considering a speech act hate speech, assuming, thus, a link between hate speech and hate crime, with the former presumably leading to the latter.

³Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

This significance of intention in identifying hate speech should be enough to justify the potentially critical contribution that research in linguistic pragmatics, and more specifically discourse analysis, could make towards delineating the term at hand, since pragmatic inquiry by definition revolves around the specification of speaker-intended meaning. After all, research in the field has shown that implicitly communicated meaning can lead to action as much as—and maybe even more than—overtly expressed meaning. This is precisely why any legal deliberation, both within the remit of hate speech/crime laws and beyond, squarely depends on the way in which a judicial body interprets both law and evidence.⁴

This brings us to what is probably the thorniest issue in approaching hate speech from a discourse analytic perspective. This would be the discrepancy between the legal understanding of the term and the multiple—and concealed—forms that the expression of hate can take. Taking, for example, the aforementioned Council Framework Decision, one could isolate the criteria qualifying speech as hate speech in the EU as follows:

1. A call motivated by racial/ethnic/national bias;
2. A call for violence;
3. A call punishable by the criminal law of the country where it occurs.

Legally speaking, it is only speech that lies at the intersection of these three criteria that would qualify as *illegal*, and thus prosecutable hate speech in this context. Still, there could still be cases of inflammatory, offensive comments or comments characterised by prejudice and intolerance that would not meet the threshold provided in the description above. And even though such cases of general disparagement, vilification and abusive language may not be considered hate speech in the legal sense, they arguably still constitute hate speech in that they may have a devastating effect on their recipients on the grounds of moral harassment—which has, for instance, been conducive to suicide on several occasions.⁵

In this regard, there seem to be two different categories of hate speech. On the one hand, there is what could be called *hard* hate speech, which comprises prosecutable forms that are prohibited by law, and on the other, there is *soft* hate speech, which is lawful but raises serious concerns in terms of intolerance and discrimination. As we will see in the section that follows, the threshold for distinguishing between hard and soft hate speech (especially in relation to protected characteristics) varies from country to country. On top of this, different democracies have altogether different approaches towards regulating and combating hate speech. So, while the USA, at governmental level, gives priority to the protection of the freedom of expression and opinion, many EU member states do invoke measures to

⁴Even though their potential role in Social Justice DG programs has not yet been yet acknowledged, forensic linguistics techniques have repeatedly been used in/applied to court cases related to hate speech and sexist, racist discourse (cf. Carney 2014; Olsson and Luchjenbroers 2013; Coulthard and Johnson 2017).

⁵For an in-depth overview of the effects of cyberbullying for LGBTQ youth, see Abreu and Kenny (2017).

regulate and combat hate speech. Given this volume's motivation and methodological angle then, we will not be addressing the distinction between legal and illegal hate speech here. Rather, we will be focusing on the features of discourse that encompasses a discriminatory attitude as a means of identifying different ways in which hate, broadly construed, is expressed in spontaneous online comments.

Discrimination has been a widely studied topic in discourse-analytic theorising, which investigates the significance of language in the production, maintenance, resistance and change of social relations of power, through mainly the ideological workings of political and media discourse (Fairclough 1989; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Halliday 1989). Through its iteration, discriminatory discourse 'manufactures' assumptions, legitimises dominance and naturalises inequality. Different approaches in discourse analysis such as discursive psychology or critical discourse analysis have developed concepts that can be particularly useful in understanding the relationship between linguistic practices and social structures, and help provide links between language use and processes of social change that take place outside discourse. At the same time, these latter processes have been shown to be substantively shaped by relevant discourses (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 4). In this respect, discourse analysis is key when it comes to social change, as discourse shapes political decisions and defines what WE are (i.e. who we are and what we can do or not), as well as what is acceptable or not by linguistically attributing characteristics to people, events or practices, and in effect bringing people to accept or at least rationalise the unacceptable (like, for example, the use of metaphors like COCKROACHES or PARASITES when discussing migrants).

Fairclough (1989), for example, blends Foucault's (1971, 1975) formulations of "orders of discourse" and "power-knowledge", Gramsci's notion (1971) of "hegemony" and Althusser's (1971) concept of "ideological state apparatuses" to describe discourse as an accepted flow of common knowledge (discourse) about which we have assumptions (thoughts) and on which we make decisions (actions). In this perspective, a discourse-analytic approach to Othering processes is fundamental for an understanding of the actions taken against minorities, whether these are sexual or social.

At the same time, critical discourse analysis has as its focus the relationship between ideology, inequality, and power through discourse, analysing them on the basis of "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak 1995: 204). One of its main tenets is that social interaction (partially) takes a linguistic form. This critical approach is distinct from other approaches to discourse analysis in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed (Wodak 1997: 173). It places the focus on the linguistic features and organisation of concrete instances of discourse, such as the choices and patterns in vocabulary or rhetorical figures (e.g. metaphors, wording), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunctions, anaphors, etc.). For example, the use of passive voice in news reporting the deportation of migrants or an assault to a transgender person can have the effect of obscuring the agent(s) of the relevant processes and therefore minimise accountability. Some

critical discourse analysts combine (quantitative) corpus linguistics and (qualitative) textual analysis techniques. Their addition of quantitative measures is motivated by the belief that a focus on the distribution of linguistic forms is an empirically reliable means for uncovering the linguistic processes through which Othering is socially materialised, as such quantitative data can help understand the relationship between “social structure and individual subjectivity and the ways in which language mediates between the two” (Levon and Mendes 2017: 15).

Wodak and her associates have also developed the critical and historical discourse analysis strand with the intention of tracing the (intertextual) history of phrases and arguments on a given topic (Wodak 1995; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). The method consists in triangulating sources, i.e. in using different documents to analyse the same phenomenon, ethnographic research and analysing news reporting. This triangulation aims to understand a particular phenomenon from different standpoints.

The analyses which follow in the following chapters are mostly based on such discourse analytic approaches. For example, as will become evident in the remainder of this volume, the triangulation methodology has been used as a basis for the research carried out within the CONTACT project. More specifically, taking into account the relevant EU laws on discriminatory discourse and hate speech, we analysed comments posted on main news portals, and carried out interviews and administered questionnaires so as to understand the public perception of discriminatory statements with a view to reaching a broader understanding of the kinds of Othering discourses that are circulated in the European space.

Since this volume focuses on the EU, however, it seems necessary to first briefly outline some of the differences that countries that are represented in the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project exhibit in their understanding and regulation of hate speech issues, before moving on to the particularities of the online setting as a locus for the expression of hate.

1.2 Regulating Hate Speech in the EU

Natalie Alkiviadou

Notwithstanding the perplexities associated with defining hate speech as a result of the free speech debate, the EU managed, after seven long years of negotiations (European Commission 2014: 1), to take a major leap forward in 2008 with its Framework Decision on Combatting Racism and Xenophobia through Criminal Law (Council of the European Union 2008). As is reflected in its title, this is not a document dealing with hate speech per se but, instead, with some of the phenomena underlying such speech. However, it was hate speech that kept the negotiations going for so many years and, particularly, the significant divergences in the legal traditions of EU member states vis-à-vis free speech (European Commission 2014:

1). These varying understandings of hate speech also mean that, regardless of the Framework Decision at the EU level, there is little coherence amongst EU member states on the definition of hate speech. To this end, in February 2017, the European Parliament put forth a motion for a resolution on establishing a common legal definition of hate speech in the EU (European Parliament 2017).

In light of this, this section will consider the main characteristics of the legal frameworks of the ten countries participating in the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project.⁶ This will allow us to see how hate speech is approached on a decentralised (member-state) level and determine possible convergences and divergences amongst the member states themselves. Before moving on, however, it is worth noting that the term ‘hate speech’ is not found in any of the legislations of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project partner countries; rather, all these countries transposed or acceded to the United Nation’s ICCPR (UN General Assembly 1966) and ICERD (UN General Assembly 1965), with the UK making a reservation to the relevant articles on the grounds of free speech. As will be demonstrated below, regardless of the ratification or accession to the aforementioned UN documents, the transposing laws are not the ones habitually relied upon to tackle hate speech. A relevant example is Denmark, where a court was faced with the statement ‘*negroes are less intelligent than Europeans*’, which falls within the framework of statements pertaining to racial superiority, prohibited by the ICERD; yet, this was deemed to be permissible speech, as it was made as part of a political debate.⁷ With this in mind, we can now turn to the legal provisions of each C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partner country in alphabetical order below.

The main anti-hate speech legislation in Cyprus is *The Combatting Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law 134 (I) of 2011*, which transposed the Framework Decision into national law. Cyprus chose to incorporate the provision of punishing only conduct which is either carried out in a manner likely to disturb public order or which is threatening, abusive or insulting. Cyprus went a step further from the protected characteristics of the supra-national level and also passed Law 87 (I)/2015 amending the Criminal Code. This amendment incorporates Article 99A into the Criminal Code, which punishes hate speech targeted at a person or person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. In sum, there is no explicit definition of hate speech in Cyprus but, instead, a transposition of supra-national documents which offer their own appraisals of hate speech and which set out varying thresholds. This results in a discordant legal setting which, nevertheless, has the positive feature of going beyond the hierarchy of hate embraced by the supra-national framework by incorporating the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics in the sphere of hate speech. Still, the above legislation has not yet been used in Court and there is no national case-law relevant to the issue of hate speech.

⁶It should be noted that the information provided in this section in relation to each member state’s national context has been synthesised from the desktop research conducted by C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partners in each member state during the first stages of the project, rather than this section’s author.

⁷Judgment no. 1.4.8, Western High Court.

In Denmark, hate speech is connected to Section 266b of the Danish Penal Code which criminalises expressions that “publicly or with intent to disseminate to a wider circle, threaten, insult or degrade a group of persons on the basis of race, skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation”. Evidently, this definition is more extensive than its supra-national counterparts, as it includes grounds such as sexual orientation. Important to this understanding of hate speech is that expressions must be made publicly or with an intention to disseminate to a wider circle, and, therefore, private conversations do not fall within the prohibited sphere. Unlike Cyprus, Denmark has relevant case-law which, *inter alia*, sheds light on the meaning of terms used in Section 266b. For example, the statement ‘*coloured people like you are not allowed in my parents’ apartment*’ which was uttered in a nursing home, was not considered by a District Court to be punishable, as the nursing home was deemed as not constituting a public place.⁸

In Greece, the main national legislation is Law No 927/1797 on punishing acts or activities aimed at racial discrimination, as amended by Law 4285/2014 that implements the Framework Decision. Article 1 deals with public incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons due to their race, colour, religion, status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability if this poses a danger to public order or constitutes a threat to the life, liberty or physical integrity of the person or persons involved and is punished with a prison sentence ranging from three months to three years and with a monetary fine of five thousand to twenty thousand euros. The scope of protected characteristics of this law is, together with Lithuania and Spain, discussed below, one of the most extensive in the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partner countries, incorporating grounds such as disability, which is not found elsewhere. While there have been several relevant cases before Greek courts, one characteristic example which demonstrates a threshold that needs to be met, in terms of the impact of the speech and its publicity, involved a Golden Dawn member. In this case, the defendant stated on camera that ‘*we are ready to open the kilns. To make soaps. Not for the people, since ... we may fall sick ...*’ These were some of the phrases he used to refer to migrants. The court decided that, even if these phrases were exaggerations, they demonstrated the accused’s intention publicly to provoke people to cause harm to migrants, so that the rest of them would be convinced to abandon Greece.⁹

The main relevant Italian Law is Law 205/1993 which makes it a crime to “propagate ideas based on racial superiority or racial or ethnic hatred, or to instigate to commit or commit acts of discrimination for racial, ethnic, national or religious motives.” The law also punishes those who “instigate in any way or commit violence or acts of provocation to violence for racist, ethnic, national or religious motives.” Although there are no strict thresholds to meet, such as public order, as is the case of Cyprus for example, Italy limits itself to the protected characteristics of ethnicity and religion, as provided for by the supra-national level.

⁸Judgment no. 1.4.6 The District Court (Hillerød).

⁹Decision 65738/2014 (Single-member Court of Athens).

In Lithuania, the central provision dealing with this issue is Article 170 of the Criminal Code entitled ‘Incitement against Any National, Racial, Ethnic, Religious or Other Group of Persons.’ This article punishes the handling or distribution of impugned material and expression, which incites hatred, violence, discrimination or contempt for a person or persons belonging to a group defined by sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions or views. This definition is particularly broad including grounds such as sex but also convictions, which are not necessarily affiliated with religion. Its threshold is also low, with discriminatory expression also falling in the net of prohibited expression. Interestingly, in relation to the punishment of expression (rather than material), the article also renders ridiculing expression a punishable offence. It also punishes a person who publicly incites violence against a person or persons of a particular group. To give an example from case law, a defendant was found guilty for publicly mocking a person of Asian origin in front of others with obscene epithets saying that *‘foreigners are not welcome here.’*¹⁰ This demonstrates the low threshold necessary in Lithuania for finding speech hateful.

The central provision in Malta is Article 82 of the Maltese Criminal Code, which punishes any person who

uses any threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or displays any written or printed material which is threatening, abusive or insulting or otherwise conducts himself in such a manner, with intent to stir up violence or racial hatred against another person or group on the grounds of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, colour, language, ethnic origin, religion or belief or political or other opinion.

The protected characteristics are also broad in Malta, although not as broad as, for example, Greece, which also incorporates the grounds of disability, Lithuania, which also includes sex or as Romania and Spain discussed below.

In Romania, Article 369 of the Criminal Code prohibits “public incitement by any means, hatred or discrimination against a class of persons.” Order 137 of 2000 sets out the protected characteristics which are race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social, belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic disease, HIV infection and membership of a disadvantaged group. This is the only country to incorporate HIV positive persons as protected by hate speech legislation and which incorporates a broad ground of disadvantaged groups. Moreover, by incorporating discrimination, the threshold of prohibition remains low.

As for Spain, although, like for other countries, there is no legislative definition of hate speech, the Constitutional Court held that hate speech is a “heavy burden of hostility that incites, directly or indirectly, violence by way of humiliation.”¹¹ The main piece of legislation is Article 510 of the Criminal Code on the incitement to hate crime, violence and discrimination. This punishes those who provoke discrimination, hate or violence against groups or associations due to racist,

¹⁰Criminal case No. 1A-407-337/2009, Panevėžys district court.

¹¹The Constitutional Court in its STC 176/1995 (Case Makoki).

anti-Semitic reasons or any other reasons related to ideology, religion or belief, family situation, belonging to an ethnic group or race, national origin, gender, sexual preference, illness or handicap. The grounds for protected characteristics in Spain are extensive and the thresholds low, incorporating, for example, discrimination and not requiring, for example, the disturbance of public order.

Turning to the UK, the Public Order Act 1986 provides that acts intended or likely to stir up racial hatred include the use of words or behaviour or display of written material, the publishing or distribution of written material, the public performance of plays, the distribution, showing or playing of a recording and/or the broadcasting of a programme in a cable programme service. The offence of stirring up religious hatred has been defined and incorporated into the 1986 Public Order Act by the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, with Sections 29B-F of the latter addressing the issue of stirring up religious hatred in the same way as it does its racial hatred counterpart. However, in relation to religious hatred, Section 29J of the Racial and Religious Hatred Act stipulates that

nothing in this Part shall be read or given effect in a way which prohibits or restricts discussion criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system.

Therefore, in relation to religious hatred, the threshold is higher, since expression such as insulting a particular religion is deemed permissible.

From the above approaches to hate speech and the variations therein, it could be argued that, although some common elements can be discerned, “hate speech seems to be whatever people choose it to mean” (Kiska 2012: 110) As we have seen in the previous section, at the supra-national EU level, protected groups are limited to ethnic and religious groups, demonstrating an adoption of a hierarchy of hate in such arenas, with some characteristics perceived as simply being more important than others. At the national level, countries such as Lithuania, Romania, Spain and Malta have an extensive conceptualisation of protected groups whilst others such as Italy limit themselves to those set out by the UN and the EU. The thresholds of what is considered prohibited speech also varies amongst countries, with Italy having a lower threshold, prohibiting, for example, ideas of racial superiority, and Cyprus incorporating safety nets such as the impact of public disorder. On a last but important note, these conceptual variations of definitions render effective challenging of online hate on the borderless medium known as the internet particularly complex.

1.3 Hate Speech in the Online Setting

César Arroyo López and Roberto Moreno López

Following the technological revolution that began in the 1960s, the ever-growing expansion of the internet since the 1990s has had considerable impact across the

globe. Ultimately, we have gone from a system of information transmission dominated by the mass media, state and lobbies, to a knowledge society where citizens are not just information transmitters themselves but can also assume a more active role, as creators and co-creators of new content. In the online world, a place of global relations characterised by a dilution of space-time limitations, anyone with online access can offer their opinion, contribute to dialogue and put forth their knowledge and perceptions for the gestation of modern culture or “cyberculture” (Sacristán 2013: 126). It is thus hard to dispute that the rapid expansion of the internet has impacted and continues to impact societies at a micro-, meso- and macro-scale.

Communication, including the production and sharing of information content, is one of the core features of the internet. Yet, this type of digital communication is marked by a number of particularities: the internet is a space that provides users with the capacity for expressing their views and communicating without limits, and typically (though not always) without control; the online setting makes it easy for users to hide their identity (in whole or in part) and, in some cases, even to hide their location and activity. As de Salvador Carrasco discusses, this *anonymity* is “the ability to perform any access, communication or publication in the network without third parties having the possibility to identify or locate the author of said action,” although it is also true that such anonymity can only become a possibility through the implementation of specific strategies and tools usually not known to most educated laymen who use the internet (de Salvador Carrasco 2012: 2). Still, even though most of the public communication that is produced online is essentially traceable in origin, most users perceive the internet as a platform where they can express themselves freely and anonymously. Interestingly, research conducted by Childnet International in over 68 countries revealed that the experience of anonymous communication is one of the elements most sought after by young people, to such an extent that they feel that the anonymous use of the internet should be safeguarded, despite its potential dangers (Childnet 2013).

These characteristics of the worldwide web have encouraged a breeding ground for the phenomenon of *cyberhate*, understood (in a non-restrictive way) as

any use of electronic communications technology to spread anti-Semitic, racist, bigoted, extremist or terrorist messages or information. These electronic communications technologies include the internet (i.e., web-sites, social networking sites, ‘Web 2.0’ user-generated content, dating sites, blogs, online games, instant messages, and e-mail) as well as other computer - and cell phone-based information technologies (Anti-Defamation League 2010: 4).

Hence, due to its global, immediate and participatory nature, the internet has become a space for both the expression and dissemination of intolerant ideas and beliefs (Isasi and Juanatey 2016), offering an additional means of facilitating the advocacy and spread of discrimination that can potentially even lead to hate crime. Such attitudes and their expression reject difference and intend to deprive persons

and groups of their dignity by denying and attacking their identity. It is these intolerant attitudes that constitute one of the main manifestations of hate speech as a social phenomenon, at least as far as the research reported in this volume is concerned. Such soft hate speech as spread online can have a devastating effect on the fabric of social order, as it potentially

not only negatively affects the groups or individuals that it targets; it also negatively impacts those who speak out for freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination in our open societies and has a chilling effect on the democratic discourse on online platforms (European Commission 2016b: 1).

For example, a recent report in Spain (Ministerio del Interior 2016) pointed out that, in the year 2016 alone, the Criminal Statistical Service identified 123 cases related to hate speech which were passed on to law enforcement bodies, with more than 75% of these cases occurring on the internet or other ICT platforms. In a similar vein, the Proxi Observatory analysed almost 5000 comments in three major digital newspapers in Spain and concluded that more than half of the user comments that appeared in response to news reported therein were intolerant in character (Cabo et al. 2015: 16–23). All this was occurring at the same time when both the internet and social networks were being used in Spain for explicit incitement to violence against people on the basis of both their ethnic group (e.g. *El Diario.es* 2016) and their sexual orientation (e.g. *elPeriodico* 2016).

Of course, this situation is not exclusive to Spain. Similar examples that can be found in most countries around the globe suggest that intolerance and hate can flourish on the internet, taking advantage of its very nature (Gagliardone et al. 2015). And even though the ‘terms of service’ of most relevant platforms, such as Facebook, Yahoo! or Twitter do stipulate that it is prohibited to post content that is “unlawful, harmful, libellous, vulgar, defamatory, obscene, tortuous, invasive of one’s privacy, hateful, or racially ethnically or otherwise objectionable” (Cohen-Almagor 2015: 163), the time it usually takes to remove such content has been an issue of growing concern. This has recently led the EU Commission and various social media giants to agree on a Code of conduct specifically targeting illegal hate speech online (European Commission 2016b).

1.4 The C.O.N.T.A.C.T. Research Workstream

Stavros Assimakopoulos, Fabienne H. Baider and Sharon Millar

Having justified the focus of the present volume on online discourse in the EU, it is now time to turn to the research on which it reports. As we will see in the following chapter, which outlines the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology, the basic source of data for the more substantial part of our research was comments posted online in

Table 1.1 Results of comments polarity evaluation in the migration corpus per country

Country	% of negative comments		% of positive comments	
	<i>Migration corpus</i>	<i>LGBTIQ corpus</i>	<i>Migration corpus</i>	<i>LGBTIQ corpus</i>
Cyprus	27.7	48.4	19.1	25.6
Denmark ^a	79.2	57	19.8	32
Greece	67.2	42.6	11.5	28
Italy	42.5	39	27.8	33
Lithuania	50.3	50	11.6	4.2
Malta	32.3	18.7	16.3	24.2
Poland	48.9	17.6	1.4	3
Spain	3.5	4.2	0.9	3.8

^aThe high percentage of negative comments may be due to the predominance of comments from the tabloid press in the Danish corpus

reaction to news reports related to migrants and members of the LGBTIQ community. While a comparative discussion of the results obtained in the different national contexts is beyond the scope of the present volume, it seems necessary at least provide a quick reference to our collective results so as to see whether discriminatory discourse is an issue to look out for in the countries of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. consortium. As is evident from Table 1.1 above, which provides an overview of the results obtained through our analysis of the relevant comments, it certainly seems that both homophobia, and to a far greater extent, xenophobia are quite prevalent in the EU. With the sole exception of Malta, where comments that view members of the LGBTIQ community in a positive light outnumber comments that reveal a negative disposition towards this group, all other national corpora show that the commenter's attitude towards both groups that were researched is more negative than positive.

It is against this backdrop that the analytical chapters, which follow the methodological overview in Chap. 2, are to be understood: Chap. 3 deals with the analysis of online comments to news reports across a number of EU countries, while Chap. 4 discusses some of our findings regarding the folk perception of hate speech on the basis of a qualitative analysis of interviews that several C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partners conducted with members of the general population. Since, as we have already noted, the aim of this volume is to offer a panorama of the strategies most commonly used to express what we have termed soft hate speech as well as an overview of topics central to the way in which the general public perceives such speech, the remarks put forth in each section of the analytical chapters are far from conclusive; yet, they should be enough to justify the usefulness of insights from linguistic pragmatics and discourse analysis when it comes to the analysis of hate speech. And while the discussion of each topic therein is based on data collected in a particular country's context, it should easily become clear to the reader that it also applies to the discussion of hate speech, broadly construed, transnationally.

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Chapter 2

The C.O.N.T.A.C.T. Methodological Approach

As already hinted at in the previous chapter, the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project covered two main strands of research: the expression of hate speech and its perception. To these ends, a multi-method approach was adopted, encompassing different types of data. In this chapter, we will outline the shared procedures of data collection and analysis in relation to both the production data, i.e. online comments to news reports, and the perceptual data, i.e. interviews.

2.1 Harvesting and Analysing Online Comments to News Reports

Sharon Millar, Fabienne H. Baider and Stavros Assimakopoulos

To investigate the expression of hate speech, the main source of data has been user-generated content as found in what is known in media circles as “*below the line*” comment fields on newspaper websites (Graham and Wright 2015: 139). The reason for this was that while there is a sizeable literature on how minorities are portrayed in the mainstream media,¹ a lot less attention has been given to the ways in which the general public reacts to this kind of discourse.² And indeed, as we will see in Chap. 3, the analysis of our collected data revealed a number of strategies that are used by commenters on news portals to communicate a negative stance toward the migrant and LGBTIQ minorities. However, given the multilingual character of our project, even the initial harvesting of such online comments in an

¹See, for example, van Dijk (1987, 1991), Reisigl and Wodak (2001), Baker et al. (2008), KhosraviNik (2010), KhosraviNik et al. (2012); as well as several papers in the *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* (cf. Kopytowska 2015; Musolf 2017).

²But see Erjavec and Kovačič (2012), Brindle (2016), among others.

attempt to compile manageable, and ultimately comparable databases for analysis in each national context was a challenge in itself.

As a first step, it was decided to use the publicly available Newsbrief web application,³ developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. This web portal monitors online news reporting across the globe in 60 different languages and hence was especially appropriate for a multilingual project like ours. Its functionalities include the searching of archives using specific terms within designated time periods in countries and languages of one's choice. The tool then allows for a compilation of hits for keywords and from this, it is possible to search for news articles that are accompanied by comments.

A pool of keywords within the thematic areas of the project was established and, from this, partners selected those terms that were relevant for their national contexts. Many of these terms were shared across at least some partners, but to ensure the possibility of comparison, all partners were required to include the following keywords in their search: '*homosexual(s)*', '*immigrant(s)*', '*lesbian(s)*', '*LGBT*', '*Muslim(s)*' and '*refugee(s)*'. Some partners carried out automated searches in more than one language, either because the country has two official languages (e.g. Maltese and English in Malta) or because of a specific interest in certain minority languages within national borders (e.g. Russian in Lithuania).

The minimum number of keywords for the main themes of xenophobia and homophobia/transphobia was six per theme. Monitoring was carried out over two, non-consecutive time periods: 1.4.2015–30.6.2015 and 1.12.2015–29.02.2016. This was done to include a period where the contemporary refugee crisis might be less overwhelmingly predominant, at least in the media of some of the partner countries. The number of hits for each keyword per month was registered to give a quantitative mapping of what topics were most in focus in the media at the time.⁴

The Newsbrief tool provides no automated means to find articles with comments from the hits collected so this was approached manually. The baseline was that partners checked all hits per keyword per month, but to a maximum of 100–120. In cases where the number of hits exceeded this maximum, an appropriate ratio was applied; for instance, if a keyword produced 500 hits in a month, then 1 in 5 hits were checked. Following this method, most partners could find more than an adequate number of articles with comments, except for the Cypriot team, who turned to the Facebook sites of the newspapers that are part of the Newsbrief Cyprus database, and monitored reactions to the relevant articles there.

As the newspaper and comment data were to be analysed qualitatively, it was decided for reasons of feasibility to restrict the databases to approximately 5000–6000 words per keyword both for articles and for comments over the designated 6-month period. In cases where too many articles with too many comments had

³<http://emm.newsbrief.eu/overview.html>.

⁴Typically, across countries, issues to do with migration, immigrants and refugees dominated across both time periods with noticeably fewer articles and reports on matters of sexual orientation and gender identity.

been found, certain sampling criteria were applied. Firstly, for each month, only the week which attracted the most articles with comments for the keyword was selected. If that single week still provided too many words for comments, then the first 300–500 words were taken, but without cutting short an individual comment or comment thread. If the monthly word count for articles was exceeded, then those articles that had only very few comments were dropped, as were articles that had little actual relevance to the keyword.⁵ The objective was to obtain at least one article with comments per keyword per month where possible. Once compiled, the overall database for all keywords was checked for duplicate articles, which were removed and, if necessary, replaced.

It should be emphasised that we make no claim of representativeness for any of the partner databases. The Newsbrief web application, although comprehensive, has inevitably its own inherent biases and during data collection, it became obvious that certain newspapers, particularly the tabloids, tended to have articles with comments while others rarely were sources of reader comments.

As with data collection, the qualitative analysis of the comments in the databases was based around a common methodology, but partners were also free to subsequently develop their analyses further within their areas of expertise. We will describe here the shared approach, which aimed to identify the evaluative language used by authors towards the relevant target groups (immigrants, refugees, homosexuals etc.). In this context, evaluation is understood as “the expression of the speaker’s or writer’s attitude or stance towards, or view point on, or feelings about the entities and propositions that he or she is talking about” (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 5). While there are many aspects to evaluative language, the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. focus was on negative and positive evaluative polarity (Alba-Juez and Thompson 2014), which was then additionally related to speaker/writer strategies operating at phrasal, sentential and discourse levels, in terms of linguistic forms (e.g. lexical choice, metaphors, use of generics and argument strategies), as well as pragmatic functions (e.g. insults, threats, jokes, stereotypes and counter stances).

To some extent, inspiration was taken from the EU-funded Light On project,⁶ which collected (and continues to collect) racist expressions, providing their source and context as well as potential explanations as to why they are considered racist or discriminatory. In a similar fashion, the qualitative analyses conducted as part of C.O.N.T.A.C.T. also provided the discursive context, both in terms of the characteristics of the newspaper (e.g. tabloid or broadsheet, political orientation) and the interactional status of the comment (e.g. direct or tangential response to the article,

⁵For example, the Cypriot team had to disambiguate results for the keyword ‘*refugee(s)*’ as some referred to Cypriot refugees in 1974, a common issue in Cypriot newspapers, rather than the 2015 refugees, while a much commented upon article that was retrieved for the keyword ‘*black(s)*’ in Malta was an article about Darth Vader in Star Wars, which obviously has no connection to the issue of xenophobia.

⁶*Cross-community actions for combating the modern symbolism and languages of racism and discrimination*. For further information, visit <http://www.lighton-project.eu/site/main/page/project-en>.

response to another contributor). In addition, the reasons for the polarity categorisations of expressions as more or less negative or positive (or ambiguous) were stipulated by each group of analysts. In this way, what could be taken as subjective categorisations were given a degree of transparency.

The shared analytical approach resulted in lists of expressions with their categorisations that permit cross-country comparisons at a general level.⁷ In this setting, negatively-loaded expressions may be potential examples of hate speech as more broadly or narrowly defined whereas more positive-oriented language may exemplify counter speech. Obviously, more in-depth qualitative and quantitative analyses were then undertaken by individual partners to shed more light on the complexities of evaluative language (potential hate speech and counter speech) in relation to the target minority groups. As will be seen in Chap. 3, these included the use of corpus linguistic methods to investigate frequencies and collocational patterns, qualitative approaches dealing with specific forms and functions as well as interactional and co-constructual aspects of evaluative language use.

2.2 Approximating Perceptions of Hate

Sharon Millar, Fabienne H. Baider and Stavros Assimakopoulos

The second major strand of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. research was a study of how the general public, and in particular young people belonging to the 18–35 age group, perceive hate speech in the local context of each partner country. This strand consisted of two phases. The first involved the online administration of a questionnaire across the consortium, and the second, which took place after the analysis of the questionnaire responses, comprised interviews intended to explore these responses in more depth. This combination of questionnaires and interviews is widely used in research wishing to capture broader perspectives and to pursue issues of interest with more targeted and in-depth questions (Adams and Cox 2008). Given this volume's aim of providing an overview of matters pertaining to the discourse analytic study of hate speech, the focus will be on the interview stage of this research strand.⁸ Nonetheless, it is still necessary to provide an overview of the

⁷Even though such comparisons are beyond the scope of the present work, just to mention one example, the use of the sickness and unnaturalness metaphors for homosexuality or non-conditional threats against refugees (e.g. *'torpedo the boats'*, *'electrify the fences'*, etc.) was present more or less across the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. datasets.

⁸Obviously, the interpretation of the questionnaire responses in each national context is also meaningful in itself and we intend to return to it on some other occasion, but given space limitations and, above all, the current volume's focus on mainly qualitative-based discourse analysis, we have decided to omit them from this section.

questionnaire design in order to contextualise the results of the interview analysis that follows in Chap. 4.

The questionnaire was intended to cover three major themes and comprised three sections. Firstly, respondents were requested to evaluate six authentic examples from each partner country's collected data in terms of acceptability, by marking their perceived acceptability on a 4-point Likert-type scale that included the options 'acceptable', 'somewhat acceptable', 'less acceptable' and 'not acceptable'. Each C.O.N.T.A.C.T. team selected three examples of negative polarity comments relating to migrants and another three relating to the LGBTIQ community from their national database. The examples for each category were chosen to represent different degrees of extremeness, ranging, for example, from obvious threats to insinuations. Finally, a further question asked whether the respondents would have assessed the six presented examples differently if they had been written in private, rather than public contexts online, for instance, in a private e-mail or during a casual chat with friends. It was hoped that this question would give an indication of how sensitive the general population is to the difference between public and private discourse when it comes to the expression of hate.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to examine the respondents' attitudes towards—and experience of—reporting hate speech incidents. To contextualise the issue, we first asked participants to share their own experiences of hate speech as targets and as witnesses in their everyday life. Those participants who stated that they have some experience of the sort were prompted to indicate the place where the incident under question took place (i.e. at work, at school, in the street, etc.). The respondents were then asked whether they would report such incidents to the relevant authorities, and if they expressed unwillingness to do so, they were given a list of options to indicate why this might be the case (e.g. embarrassment, fear of reprisals, belief that police would not do anything, too much trouble to report etc.).

Finally, the third part of the questionnaire sought to investigate the respondents' perception of the concept 'hate speech' itself by asking them to indicate on a 6-point Likert-style scale the extent to which they agree with each of four definitions of hate speech that respectively equated the term with 'making negative prejudiced remarks', 'insulting', 'threatening' or 'encouraging other people to be violent or show hatred' towards people because of their race/nationality/ethnic origins/religion/gender and/or sexual orientation.

Against this backdrop, the aim of the interviews was to follow up on the questionnaire, by providing a better understanding of any interesting conclusions or particular issues that arose from the analysis of the questionnaire responses. Interviews were conducted either individually or in focus groups with young people aged between 18 and 35 who were normally residents of each partner country. Some of those interviewed had taken part in the questionnaire survey. At least 20 participants in total were interviewed per country (except for the UK, where only 12 took part in the interviews). Individual interviews lasted on average 15 min each, while focus group sessions had an average duration of 45–60 min each. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed orthographically.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, using an interview guide which was structured around several themes to permit comparability across national contexts. Starting off with a brief presentation of the acceptability ratings given for the six examples of hate speech from the questionnaire, the interviewees were asked to give their opinion as to why each example received the overall ratings that it did. This was followed by a discussion of the concept of hate speech, which involved consideration of both the definitions given in the questionnaire and the need to legislate in relation to these definitions. A further theme covered was any experience interviewees may have had with hate speech or discriminatory discourse. Interviewers were also free to gear the discussion towards other issues identified from the analysis of the questionnaire responses as particularly important in the national context concerned. Each session was concluded by asking participants if they wished to add anything they deemed relevant to the discussion.

In terms of analysis, interviews were then subjected to “conventional content analysis” which is used to identify categories, patterns and themes that emerge from the data (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1279). Content analysis permits both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Bengtsson 2016) and, as we will see in Chap. 4, while the former was most generally adopted by partners, the latter was also used for pattern analysis by the team from Cyprus.

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Chapter 3

Analysis of Online Comments to News Reports

Having outlined the common methodological perspective that C.O.N.T.A.C.T. partners adopted for both research strands of the project, it is now time to turn to a general discussion of the results obtained. To this end, this chapter will focus on the analysis of the comments corpora that were compiled at the first stage of our investigation; through the application of different techniques and against the background of various theoretical standpoints, the following sections touch on topics of central importance for the discourse-analytic discussion of hate speech, broadly construed. More specifically, Sect. 3.1 discusses categorisation in the context of Othering and its use as a means of defending one's identity against the perceived threat posed by minority groups in the Italian setting, with Sect. 3.2 building up on the topic of categorisation by zooming in on comments related to the LGBTIQ community in Lithuania and discussing stereotyping as another strategy for the expression of hate and discrimination. Moving on to the issue of xenophobia, Sect. 3.3 explores the discursive dynamics of Polish online "patriotism" and its interface with fear-mongering and incitement to hatred, while, remaining on the topic, Sect. 3.4 highlights the use of conceptual metaphors in comments related to migrants in Cyprus. Finally, turning to the discussion of indirectness in discriminatory discourse, Sect. 3.5 focuses on implicitness as a commonly used way of signalling an unfavourable stance towards minorities in Malta, and Sect. 3.6 examines the intricate ways in which constructed and fictive dialogue are used to legitimise xenophobic and homophobic discourse in the Danish context.

3.1 Categorisation and Defence Strategies

Ernesto Russo and Pablo Bernardino Tempesta

Categorisation is a fundamental human cognitive process which allows us to recognise and understand reality, by grouping its objects into categories depending

on some meaningful criterion (Cohen and Claire Lefebvre 2005). When it comes to the specific cognitive process of *social categorisation*, which divides individuals into social groups (Allport 1979), it is typically undertaken on the basis of common and shared characteristics of a group of people, as, for example, nationality, gender, age, skin colour, religion, etc. This enables us to view the relevant people more as members of a specific social group rather than as mere individuals.

In this respect, categorisation plays a key role in the process of stereotype-forming and, as Mazzara discusses, by extension, prejudice-forming too:

It is evident how the concept of stereotype is extremely connected with prejudice, to such an extent that it is both confused and associated with it. It is possible to claim that a stereotype is the cognitive core of a prejudice, a set of information and beliefs related to a particular category of objects [i.e. social groups etc.] elaborated into a unique, coherent, stable image able to uphold and to create a prejudice against them. In other words, the stereotype is able to funnel the evaluation of data into a prejudice.

(Mazzara 1997: 72, translation our own)

It follows then that mentally categorising individuals and/or behaviours into more generic groupings paves the way for the shaping of mental beliefs, which are in turn known as stereotypes, and which are sometimes formed on the basis of personal (often hostile and harmful) opinions, called prejudice.

This process of generalisation gives rise to a mechanism of contrast in which one tends to group together all those people with alike characteristics that one considers to be incompatible with one's own worldview (also known as *Weltanschauung*). Through this latter process, which is generally known as *Othering*, a social group becomes (mentally) classified as not belonging to the individual's in-group by means of a clear opposition (in terms of a characteristic like gender, nationality, religion, etc.). This often takes the form of vilification and "denies the Other those defining characteristics of the 'Same', [such as] reason, dignity, love, pride, heroism, nobility, and ultimately any entitlement to human rights" (Gabriel 2008: 213).

Connecting cognitive categorisation and stereotype-forming processes to the development of hate manifestations (both in verbal and physical forms) towards determined social groups, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993) offers a comprehensive account of the role that defence instincts play here. As Castiglioni summarises (2005: 18–20), when a cognitive defence strategy is activated, only the in-group is favourably considered and assumed to stand above the other(s) in terms of intelligence, civilisation, historic roots, etc. Everything else that forms part of the out-group is condemned because of fear, which makes those in mental defence mode perceive themselves as being besieged. In this setting, defence often takes the form of denigration where others are represented in a negative way, and attributed undesired characteristics through simplifications based on limited knowledge (stereotypes). Denigration mainly takes the form of verbal hostility against different cultures, but there are also many cases in which people masquerade their aggressiveness as defence, by underlining the 'dangers' posed by an ethnic or religious group.

Such cognitive defence strategies seem to arise from the fear of not being able to maintain one's self-schema, as well as from the need to counter the anxiety of confronting one's weaknesses and tackle anything opposing one's worldview. With this in mind, we will now focus on a few examples of comments that we have collected from Italian media as a way of showcasing this defensive approach to hate speech.

- (1) *Domani la nostra città sarà per l'ennesima volta un deprimente palcoscenico di qualche migliaio di frustrati, vittime di aberrazioni della natura.*¹
 Tomorrow our city will again become a depressing stage for a thousand or so frustrated people, victims of nature's perversion.

The homophobic comment above is found in an article reporting the unfolding of the 2015 gay pride parade in Milan with the presence of the city mayor. It was made by two city councillors, members of the Italian regionalist party *Northern League* (famous for its xenophobic positions). Besides the intention to attack the opposing party, this comment reveals their hostility towards the LGBT community as a whole, which they characterise as '*frustrated*' as well as comprising '*victims of nature's perversion*,' hence highlighting their declassification through denigration. The use of the possessive adjective '*our*' in '*our city*' aims to stress the identification of a common good (the city) and emphasises their feeling of being threatened and besieged by the LGBT community which is evidently not considered to belong to the councillors' in-group (Othering). Thus the defence mechanism manifests itself with the neat opposition that the councilmen build between themselves (and their audience) and the LGBT community with all its characteristics.

The following comment also belongs to the same article and constitutes another interesting example of a homophobic statement:

- (2) *Che palle che ci fanno questi gay pride e i relativi componenti e pure i politici che gli accodano per i voti, pisapia docet. Ovviamente ognuno di noi deve esprimere la sua sessualità nel letto con chi più gradisce, contento lui/lei contenti tutti, ma non vedo perché devono fare queste RIDICOLE BUFFONATE e SONO ANCORA PIU' BUFFONI COLORO CHE AUTORIZZANO A FARLE.*²
 What a load of bullshit these gay parades, their affiliates and also the politicians who join them to get more votes, Pisapia is the first of them. Anyone should be able to obviously express their sexuality in bed with whom they want, but I really don't understand why they should be doing this RIDICULOUS NONSENSE and THOSE GIVING THEM PERMISSION TO DO IT ARE EVEN MORE RIDICULOUS.

¹Comment located at: <http://www.milanopost.info/2015/06/27/oggi-il-gay-pride-con-matrimonio-collettivo-finale-lega-aberrazioni-della-natura/>.

²Comment located at: <http://www.milanopost.info/2015/06/27/oggi-il-gay-pride-con-matrimonio-collettivo-finale-lega-aberrazioni-della-natura/>.

Here, the reader commenting on the article categorises the LGBT community as engaging in nonsensical activities. In order to understand the defence mechanism at play here, we need to focus on the event described in the article, the gay parade, which the reader seems to be hostile to (despite him/her stating that everyone is free to privately express their sexuality). This hostility manifests itself not only in relation to LGBT community members but also to anyone supporting them (e.g. the mayor and city council). This extension towards anyone related to this social group represents a mechanism of generalisation juxtaposing ‘*I, myself*’ from ‘*them*’, thus highlighting the fear of an attack to one’s own identity. On the one hand, the commenter seems to be in favour of sexual freedom as a commonsense principle for all individuals, but then on the other, ironically labels gay parades as ‘*ridiculous nonsense*’.

We would like now to go through an example of a xenophobic comment taken from the Italian weekly news magazine *L’espresso*, addressed against the Roma community, which is often discriminated against in Italy:

- (3) *Quando vedrò un ROM onesto neviccherà il 15 di Agosto! E’ l’ora di farsi sentire, di far capire a questa feccia che prima vengono i diritti degli onesti cittadini e poi i loro. Non se ne può più di vivere col terrore che ti vengano a svaligiare casa, causandoti molti danni per pochi euro di refurtiva. Basta!!! Che se ne tornino nei Balcani, devono capire che l’Italia deve essere un paese deromizzato.*³

When I see an honest Roma person it will be snowing on the 15th August! It’s time to raise the voice. The time has come to make this scum understand that the rights of honest citizens come first and then theirs follow. Enough with living with the fear of burglars who cause lots of damage for just a few euros of loot. Enough!!! Let them go back to the Balkans, they need to understand that Italy has to be deromanised!

More so than the previous examples, this comment shows how the phenomenon of stereotype-forming is deeply rooted in society. With a strong emphasis on the use of (cynical) sarcasm, the reader underlines how being honest and being a Roma person is contradictory and essentially ‘*as odd as snow in mid-August*’. The reader’s cognitive process follows the line of advocating a common fight against a foe (‘*them*’) with a clear defence strategy of ‘*us honest people*’ against ‘*them, dishonest Roma*’ (as in the eternal fight between good and evil). The xenophobic climax is reached with the use of the term ‘*scum*’ to define the entire Roma group. This is a case where a stereotype is taken to an extreme, becoming prejudice, and where categorisation becomes a hate instrument. Roma people are pointed at as thieves or brigands from whom Italians have to defend themselves. In this sense, a strong nationalism underlies this particular example of categorisation, which is deeply rooted in the reader’s belief that the country needs to be ‘*deromanised*’. All in all, what is perceived as a huge social problem is given an extreme solution: as in the

³Comment located at: http://espresso.repubblica.it/inchieste/2015/06/05/news/la-festa-degli-zingari-nell-anno-della-destra-con-salvini-e-le-pen-sempre-peggio-1.215215?refresh_ce.

worst examples of racism, the user pictures society as a place where people should be divided on the basis of their ethnicity.

As the examples discussed above show, hateful discourse, prejudice-based remarks or even incitement to violence against certain individuals/social groups often arise because their identity and social roles have been respectively reduced to their ethnicity and anti-social actions, so much so that they are perceived as a threat to one's (or to the whole nation's) identity. In this respect, defence mechanisms, which emerge from the generalisation of particular characteristics allocated to determined social groups, aim at responding to the unpleasant emotions triggered by some perceived stereotype and at preventing the anxiety generated by the fear of a possible identity crisis and an attack on one's own life context.

3.2 Stereotyping Vulnerable Groups

Uladzislau Ivanou

Negative stereotypes and their influence on social inequality may often be underestimated, but the connection between stereotypes and the explosion of hate speech is nowadays becoming increasingly obvious. In our study of hate speech in Lithuanian newspaper comments, stereotypes were found mainly in comments made in response to articles encompassing either a neutral or a positive attitude towards the populations usually affected by xenophobia and homophobia; however, due to space restrictions, this section will focus solely on homophobia and its expression through the use of stereotypes. That said, and before moving on, it is important to note that, in the Lithuanian context, stereotyping of the LGBTIQ community affects male individuals engaging in homosexuality more than it does female ones.⁴ That is why the absolute majority of stereotypes concerning the LGBTIQ population in the present comments analysis applies to gay men and includes stereotypes identified through the use of keywords such as *'gay pride'*, *'LGBT'*, *'homosexuality'*, *'homosexuals'*, *'gays'* and *'sexual minorities'*.

Stereotyping is not just a phenomenon but also a process, since stereotypes evolve and are constantly enriched. For example, as we will see, in the Lithuanian context, gay men are not only viewed as *'chicken hawks'*, but can also be stereotypically perceived as *'zoophiles'*, *'fetishists'* or even *'democratic scum'*. This stereotyping process poses what has been labelled a "stereotype threat" (Inzlicht and Schmader 2011), where hate speech transforms into action and can lead to hate crime. History has numerous examples of initially harmless stereotypes gradually

⁴As Wittig has noted (2007), and in accordance with various studies concerning the issue in the EU (cf. SOS Homophobie 2008; Gabrieliūtė 2012; Desombre et al. 2017), lesbians often remain invisible, due to their double marginalisation as women in the masculine society and as representatives of a sexuality which is relatively "safe" and "alternative", and not in direct conflict with heterosexuality.

transformed into isolated and later collective displays of hate speech and, finally, actions and crimes, involving mass extermination and harassment of vulnerable groups: witches, Roma, Jews, Armenians, homosexuals etc.

To understand stereotyping as a phenomenon and process, the context in which a stereotype is used is important. For instance, the stereotype of a '*feminist*' will differ among conservatives, Christians and leftists, as would the stereotype of a '*redneck*' among feminists and blue collars. A stereotype's (positive or negative) connotations should also be taken into consideration. For example, according to van Ypersele and Klein (2006), gay stereotyping in Lithuania, which has always been negative in nature, is characteristic of hasty and extremely reductionist collective evaluations that are reproduced across generations. As Cuddy et al. (2009) put it, homosexuality belongs to the category of *contemptuous stereotypes*.

According to the Stereotype Content Model (henceforth SCM) (Fiske et al. 2002), any stereotype includes two levels of content: a descriptive one, which encompasses those qualities of a certain group that trigger emotions (and are therefore mocked in our setting), and an explanatory content, which deals with the underlying idea that motivates the expression of a stereotype in a certain context. Considering their descriptive and explanatory components, the stereotypes concerning homosexuality that were identified on the basis of the online comments collected as part of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project in the Lithuanian context are provided in Table 3.1.

Stereotypes are produced under the influence of a certain socio-political culture and are affected by significant external influences. Thus, in Lithuania, the influence of the Russian culture during the Russian-empire as well as the Soviet era should be

Table 3.1 Stereotypes related to homosexuality in the Lithuanian C.O.N.T.A.C.T. corpus

Descriptive content	Explanatory content
Homosexuals are a plague (<i>found in 238 comments</i>)	Almost everybody in Europe is gay, and they would turn everyone else gay too.
Homosexuals are sick (<i>found in 259 comments</i>)	Homosexuality is as sick as paedophilia, scatophilia or zoophilia.
Homosexuals are exhibitionists (<i>found in 109 comments</i>)	Gay men take their clothes off during gay parades, ' <i>Gayvision</i> ' (Eurovision) and other events.
Homosexuals are liberal, tolerant, and democratic scum (<i>found in 338 comments</i>)	A new dangerous gay-tolerant ideology of genderism (like a new Bolshevism) is developing in Europe.
Gay men are effeminate (<i>found in 533 comments</i>)	Many gay men like to dress like women and select feminine trades (e.g. make-up artists).
Homosexuals show contempt to God (<i>found in 8 comments</i>)	As people in Europe turn their back on God, the course of nature is disrupted, and more and more people become gay.
Homosexuals are selfish (<i>found in 17 comments</i>)	Homosexual people do not conform to the values of the family, nation, country, and only live for themselves.

taken into consideration. When it comes to stereotypes of gay men, it is possible to find both the Soviet trace or mediation of the Soviet and later Russian culture in the expressions ‘*liberal gays*’, ‘*democratic trash*’, and the local, national trace, when there is talk about homosexuality as a threat to national prosperity. A socio-linguistic analysis of image stereotypes underscores a mixed nature of stereotyping where an interplay of global and local influences is evident, with stereotypical images of gay men in Lithuanian including ‘*piderastas*’ (*faggot*), ‘*pedikas*’ (*fag*), ‘*homikas*’ (*woofer*), and ‘*žydras*’ (*banana crammer*), all of which are borrowed from Russian (cf. Jasiūnaitė 2005, 2006, 2009; Zaikauskas 2007: 114–115).

In terms of prevalence, stereotypes concerning gay men can be classified as typical, that is, universal and known in the neighbouring countries and in Europe as a whole (e.g. ‘*Homosexuality is a disease*’, ‘*Gay men are effeminate*’) and rare (‘*Gay people are selfish*’). Still, some universal stereotypes acquire additional local shades of meaning: thus, for example, the stereotype of homosexual ‘promiscuity’, and ‘decay of virtue’ gets extended in the Lithuanian setting to encompass an extreme form of liberalism, as is seen in the description of gay individuals as ‘democratic scum’ (‘*demokratijos šlamštas*’), since decay of virtue is often associated in the region (Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania) with excessive democratism. In this setting, due to the freedom of gay people in the West, the value of democracy is discredited under the influence of the traditional, and sometimes quite authoritarian, political stance that was inherited from the USSR and is still upheld in domestic nationalism beliefs. This is also evident in the widespread, in our data, stereotype of ‘*малерасты*’ (people tolerating gays) in Europe, who are deemed to be too lenient with homosexuality.

Turning to what can be described as a rare stereotype of homosexuality stereotype present in the local media, we find the belief that homosexual individuals are selfish

- (4) *O LGBT visuomenė, kurios tikslai egoistiniai ir visą visuomenę vedantys į niekur, meilės nenusipenė ir niekada nesusipelnys.*⁵

LGBT people are selfish, they don’t deserve to be protected by the state.

Yet, the belief that gay people ‘think and love themselves only’ and ‘are not ready to be responsible’ and create a family is quite paradoxical, since homosexual individuals have no right to assume such a responsibility in Lithuania, where neither same sex union nor adoption are allowed by the state.

All in all, the investigation of stereotypes related to homophobia (and xenophobia, by association) is not just a research curiosity, but rather an inquiry into the weaknesses of our society, and its findings can inform both politicians and the public about some issues that should be addressed not only by politicians, but by education and media specialists too. As Barthes, who defined the stereotype as

⁵Comment located at: <http://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/834689/lgl-vadovas-lesbietes-ir-gejai-isliekatarp-labiausiai-pazeidziamu-visuomenes-grupiu>.

something solid, unshakable, unchanging and—at the same time—monstrous, notes, it is possible to presume that politics has no unshakable and unchanging territory (1975: 63). That is why policy-making in relation to the detection and prevention of hate speech and crimes should also have the objective of minimising negative stereotypes on top of preventing incitement to violence.

3.3 From ‘Patriotism’ to Hate: Axiological Urgency in Online Comments Related to Refugees

Monika Kopytowska, Julita Woźniak and Łukasz Grabowski

In his *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, Appadurai points to “a lack of tolerance of any sort of collective stranger” tied to uncertainty resulting from blurring “the boundaries of national peoplehood” (2006: 45). The collective Self, contingent on membership in social groups and the shared identification with these groups, along with the in-group versus out-group construction, gains particular prominence in times of conflict and crisis of political, ethnic, cultural, religious, or economic nature. Defining the Other allows for the (re)definition of the Self and “functions to promote straightforward feelings of identification, empathy or disapproval” (Fowler 1991: 15). The dynamics of this process is captured by van Dijk’s “*ideological square*” (1998: 33), set to present ‘us’ in a favourable light and ‘them’ unfavourably, and consisting in emphasising ‘our’ good properties/actions, while highlighting ‘their’ bad properties/actions. In this sense, it is related to what Chilton calls *delegitimisation*, which involves

acts of negative other presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalising, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other (2004: 47).

Within the Media Proximation Approach (Kopytowska 2015a, b), this process of polarisation is discussed in terms of cognitive-discursive operations within the domain of axiology characterised by three functions:

1. establishing axiological status: that is, ‘our’ values/norms;
2. delineating axiological conflict: that is, the incompatibility of ‘our’ values/norms with ‘their’ values/norms; and,
3. conveying axiological urgency: that is, responding to a threat posed (often by ‘their’ actions) to ‘our’ values/norms and accepting moral responsibility to act.

This axiological conflict is, for example, reflected by the most frequent migrant-related topoi/themes in the UK press, as listed by Hart (cf. Table 3.2), which, connected with the concept of physical or mental threat, are likely to generate fear and evoke strongly negative emotional responses towards migrants (Hart 2010, see also Richardson and Colombo 2013).

Table 3.2 Migrant-related topoi in the UK press (after Hart 2010: 67)

Axiological value	Description
Burden	The out-group needs to be supported by the in-group
Character	The out-group has certain undesirable characteristics
Crime	The out-group consists of criminals
Culture	The out-group has different norms and values than the in-group and is unable to assimilate
Danger	The out-group is dangerous
Disadvantage	The out-group brings no advantages/is of no use to the in-group
Disease	The out-group is dirty and carries infectious diseases
Displacement	The out-group will eventually outnumber and/or dominate the in-group and will get privileged access to limited socio-economic resources, over and above the in-group
Exploitation	The out-group exploits the welfare system of the in-group

Another way to promote anxiety and panic is the use of metaphors conceptualising immigration as an invasion and as flooding the country (cf. Mahtani and Mountz 2002). Perceived in this way, migrants and refugees inevitably constitute a threat to the collective Self and the survival of a community as a cohesive unit (cf. Buzan et al. 1998): in the particular setting of the current migration crisis, coming from a predominantly Muslim background, they are likely to bring in beliefs and traditions incompatible with the European Christian worldview.

This stance gains even more relevance in the case of ethnically and religiously homogenous societies, such as the Polish one. Here, the sense of threat and axiological urgency is not only justified quantitatively (religious/ethnic majority), but also substantiated with historical experience and collective memory. More precisely, over the centuries, the sovereignty of Poland and its people’s status quo have been threatened by various Others during the time of partitions, World War I and II, and the Soviet Union’s domination. The cult of struggle for national integrity and militant opposition against the enemy have become a hallmark of Polish patriotism, with its slogan ‘*Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna*’ (‘God, Honour, Fatherland’).

Against this background, we will explore, in this section, the discursive dynamics of Polish online ‘patriotism’ and its interface with fear-mongering and incitement to hatred against the Other(s). More specifically, we will demonstrate how, by appealing to collective memory, existing stereotypes and cultural/national values, media texts producers and commenters create a sense of axiological urgency and arouse strong negative emotions, thus possibly bonding the in-group and legitimising verbal and physical aggression directed at the out-group perceived as the threat and the enemy.

Refugee-related hate speech with “patriotic” undertones has been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, Poland is one of the EU countries ‘experiencing’ the crisis and ‘moral panic’ without being directly affected by the physical presence of migrants and refugees. Constituting a pillar of the dominant narrative of the

country's ruling conservative government and of right-wing media, this anti-migrant rhetoric has played an important role in the (mediated) construction of the crisis in Poland (cf. Kopytowska et al. 2017; Kopytowska and Grabowski 2017). Secondly, the analysed data powerfully reflect a peculiar form of the Polish 'patriotism' thriving on national pride, collective memory, belligerent courage, and the need to unite against an external enemy. Thirdly, such instances of anti-migrant discourse provide evidence of how *ethnic and religious homogeneity* can be effectively exploited in collective identity formation and Us versus Them construction in times of (perceived) crisis.

To examine how Polish "patriotism" is conceptualised and used as motivation for and justification of hate speech directed against refugees and migrants, three salient concepts associated with the national collective identity, namely '*Polska*' ('Poland'), '*Polak*' ('Pole'), and '*nasz*' ('our'), were identified and analysed in the Polish C.O.N.T.A.C.T. corpus. More specifically, after identifying comments for the keyword '*uchodźcy*' ('refugees') following the common C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology,⁶ we tagged and parsed them using Sketch Grammar for Polish, which was developed on the basis of the tagset of the IPI PAN Corpus of Polish and implemented into the SketchEngine software (Kilgarriff et al. 2014).

In our corpus, '*nasz*' ('our') collocates with the following nouns: '*kraj*' ('country'), '*ojczyzna*' ('fatherland'), '*dom*' ('home'), '*zasada*' ('rule'), '*rodak*' ('compatriot'), '*kultura*' ('culture'), '*demokracja*' ('democracy'), '*historia*' ('history'), '*terytorium*' ('territory'), '*ulica*' ('street'), '*kobieta*' ('woman'), while isolating comments made in response to YouTube videos alone, it correspondingly collocates with: '*kraj*' ('country'), '*teren*' ('territory'), '*cywilizacja*' ('civilisation'), '*ojczyzna*' ('homeland'), '*rodzina*' ('family'), '*przodek*' ('ancestor'), '*granica*' ('border'), '*dziecko*' ('child'). Subsequent word sketches and concordance analyses revealed several interesting patterns in the semantic prosody of these words and their "axiological potential". For example, 'Poland' frequently appears in the phrase '*Polska dla Polaków*' ('Poland for Poles'), but also in such statements as that it is not a place for '*szumowin imigracyjnych*' ('immigration scum'), and it will not accept '*tych bydlaków, pasożytów, gwałcicieli, terrorystów*' ('these beasts, parasites, rapists, terrorists'). Spatial appropriation is also often visible:

- (5) *nasza Ojczyzna należy do Nas Polaków*⁷
our Homeland belongs to Us Poles
- (6) *Nie pozwólmy żeby to ścierwo wkrađało się na nasze tereny*⁸
Let's not allow this carcass to sneak into our territory

⁶One particularity of the Polish C.O.N.T.A.C.T. corpus is that on top of the comments posted in news portals, it also comprises comments made in response to YouTube videos whose description included the keywords under scrutiny. The corpus of comments presented in this paper was compiled in December 2016–February 2017.

⁷Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/87995-tyle-kopacz-krzyczala-uchodzczy-w-polsce-opozycja-wreszcie-przyznala-racje-pis>.

⁸Comment located at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23XtougJbjM>.

- (7) *PiS nie wpuści brudasów do naszego kraju*⁹
Law and Justice will not let allow these slob to enter our country
- (8) *nie ulegac Niemcom z ich bandyckim planem podrzucenia najeźdźców-dziczy do naszej Ojczyzny!*¹⁰
let's not give into Germans with their thuggish plan to bring invaders-savages into our Homeland!

Refugees and migrants are not only axiologically downgraded by being dehumanised through animal metaphors, but are also presented as a threat of both moral and physical nature:

- (9) *Nie szanują absolutnie niczego w naszej cywilizacji*¹¹
They have no respect for anything in our civilisation
- (10) *będą nasze dzieci, nasze wnuki zabijać za allaha*¹²
they will kill our children, our grandchildren for Allah
- (11) *będą nas rabować, bić gwałcić nasze kobiety*¹³
they will rob us, beat up and rape our women

Finally, particular instances of the Other's savagery are provided, as in the following comment:

- (12) *pierwsze ataki islamistów w Niemczech na Polaków:*

- *zamordowanie meczeta Polki,*
- *zamordowanie Polaka kierowcy TIRa,*
- *podpalenie Polaka bezdomnego,*

*to są początki, musimy być przygotowani Polacy rodacy że takie ataki będą coraz częstsze, należy zachować czujność w Niemczech, Polsce i innych krajach UE, ponieważ Polacy stawiamy tamę nachodząc ta fala będzie napierała na Polskę i Polaków mocno, jak potop szwedzki i radziecki.*¹⁴

first attacks of islamists in Germany affecting Poles:

- killing a Polish woman with a machete
- killing a Polish lorry driver
- setting fire to a homeless Pole

This is just the beginning, Polish fellows we have to be prepared for the fact that such attacks will be more and more frequent, we need to be on alert in

⁹Comment located at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SQkT7vOV4k>.

¹⁰Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75987-uchodzcy-coraz-bardziej-agresywni-niemcy-chca-zeby-do-nich-strzelac-wideo>.

¹¹Comment located at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SQkT7vOV4k>.

¹²Comment located at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fsb63e2WznI>.

¹³Comment located at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fsb63e2WznI>.

¹⁴Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/91340-uchodzcy-podpalili-polaka-sa-aresztowani>.

Germany, Poland and other EU countries because we Poles prevent the invaders this wave will hit Poland as hard as the Swedish or Soviet Deluge.

In view of such a threat, counteraction seems to be a moral obligation and patriotic duty. Commenters thus pledge to protect the Polish people:

- (13) *MY będziemy BRONIĆ naszych kobiet i dzieci przed zagrożeniem.*¹⁵
WE will DEFEND our women and children against this threat.
- (14) *Będziemy po swojemu z nimi załatwiać, Polacy znowu wezmą w swoje ręce rozprawę z islamem!*¹⁶
We will deal with them in our own way; the Poles will again crack down on Islam!

At the same time, using both imperative forms and modals with deontic meaning as collocates of ‘we’ and ‘Poles’, they call on their compatriots to be vigilant and take action:

- (15) *musimy się wszyscy przygotować na odpór tej zarazy.*¹⁷
we have to prepare to fight off this plague.
- (16) *musimy się połączyć wziąć się w garść i im pokazać co potrafią Polacy zanim będzie za późno.*¹⁸
we have to unite, pull ourselves together to show them what Poles are able to do before it is too late.

Religion also emerges as a salient issue, and Islam is presented as incompatible with the Polish culture:

- (17) *Polacy mówią NIE islamizacji Polski i basta!*¹⁹
Poles say NO to the islamisation of Poland and that’s enough!
- (18) *Polacy nie zgadzają się na islam w Polsce!*²⁰
Poles do not agree to Islam in Poland!’

Interestingly, references are also made to Jan III Sobieski, a Polish king credited with turning back the last great wave of Muslim expansion in Europe through his victory against the Turks in the battle of Vienna in 1683. In some comments, his actions are given as an example of patriotic spirit and something to be cherished and

¹⁵Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/91340-uchodzczy-podpalili-polaka-sa-aresztowani>.

¹⁶Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/74915-w-niemczech-nowe-ataki-imigrantow-na-dzieci-i-kobiety-czy-merkel-przetrwa>.

¹⁷Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75363-juz-wiadomo-gdzie-beda-przebywac-w-polsce-uchodzczy>.

¹⁸Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75401-skandaliczne-zachowania-uchodzcow-na-niemieckich-basenach>.

¹⁹Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/78070-zamachowcy-z-brukseli-uchodzczy-ilu-jeszcze-terrorystow-wpuszczono-do-europy>.

²⁰Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75363-juz-wiadomo-gdzie-beda-przebywac-w-polsce-uchodzczy>.

continued. From this perspective, letting in refugees, who are Muslims, will be a crime and lack of respect for national history and values:

- (19) *i usilnie namawiam rodaków do bezwzględności! Po co Jan III Sobieski ich pogonił, tak sobie a my mamy to w d...e?*²¹
and I strongly urge my compatriots to be ruthless! Why John III Sobieski chased them away, for nothing and we don't give a f...k?

As far as cultural and moral values are concerned, the Polish nation emerges as both self-sufficient and superior:

- (20) *My Polacy NIC nikomu nie jesteśmy winni i nie potrzebujemyich "ubogacania" bo nie potrzebna nam jest ta ich "kultura"na poziomoe VII czy VIII wieku podniesiona do rangi "bogactwa kulturowego" za pomocą noży, kalachów i ładunków wybuchowych.*²²
We Poles do not owe ANYTHING to anybody and we do not need their "enrichment" because we do not need their "culture" from the level of 7th or 8th c. elevated to the level of "cultural richness" with the help of knives, Kalashnikovs, explosives.
- (21) *Naród Polski nie wyraża zgody na mieszanie wrogich obcych kultur i religii ze zdobyczami wartości narodowych w Polskiej przestrzeni terytorialnej.*²³
The Polish people does not agree to mixing other hostile cultures and religions with the heritage of national values on the Polish territory.

Also, its virtue seems to lie in its readiness to take up arms if the need arises:

- (22) *Jesteśmy jednym z najbardziej walecznych nacji w Europie. Sam wezmę udział w obronie moich rodaków, jeśli trzeba będzie.*²⁴
We are one of the most gallant nations in Europe. I myself will take part in defending my compatriots if necessary.
- (23) *Jesteśmy Polakami i Patriotami i chcemy dobrze dla Kraju naszych przodków którzy też o to samo niejednokrotnie walczyli z bronią w ręku.*²⁵
We are Poles and Patriots and we want all the best for the Land of our fathers who often took to arms to fight for this.

²¹Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75363-juz-wiadomo-gdzie-beda-przebywac-w-polsce-uchodzczy>.

²²Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/74915-w-niemcezech-nowe-ataki-imigrantow-na-dzieci-i-kobiety-czy-merkel-przetrwa>.

²³Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75363-juz-wiadomo-gdzie-beda-przebywac-w-polsce-uchodzczy>.

²⁴Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/75363-juz-wiadomo-gdzie-beda-przebywac-w-polsce-uchodzczy>.

²⁵Comment located at: <http://niezalezna.pl/74661-uchodzczy-w-polsce-najpierw-kobiety-dzieci-i-chrzescijanie>.

As revealed by word-occurrence patterns in the analysed corpus, frequent appeals to the national pride, identity and history on the one hand, and to the need to protect Poles from both physical and moral threat, on the other, seem to represent a way of motivating people to act against refugees and migrants. As the threat is presented as imminent, there appears to be an axiological urgency to act, manifested in exclamations and imperatives expressing commands. To evoke fear of and anger at the refugees, their potentially harmful actions are given both in the form of factual occurrences (past and present tense, perfective and progressive aspect) and imminent acts of violence (future tense). At the same time, references are made to heroic deeds and sacrifice in the Polish history, to national heroes and to events which are salient in the Polish collective memory.

All in all, an opposition is constructed between a Christian, European, civilised world, with Poland at the forefront, and the world of the primitive Other.²⁶ Having no intelligence and morality, this Other has no respect for ‘our’ values and since reasoning with ‘them’ is out of the question, the only way to protect ‘our’ values is to use force. Hence we find in our corpus frequent calls to actions (involving physical violence) which should be (or are intended to be) taken. Importantly, since cyberspace, with its interactive and intertextual potential, allows groups and individuals with similar (often radical) ideas to connect, this hostile form of Polish ‘patriotism’ becomes salient in online discourse, thus generating a spiral of hate (cf. Kopytowska et al. 2017) in subsequent comments and conveying a sense of axiological urgency: We have to act before the Other(s) invade and destroy us.

3.4 Metaphors Related to Othering the Non-natives

Fabienne H. Baider, Anna Constantinou and Anastasia Petrou

Recurrent linguistic strategies and specific discursive choices are often employed with a view to constructing the exclusion of the out-group and the cohesion of the in-group (Baker et al. 2008). Such discursive choices include referential strategies, like epistemic modalities attributing negative qualities to the out-group, exploitation of existing stereotypes, aggregation (i.e. referring to a homogeneous group that also shares the same intentions), as well as intensification (i.e. the excessive use of quantifying adverbs or adjectives). Such figures of speech reinforce conscious or subliminal fears related to the LGBTIQ community or to immigrants and encourage socio-cultural practices as well as interpersonal relations on the basis of negative tropes.

Metaphors are particularly important to study since “understanding the systematic nature of metaphor choices” allows us to understand in turn how “*entire*

²⁶Interestingly, there is a parallel in this regard between our findings and other analyses of extreme-right discourse (cf. Baider and Constantinou 2017).

belief systems are conceived and communicated” (Charteris-Black 2005: 3, our italics). In particular, metaphors of THREAT, LEECHES or PARASITES are typically used to ostracise the non-natives (Musolff 2015; Baker et al. 2008), and have also been described as being coherent with the beliefs, actions, or imaginings of the person using them. In a way, metaphors can reveal the *underlying conceptual frame* of their producer and give access to a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about the ‘typical’ aspects of a member of a minority or any person belonging (or appearing as belonging) to that group. This then leads to the conceptualisation of metaphors as creating or confirming stereotypes (Zinken 2003).

In light of the above, the aim of the present section is to understand how in the context of the small Orthodox island of Cyprus, where almost no refugees had landed during the summer of 2015 and where religion plays an active part in politics and everyday life (cf. Baider 2017), xenophobic metaphors are used to construct the social Other in social media. Due to space limitations, this section focuses only on our analysis of comments retrieved on the basis of the keywords ‘*refugee(s)*’, ‘*migrant(s)*’ and ‘*foreigner(s)*’ in line with the common C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology.²⁷

For these particular keywords, we collected 2446 comments. Our analysis of these comments in terms of polarity revealed that more comments were negative than positive but not overwhelmingly so, as Table 3.3 shows.

Having collected and classified our data in this way, we then proceeded to identify the most common linguistic means that are used to negatively categorise the social groups at hand. Here, the most frequent means include metaphors, insults, proverbs and irony/sarcasm, but for the purposes of this section we will focus on metaphors as a means for Othering migrants, foreigners and refugees. Most work dealing with the use of metaphors in discourse related to migration (see, for instance, Santa Ana 1999) has shown that it is often being conceptualised as a

Table 3.3 Polarity analysis of the Cypriot C.O.N.T.A.C.T. corpus

Polarity	Raw number of comments	Percentage in overall corpus (%)
Positive	543	22.2
Negative	945	38.6
Irrelevant/neutral ^a	958	39.2

^aThis category comprises comments not directly referring to the keyword, diverting from the article’s subject and/or the keyword group, as well as empty comments, where just a Facebook friend is tagged. It is important for the Cypriot data to include the neutral category given the polysemy of the word *refugees* that is also commonly used to refer to the Greek Cypriots that were displaced as a result of the 1974 occupation or to the newcomers to the island

²⁷As already mentioned in the previous chapter, since our keyword search in the online editions of Cypriot newspapers did not generate a high number of articles and comments, we turned to the newspapers’ Facebook pages, which users check more often and are thus more inclined to comment on articles posted on them.

Table 3.4 Recurrent metaphors used for Othering immigrants in the Cypriot C.O.N.T.A.C.T. corpus

Metaphor of	Example
DISEASE	Refugees have not done ‘ <i>medical tests</i> .’
DIRT	Zero policy migration is ‘ <i>a global clean up</i> .’
AMORALITY	Female foreigners being referred to as ‘ <i>prostitutes</i> .’
SUBHUMAN/ ALIEN	Immigrants being referred to using animal categories, such as ‘ <i>mice</i> ’, ‘ <i>worms</i> ’ and ‘ <i>monkeys</i> .’
OUTLAW	‘ <i>Migrants do everything illegally</i> .’
BURDEN	‘ <i>Migrants expect to be taken care of</i> .’
DANGER/ THREAT	Migrants have ‘ <i>dangerous relationships</i> ’ with Islam, ‘ <i>foreigners spread the terror</i> .’

natural or manmade disaster (typically referred to using lexemes related to floods, tsunamis or pollution) and migrants, refugees and foreigners as menacing animals, bacteria and beasts of burden.

Table 3.4 summarises those conceptual metaphors that we encountered in our collected comments the most, alongside some examples of phrases that seem to trigger the relevant classification within them.

Even though Table 3.4 shows the most typical anti-immigration discourse tropes, it is not the same metaphors that are found for each category of Other in our dataset. For example, the category ‘*refugee(s)*’, which is the most diversely constructed one, comprises mainly metaphors characterising the relevant individuals as disgusting animals (‘*worms*’ in 24) or pests (‘*mice*’ in 25):

- (24) τόσο θράσος τα σκουλίκια, αχάριστα αδέσποτα παρουσιάζονται με απαιτήσεις.²⁸

They have audacity these worms; these ungrateful stray animals come over with demands.

- (25) Όταν μια χώρα σε φιλοξενή σε ταιζει και εισαι ασφαλής απο τον πολέμο που υπαρχει στην χώρα σου και εσυ αντι να μείνης στην πατρίδα σου να πολεμήσεις φευγεις σαν ποντικός διαμαρτιρεσαι αχαριστε?²⁹

When a country is hosting, feeding and protecting you from the war that is going on in your country, and you leave from your homeland like a mouse, instead of staying and fighting, how can you be complaining, you ungrateful?

Conversely, the category ‘*migrant(s)*’ seems to be more commonly attributed metaphors of OUTLAW, VIOLENCE and DISEASE:

²⁸Comment located at: <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/local/291098/epeisodiame-prosfyges-sto-kentropodoxis-sti-kofinou>.

²⁹Comment located at: <http://www.facebook.com/phileleftheros/posts/956739704363984>.

- (26) *otan efigan oi pappoudes mou epian me to plio kanonika kai me ton nomo stin agklia! eperasan apo iatrikes epitropes kai 1000 dio alla, toutoi kammoun etsi? i adinatis na katalavis tin diafora metanasti me ton lathreo*³⁰

When my grandparents left, they went with the ship normally and legally to England! They went through medical tests and a thousand other things; are these ones [the migrants] doing the same? Or are you unable to understand the difference between a legal and an illegal migrant?

As for the category ‘foreigner(s)’, it is more typically approached using the metaphor of AMORALITY, which includes prostitution or sexual promiscuity and lack of decent/moral behaviour as the following examples of comments in response to an article entitled ‘A foreign woman abandoned her 12 year old child to go on a trip’ show:

- (27) *Ayti einai nootropia poutanou. epiase o poutanos ton moulla tziae epie stin xwra tou. Alla en epire ton mikro mazi tis (...). etsi o poutanos eprotimise ton moulla para to mwro tis*³¹

This is the mindset of a whore. The whore got the mullah and went to her country, but she didn’t take the boy with her (...). So the whore chose the mullah instead of her baby.

- (28) *Prepei na bolla anomali, mana-teras, psyxoanomali... Thee mu...na analavei to moro to kratos tse sta tsakkidia e opia k an einai e akatanomasti.*³²

She must be such a pervert, a monster of a mother, a schizo... Oh my God! The baby needs to be taken care of by the state and she should go to hell whoever she is...

Metaphors are an intrinsic part of the Othering process, and central to identity construction. As such, they could easily lead to social exclusion and marginalisation processes as well. Indeed, in example (25) above, the fact that refugees left their country is interpreted as a lack of courage and therefore the metaphor of the *mouse* is used. What is more, this animal metaphor could reveal a conceptualisation on the part of the speaker which may in turn lead to an acceptance of treatment reserved for pests against the target of this trope. In this vein, metaphors could act as a transition from the argument ‘migrants should be deported’ to the conclusion ‘any means are justified to do so,’ as they are, at the same time, the results of unspoken premises and inferred conclusions.

All in all, this study confirms that previously identified metaphors used to Othering migrants and refugees in other languages are also found in Cypriot discourse. However, some tropes are typical of specific social categories, such as AMORALITY being used only in relation to female foreigners in our data. From our brief exploration of the topic, it seems safe to conclude that metaphors function as a

³⁰Comment located at: <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/international/225298/sima-kindynou-apo-ploio-me-300-metanastes-sti-mesogeio>.

³¹Comment located at: <http://www.facebook.com/sigmalivecy/posts/10152932493703580>.

³²Comment located at: <http://www.facebook.com/sigmalivecy/posts/10152932493703580>.

topos, i.e. as a place to *look for arguments* and a place where those arguments *are ready for use* (Zagar 2010). Indeed, much like *topoi*, metaphors are part of a categorisation scheme: they enable the speaker to *construe an argument* for a given conclusion, which, in this case, is the equation of the Other to a negative ontological (animal) or social (prostitute) category.

3.5 The Implicit Dimension of Discriminatory Discourse

Rebecca Vella Muskat and Stavros Assimakopoulos

From a purely legal viewpoint, one needs to prove intent to stir up violence and hate toward a specific minority group in order to establish that some statement constitutes hate speech. However, in order to accomplish a thorough understanding of discrimination in language use as a social phenomenon, one would need to broaden the definition of the term, so that it also includes strategies used to implicitly impart a negative stance towards a given minority. As Reisigl and Wodak characteristically note, while discussing prejudice in racist discourse,

a categorisation according to the sentence structure of the most obvious prejudices is only partially able to grasp latent meanings, allusions, indirect strategies, vague formulations, implications, and forms of argumentation, all of which can extend beyond a single sentence and characterise written texts or oral discourse connected with prejudice and racism.

(Reisigl and Wodak 2005: 21).

In a similar vein, van Dijk also observes that “various types of implicitness play a prominent role in texts about minorities,” and attributes this tendency to “face-saving strategies [which] require that speakers avoid expressing explicitly negative propositions about minorities” (1992: 225). Indeed, the Maltese strand of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project research showed that, perhaps in fear of appearing intolerant towards migrants and/or the LGBTIQ community, most commenters who expressed a negative stance towards these groups did so implicitly, using a number of different indirect strategies.

Against this backdrop, this section will showcase how discrimination can be implied below the surface structure of the actual language being used, using examples from the online comments that were analysed following the common C. O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology in the Maltese context. Naturally, the starting point when one talks about implicit meaning is Grice, who famously coined the term *implicature* to describe meaning that is communicated over and above what is actually said by an utterance (Grice 1975). And even though we will not, in this section, be dealing directly with the notion of implicature—or the Gricean analysis of it for that matter, it should be acknowledged that it could, as a concept, encompass most of the indirect strategies that can be used to express a negative stance towards a minority. Perhaps the most pertinent aspect of implicature in this regard can be found in the post-Gricean, relevance-theoretic reanalysis of

implicatures as propositions that can, among other things, “be communicated with varying degrees of strength, depending on the confidence with which a hearer can assume that they form part of the speaker’s informative intention” (Assimakopoulos 2017: 319). So, even though a statement may not constitute hate speech in the eyes of the law, it might still reveal the discriminatory attitude of its producer, to the extent that it could also be considered to be detrimental to the feeling of self-worth of members of a minority group. What is crucial in this respect is, of course, to take into account not only the explicit content of a given statement, but also the particular context in which it has been produced.

One of the most extensively researched categories of implicated meaning is that of irony, which can be easily identified in the example that follows:

- (29) *We need to thank the geniuses who agreed with us signing the Dublin 2 convention. They want us to fingerprint immigrants to make it easier for them to identify and deport them back to Malta.*³³

At face value, the comment above has a particularly positive undertone, as it starts off with positively charged words, like ‘thank’ and ‘geniuses’. Yet, when looked at in its particular context, it is clear that it is meant as a negative comment against the Maltese politicians who signed the ‘the Dublin 2 convention’,³⁴ thus agreeing to Malta being solely responsible for the examination of asylum applications by refugees who enter the EU through its territory. The implicitly communicated negative meaning of this comment is derived from the combinatorial meaning of the two sentences it comprises, with the second sentence providing an explanation as to why the first one is intended as an ironical statement. In this second sentence, the user creates a distinction between ‘us’ (=the Maltese) and (the first, exophoric) ‘them’ (=other EU countries) to relay the information that ‘immigrants’³⁵ are unwanted and that the EU is using Malta as a dumping ground for this undesirable group of people. It is therefore evident that the user employs irony to communicate that the signing of the Dublin II convention was an unwise decision that has had negative effects on Malta. And even though the implicature at hand strongly communicates the user’s dismay at a particular political choice, it also carries a weaker negative stance toward migrants, since the irony of the first sentence in

³³Comment located at: http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/europe/60155/ec_rebukes_malta_over_failure_to_fully_transpose_asylum_policies.

³⁴The Dublin II Regulation, as it is also known, is a revised version of the Dublin Convention, which originally came into force in 1997. The Dublin II Regulation was later signed in 2003 and was applied to all EU member states, with the exception of Denmark. In short, it stipulates that it is the member state that constitutes the point of entry of a refugee in the EU, and that state alone that is responsible for processing the relevant refugee’s asylum application. This gives the right to some other member state of the EU, where the refugee may have moved in the meantime, to deport the refugee under question back to his/her original point of entry.

³⁵Even the choice of the word ‘immigrant’ over other alternatives, such as ‘migrant,’ has been, on its own, shown to carry negative connotations (Baker et al. 2008).

combination with the elaboration provided in the second one makes it clear that the user views migrants in Malta unfavourably.

The next example we will be discussing also belongs to the category of irony, but has a more pronounced mocking tone, and can thus be more succinctly described as an instance of sarcasm:

- (30) *While the local taxpayer will foot the bill for the police time, court time and legal aid. Way to go!*³⁶

The news article with the headline ‘*Libyan conditionally discharged after AWAS row,*’ to which this comment was a direct reply reported on a trial in which a man from Libya, who pleaded guilty to the charges of causing material damages to the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers by breaking the glass surface of a desk when he was not attended to, was conditionally discharged and fined €80. Within this context, the second sentence of the comment in (30), which, when used in a neutral context, is a positive expression similar to ‘*well done!*’, is produced with a sarcastic tone, showing the user’s negative stance toward the fact that a migrant has cost the Maltese tax-payers money. This becomes clear by looking more closely at the language used in the first sentence of the comment. For one, the commenter uses the expression ‘*foot the bill*’, which is typically used in situations when the person paying a fee is somewhat unwillingly hoaxed into paying, in the same way a parent might have to ‘*foot the bill*’ for damages caused by their children. Then, this sentence also begins with the conjunction ‘*while,*’ which is often used to introduce information that contrasts with the main clause (the ‘*main clause*’ in this case being the narrative presented in the article, which merely reports the incident). Hence, the first sentence indicates a sort of forcible anchor on the taxpayer’s pocket, which is obviously not viewed favourably by the commenter. Moreover, the user modifies the noun ‘*taxpayer*’ with the adjective ‘*local*’, thus further emphasising their dismay that a foreign person has cost the Maltese money. Again, much like in the previous example in (29), even though the user strongly communicates their frustration with a particular state policy by means of this comment, they also weakly show a negative stance toward migrants and the presumed burden they put on the Maltese economy.

Turning to the issue of indirectly discriminating against the LGBTIQ community, the comment in (31) is a good example of a statement that may not constitute prosecutable hate speech in itself, but is strongly discriminatory in nature:

- (31) *If adults have unwanted sexual urges or dreams, they should be able to get help. Especially they are married and have kids. Whether those urges are for men or young boys, it shouldn’t matter. Now if a parent sent his gay kid to NARTH, that’s a different story.*³⁷

³⁶Comment located at: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160115/local/libyan-conditionally-discharged-after-awas-row.598879>.

³⁷Comment located at: http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/54144/gay_conversion_therapy_might_become_a_criminal_offence.

To begin with, the commenter here does draw the line at parents forcibly sending their children to NARTH (National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality), an organisation that offers gay conversion therapy, thus, recognising the danger that such therapy can bring on LGBTIQ youth. However, the language used in the rest of the comment indicates a strong negative stance toward homosexuality and a profound ignorance of LGBTIQ issues. Firstly, the user refers to non-straight sexual desires as ‘*unwanted...urges*’. Both these words have negative connotations and imply something unfavourable. Moreover, by way of the modal verb ‘*should*’, the user offers a suggestion for people with such ‘urges’ to ‘*get help*’. In doing so, the user implies that heteronormative values are hegemonic and any deviation from them creates an urgent need for the individual to seek help. Finally, the use of the inclusive ‘*or*’ in the sentence ‘*Whether those urges are for men or young boys, it shouldn’t matter.*’ strongly implicates that, in the mind of the commenter, homosexuality is on a par with paedophilia and thus warrants ‘*treatment*.’ In view of all this, then, the final, positive, statement that parents should not force their children to undergo gay conversion therapy is overshadowed by the overall negative stance the user has towards the LGBTIQ community.

Similarly, the comment in (32), which was made in response to a newspaper article about the civil union of a gay couple, might not seem at first to be overly discriminatory. Yet, if we break it down into its component parts and discern the meaning beneath the allusions being used therein, we might form a different opinion.

- (32) *people marry because they fall in love, and although it’s a choice, it was meant to be like that even in the animal kingdom, for example swans mate for life, male and female, not male and male.*³⁸

The user that posted this comment may posit the idea that marriage is a choice, but frames the relevant clause with the conjunction ‘*although*’ (a conventional implicature à la Grice), which is generally used to present two contrastive arguments, thus indicating that even though marriage is a choice for people who fall in love, it is also a choice that comes with restrictions. By bringing in a comparison with mating in the animal kingdom, whereby all swan relationships are described as being heterosexual, the commenter subscribes to heteronormative ideals, implying in this way that any deviation from the heterosexual norm is unnatural. So, even though this comment concedes that marriage is a choice, somewhat echoing the main argument of most gay rights movements on the matter, it still exhibits a negative attitude towards the members of the LGBTIQ community.

Clearly, this short section cannot do justice to the far-reaching implications that the study of indirectness can have for our understanding of discrimination in language use. What we hope to have achieved through this discussion of some online reactions to news items in the Maltese press is to have justified the need for going beyond the explicitly expressed and overtly communicated meaning when it

³⁸Comment located at: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2015-04-26/local-news/Popular-dancers-Felix-Busuttil-and-Daron-Galea-tie-the-knot-6736134473>.

comes to potentially discriminatory discourse. After all, as van Dijk rightly points out, discourse of any kind “may be seen as a semantic iceberg, of which only a few meanings are expressed on the surface of text and talk, whereas others meanings remain implicit knowledge stored in mental models” (1993: 109) that he elsewhere attributes to “(the users of) a text, [... and not to] the text itself” (2001: 104).³⁹ And given that the most effective weapon against xenophobia and homophobia (alongside many other forms of discrimination) is the promotion of a more inclusive mentality, the identification of such beliefs that can tacitly sway the public opinion towards discrimination is certainly pivotal.

3.6 Changing Participant Roles in the Expression of Hate Speech

Sharon Millar, Klaus Geyer, Anna Vibeke Lindø and Rasmus Nielsen

Following Goffman (1981) and Levinson (1988), it has been generally acknowledged that there are various production and reception roles in interaction that go beyond the traditional, unnuanced categories of speaker and hearer. In Goffman’s terms, these roles align or position the individual in relation to an utterance, which he terms *footing*. Production roles may, for instance, be in the form of animator (the person who produces the talk or the text), author (the person who creates what is said or written), relayer (the person who relays the utterances of others) or principal (the person whose position or beliefs are established by the utterance), while reception roles include those of the addressee, bystander and eavesdropper. In this setting, the role of *figure* refers to the entity being talked or written about. These various interactional roles have been shown to be relevant to dialogically-oriented discursive strategies, such as constructed dialogue (Tannen 2007) and fictive interaction (Pascual and Sandler 2016), which have affinities with the Bakhtinian notions of polyphony and heteroglossia. Constructed dialogue is Tannen’s preferred term for reported speech since such speech is always recontextualised into new discursive contexts, while fictive interaction concerns “the use of the conversation frame to structure cognition, discourse, and grammar” (Pascual and Sandler 2016: 3) and covers phenomena such as talking to oneself, engaging in dialogues with virtual participants, or using rhetorical questions.

One could also argue that the technological affordances of online platforms impact on participant roles. For instance, hyperlinks allow the writer of the comment to relay content, or voices, from other sources, but, since such relayed content is also recontextualised into a new discussion, the resultant participant roles of the

³⁹What is meant by van Dijk’s reference to *mental models*, as he himself explains, is that “implicit meanings are related to underlying beliefs, but are not openly, directly, completely or precisely asserted, for various contextual reasons” (2001: 104).

various voices can be quite complex. Against this background, we consider here changes in participant roles in relation to both fictive interaction, constructed dialogue and hyperlinks when it comes to the expression of hate in online reactions to news items in Denmark.

We begin with an example of fictive interaction that involves the manipulation of person deixis. The relevant comment (example 33) is in response to an article in the Danish tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* reporting how a man, who was selling his car online, was fined for writing ‘*Fuck you, you Muslim*’ to a bidder with an obviously foreign name, who offered what was viewed as an insultingly low price:

- (33) *Så dig, som vi her kan kalde Hr F. Muslim, tag dig sammen og prøv at forstå, at selvom vi er yderst tolerante, er vi ikke dumme, dette giver dig ikke ret til at skambyde på en bil eller andet du måtte ønske af os tolerante danskere. Hold op med at lukrere på, at du er muslim, hvilken betydning har det egentligt for os... Betal manden de 5000 kr. tilbage som han har fået i bøde, blot fordi du pipper om din muslimske herkomst og opfører dig som en mand og ikke en kylling.*⁴⁰

So you, who we here can call Mr. F. Muslim, pull yourself together and try to understand that although we are extremely tolerant, we are not stupid, this does not give you the right to make a disgracefully low offer on a car or anything else you might want from us tolerant Danes. Stop exploiting that you are a Muslim, what meaning does that have for us... Pay the man the 5000 kr back that he got as a fine just because you chirp about your Muslim origins and act like a man and not a chicken.

This comment is structured as interaction by using the 2nd person pronoun ‘you’ and a derogatory term of address, Mr. F Muslim, that plays on and perpetuates the original explicit language of the insult. This combination shifts the role of figure (the character talked about) to the reception role of the (most probably) non-present addressee. Moreover, the writer, who obviously is the author of the discourse, takes a collective perspective and in so doing distributes the role of principal (the person whose views or beliefs are established) across the in-group, ‘we’ Danes. The fictive dialogue then allows the writer to express a decidedly negative group stance towards the individual concerned on the grounds of his religious identity and towards his act of reporting the insult, while simultaneously portraying the in-group in a positive light. Minority identity is constructed as a means by which members of the minority group take unfair advantage of the put-upon in-group, and reporting what could be viewed as a hate incident is associated with cowardice. Hence, what is being legitimised is the discriminatory behaviour of the man selling the car.

The next example illustrates a different type of change in participant role, where the writer of the comment takes on the character of ‘all the immigrants’ in a fictive interaction. This comment is in response to a leader article in the tabloid *Ekstra*

⁴⁰Comment located at: <http://ekstrabladet.dk/kup/forbrug/bilsaelger-faar-boede-skrev-fuck-dig-din-muslim/5505138>.

Bladet about a reception being held for people who became Danish citizens during the previous year.

- (34) *Stakkels Pensionister .. de får ingen pleje eller støtte i hjemmet, hospitalerne har så få ressourcer at de diskutere hvem der har et liv tilbage og som man vil ofre en behandling på. Fedt med alle invandrene som kan finde vej til Danmark og sige: 'Maj ha penga .. manga penga'*⁴¹
 Poor Pensioners... they get no care or support in the home, hospitals have so few resources that they discuss who will have a life back and who they will devote treatment to. Awesome with all the immigrants who can find their way to Denmark and say 'Me have monay...much monay'

In evidence is a form of ventriloquism (cf. Cooren 2012) where the author of the text animates a generalised voice, manipulating pronouns and spelling to convey poor, foreign-accented Danish and, thus, perpetuating the stereotype of immigrants as having poor competences in Danish. At the same time, the content of what is said plays on the prevalent stereotype that immigrants are only interested in receiving welfare benefits. The fictive interaction functions as a means of negatively stereotyping an entire group. However, it also serves to hold this group responsible, since it shifts their role from the figure to the participant roles of both author, i.e. their words, and principal, i.e. their beliefs. Embedded in a sarcastic construction, the implied meaning is that it is far from 'awesome' that immigrants come to Denmark demanding money and this interpretation is strengthened by the contextual, and generalised, narrative about lack of resources for geriatric care and hospital treatments.

We will now turn to the role of hyperlinks in the expression of hate speech online. As noted by Klein, hate speech involves "the tactical employment of words, images, and symbols, as well as links, downloads, news threads, conspiracy theories, politics, and even pop culture" (2012: 428). The following comment relates to a newspaper article again from *Ekstra Bladet* reporting the intention of the Hungarian government to build a fence to keep refugees out.

- (35) *"Instant justice" til fup-flygtninge* <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1SCdXHrykfI>⁴²
 "Instant justice" to bogus refugees

This comment is clearly negative, given the categorisation 'bogus refugees', but the link is integral to the comment if the exact nature of 'instant justice' is to be identified. While the YouTube link was no longer accessible, having been removed for copyright reasons, its original source was still visible: 'liveleak migrants beaten'. A search on LiveLeak suggests that the video was about 'migrants beaten by truck drivers in Calais', and was also labelled as 'shocking footage'. While

⁴¹Comment located at: <http://ekstrabladet.dk/nyheder/lederen/hjertelig-velkommen/5539498>.

⁴²Comment located at: <http://ekstrabladet.dk/nyheder/samfund/tv-ungarn-vil-holde-flygtninge-ude-med-hegn/5623681>.

LiveLeak makes no mention of ‘instant justice’, compilations of ‘instant justice’ can be found on YouTube, although not necessarily related to any group, suggesting that the phrase has some form of memetic status. At one level, the writer of the comment is relaying the video to others, but through the process of recontextualisation, new meanings for this video have been created or authored by the commenter. S/he has embedded the video in a textual context that legitimises violence towards refugees as justice. In this respect, hyperlink use can arguably be seen as some form of multimodal constructed dialogue.

Our final example deals with issues of sexuality and originates from the national broadsheet, *Kristeligt Dagblad*, which focuses on issues of faith, ethics and existence. The comment responds to an article about the decision of the US Supreme Court to permit homosexual marriages.

- (36) *Indtil to med samme køn reproducerer sig selv, så vil jeg fastholde at homoseksualitet er unaturligt i ordets egentlige betydning.* <http://www.mx.dk/nyheder/aarhus/story/16276482>⁴³

Until two people with the same sex reproduce, I will maintain that homosexuality is unnatural in the literal meaning of the word.

Here, the hyperlink is quasi-transparent, linking to an article in another Danish newspaper *Metro Express* (21 June 2015), which is about how a politician caused a considerable controversy by deleting from her Facebook profile a question from a well-known homosexual TV presenter, whom she subsequently blocked when he continued to ask this question. This politician is a member of the right-wing Danish Peoples’ Party and had been recently elected to Parliament, while the question at hand related to her previous assertion, in 2013, that all kinds of family life besides the traditional model were unnatural and against the laws of nature. Even though she had back-pedalled from her statements at the time, the TV presenter raised the issue again. The linked article is complex in terms of participant roles, with three voices present: the journalist, the TV presenter and the politician. The journalist has the roles of author and relayer, but since he inserts direct and indirect quotations into a new context as constructed dialogue, the authorial role is paramount. The TV presenter and the politician are both figures in that they are being talked about, but they are also given the role of principal, as through the constructed dialogue their positions and beliefs are established. The TV presenter, however, is the more prevalent figure and principal in this article. Hence, the rhetorical function of the link is ambiguous in a comment that posits the unnaturalness of homosexuality. The commenter’s negative evaluation aligns only with the previous statement of the politician so his focus seems to be on her role as principal regarding this former position. It therefore seems that the relationship between a hyperlink and the comment within which it is embedded may not always be transparent, as it was in example (35) above, especially if the material within the link is itself complex.

⁴³Comment located at: <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/udland/et-forandret-usa-siger-ja-til-homoseksuelle-aegteskaber>.

To conclude, our data points to the importance of indirect practices in the expression of hate speech as interpreted broadly. The use of fictive interaction, constructed dialogue and hyperlinks can serve to perpetuate stereotypes, and normalise and legitimise xenophobic and homophobic discourse as well as involve the presumed online audience through creative rhetorical strategies.

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Chapter 4

Young People's Perception of Hate Speech

The present chapter, much like the previous one, comprises a series of short sections, each focusing on a particular aspect arising from the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interview discussions. The analyses adopt predominantly thematic qualitative approaches embedded within various theoretical perspectives and are meant to explore the ways in which young people perceive hate speech and matters associated with it. Again, it should be noted that even though each section is based on a particular national setting, the overall argumentation is of relevance to other contexts too, as well as to the wider discussion of the specific phenomenon in focus. In this light, Sect. 4.1 examines the experiences of hate speech narrated by the interviewees in Poland in an attempt to come up with recommendations for countering it and Sect. 4.2 follows suit by examining the mobilisation of young people against discriminatory discourse in the United Kingdom. In turn, Sect. 4.3 focuses on the relatively unexplored issue of folk conceptualisations of hate speech, showing how interviewees in Denmark characterise the concept of hate speech and its regulation, while Sect. 4.4 addresses the thorny issue of freedom of expression when it comes to regulating hate speech in Lithuania. Section 4.5 investigates the tendency of young people to be more accepting of discriminatory comments against migrants rather than the LGBTIQ community, identifying some reasons why xenophobia is so much on the rise when compared to homophobia in Malta. Remaining on the issue of xenophobia, Sect. 4.6 focuses on the typical conflation of the categories of race and religion in xenophobic talk in Cyprus, where anyone not conforming to the Greek Orthodox faith being submitted to similar processes of Othering. Finally, turning to the investigation of hate speech in the online setting, Sect. 4.7 zooms in on Italian youth perceptions of the role that the media plays in the diffusion of discriminatory discourse in the digital era, and Sect. 4.8 draws on the parallels between cyberhate and cyberbullying, by focusing on online anonymity as a crucial factor that is perceived to motivate the expression of hate on the internet in Spain.

4.1 Youth and Hate Speech in the (Mediatised) Public Sphere

Monika Kopytowska, Julita Woźniak and Łukasz Grabowski

Recent debates on freedom of speech on the one hand and incivility and hatred in public discourse on the other have brought into the limelight the role of language as a social agent in the public sphere. As argued by social constructivists and critical discourse analysis scholars alike (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966/1991; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Searle 1995, 2010), discursive representations of individuals, groups, events, issues, phenomena and relations are both constituted by and constitutive of the socio-political status-quo of these entities. Since contemporary public discourse abounds in messages of hate, and research findings demonstrate that there exists a link between verbal and physical aggression, it seems vital to explore the dynamics of hate speech production and reception in the public sphere in its current mediatised form.¹

Habermas' concept of the public sphere denotes "the space between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest is institutionally guaranteed." (1989: xi). There are, according to him, two reasons why discourse matters in the public sphere, or, to put it more aptly, two kinds of actions accompanying public debate: strategic action and communicative action. The former is meant to influence the behaviour of the audience by means of a "threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to cause the interaction to continue as the first actor desires," while the latter is intended to "[rationally] motivate [...] other[s] by relying on the illusionary binding/bonding effect of the offer contained in [...] a speech act" (Habermas 1989: 58).

While globalisation has led to the emergence of a 'global public sphere,' 'mediatisation' has stretched the public sphere, in its traditional sense, beyond the 'geospatial,' or territorially bounded configuration, via a 'sociospatial,' or online virtual space configuration (Youngs 2009). The mediatised public sphere (cf. Kopytowska 2013, 2015a–c), which is created as a result of this process, constitutes an online space where members of society can exchange socio-political opinions, and collaborate in the construction of social reality via peer production. Its near-instantaneous, dialogic, and decentralised nature and interactivity make it an ultra-attractive site for extended socio-political debate. At the same time, however, anonymity and global accessibility have transformed it into a tool for promoting messages of hate and radicalism, by enabling previously diverse and fragmented groups to connect and providing them with a sense of community that shares values, ideologies and fears (Perry and Olsson 2009), while making such messages available to mass publics (Duffy 2003) by removing the boundaries of time and space.²

¹For a comprehensive overview of the performativity of hate speech, see Leezenberg (2015).

²For the role of anonymity in encouraging incivility among Internet users, see Santana (2014); for the interface between anonymity, accountability for one's words and tendency towards mental shortcuts and simplistic judgements, see Tetlock (1983).

Drawing on these theoretical insights and referring to the data collected during the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project focus group interviews in Poland,³ we will discuss here the interface between the (mediatized) public sphere and hate speech/hate crime as perceived and experienced by the youth in Poland (including foreigners studying here) with a view to coming up with possible recommendations for counteracting these phenomena. Overall, the relevant issues discussed in these interviews can be linked to several concepts, namely accessibility, anonymity in the absence of face-to-face interaction, permanence and pervasiveness of messages, public awareness, and ‘performativity of hate speech’.

As observed by the students who took part in the interviews, while the mediatization of the public sphere has resulted in an overall increase of the amount of hate speech, it has also made the society more aware of the existence of the phenomenon—hence the importance of the historical permanence of online written discourses in contrast to the transient nature of face-to-face communication. As one of the participants characteristically pointed out,

- (37) *such opinions remain in the public sphere and are more salient; earlier someone could say something and it just ‘faded away’.*
(P2, FG1)⁴

Accordingly, both anonymity and lack of direct face-to-face interaction are seen as factors behind incivility in the virtual public sphere:

- (38) *The fact that there is no direct contact with the other person also matters (...) One can afford to say much more than in face-to-face interaction.*
(P1, FG1)
- (39) *People feel unrestricted because of anonymity. They believe they can say anything and give vent to all sorts of emotions.*
(P2, FG2)

At the same time, however, the documented increase in the amount of hate speech online can be attributed to the escalation of fear in the current socio-political context (terrorism, migrant crisis, radicalisation), and while it is undesirable, it is still better, as one of the interviewees believes, that such an outburst of emotions takes place in the cyberspace and not publicly, or, as she puts it, in the “material world”, that is, in the streets (P1, FG4).

Yet, the issue of cyber-violence and its potential effects in the real world is also salient, firstly, because of its quantitative nature, in the sense of accumulating hate speech,

³Six focus-group interviews were conducted among 22 individuals in total, all students at either the University of Łódź or University of Opole.

⁴Throughout this chapter, the abbreviated forms ‘Px’ and ‘FGy’ will be used as identifiers of particular interviewees, by referring to the relevant participant and focus group number in each national interview transcript database. Also, due to space restrictions, only a translation of the relevant interviewees’ original utterances into English, when these were produced in a language other than English, will be provided in this instance.

- (40) *a bulk of some threats may exert such a pressure on someone that he or she will resort to crime in the real world.*

(P2, FG3)

and then, due to the fact that such hate speech is widely accessible to various types of audiences, for whom it may act as a trigger for the already active prejudice and hatred.

- (41) *If we look at the statement that “each Paki and Nigger trash should get a 9 mm bullet in between the eyes” ...there are different people and masses of people on the Internet. [...] Some, like us will just laugh at it, while someone else after reading it will reach for a gun with 9 mm bullets, go to the street, and seeing the first person with Middle Eastern or African origin, will literally take out this gun and fire...*

(P3, FG3)

Accordingly, as pointed out by several individuals, the existence of Facebook groups inciting to violence, like for example ‘Stop islamizacji Europy’ [Stop the Islamisation of Europe] may become motivation and pretext for fanatics.

While it is generally assumed that more ‘distance’, in the sense of critical thinking, is expected in the case of interactions within the virtual public sphere, it is also acknowledged that this type of environment, which blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, is conducive to possible prejudice and discriminatory behaviour. Still, on a positive note, the Internet is also perceived as

- (42) *the only medium within public sphere that is free of restrictions*

(P1, FG1)

and a place where one can get information that is unavailable (censored) via other channels, such as what one of the participants referred to as “the truth” concerning refugee violence against women in Germany or Sweden (P1, FG1). Hence, a balance should be struck between “uncivil discourse and selectivity-inducing political correctness” (P1, FG4).

Opinions concerning reactions to hate speech in both the physical and virtual public sphere seem to be divided. On the one hand, penalising online hate speech is viewed as something that should be commonly accepted and obvious:

- (43) *just as one can be fined for vulgar speech in the street and it is not perceived as restriction on the freedom of speech.*

(P2, FG4)

But on the other hand, when it comes to how ‘ordinary’ citizens should react to hate speech incidents, reactions to hate-motivated verbal or physical violence seems to be more desirable in the physical world, while in the networked public sphere, inaction is more likely to be perceived as the right attitude, as it does not contribute to the escalation of hate. As one of the interviewees puts it, reacting to online hate speech amounts to “feeding the troll” (P2, FG1), since many haters simply want to be noticed and engage in an endless debate.

Importantly, as argued by some of the interviewees, to properly counter the phenomenon of hate speech in the public sphere, both in the physical and virtual dimension, more should be done in terms of public awareness and education, since

(44) *hate speech results simply from people's lack of knowledge and fear of the unknown.*

(P1, FG3)

As shown by this discussion of the interviews concerning the public perception of hate speech among young people living in Poland, there exists considerable social acceptance of verbal abuse and aggression in online communication. At the same time, our interviewees point to the need of raising public awareness and fostering education that enables individuals to understand and appreciate the links between legal instruments, law enforcement and the social acceptance of hate speech in online and offline modes of communication, both private and public—or to use again Habermas' concepts, between *strategic action* and *communicative action* in the context of public deliberation.

4.2 Resistance Against Hate Speech: Generation 'Snowflake' or Generation 'Woke'?

Georgia Whitaker

Following the EU referendum in June 2016, hate speech and hate crime figures increased by 58% across the UK (National Police Chief's Council 2016). One year on, this trend is still evident, with Islamophobic hate crime increasing by fivefold since the London Bridge terrorist attacks (Travis 2017). Major UK NGOs such as Amnesty UK have launched emergency campaigns to address the issue (Amnesty International 2017), yet the 'millennial generation'⁵ have been tackling hate speech long before the EU referendum occurred.

In this section, I explore how British youth have moulded a more radical definition of hate speech which advances on Loewenstein's theory of Militant Democracy (1937). Following the EU referendum, resistance against hate speech has been politicised, as part of a 'remoaner'⁶ agenda, or worse, a characteristic of generation 'Snowflake'.⁷ Yet the British millennial generation represented in the

⁵The term 'millennials' generally refers to the generation of people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (Main 2013).

⁶The term 'remoaner' refers to a person who vociferously opposes Britain's exit from the European Union (Stromme 2016).

⁷As we will very shortly see, 'snowflake' is used in this setting in an informal, derogatory way to denote an overly sensitive or easily offended young person, or someone who believes they are entitled to special treatment on account of their supposedly unique characteristics.

C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interview data resist these labels, defining themselves instead as generation 'Woke' in their activism against hate speech.

The term 'Woke' was actually added to the Oxford English Dictionary as recently as June 2017 (Steinmetz 2017):

'Woke', adjective

Originally: well-informed, up-to-date. Now chiefly: alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice; frequently in *stay woke*.

The term itself is not exclusive to the U.K, and originates from the U.S. Black Lives Matter movement connoting an awareness of racial and social justice and resistance against "structural violence" (Galtung 1969). Whilst it is now used outside the Black Lives Matter movement, being 'woke' is still largely defined by (but not excluded to) racial issues (Hess 2016). Woke activists endeavour to 'call out' others on their 'privilege' and conscious or unconscious prejudices prevalent due to patriarchal and post-colonial societal structures (cf. Said 1978).

During our C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interviews,⁸ one interviewee reflected on becoming 'woke' through a process of self-education:

- (45) *Before I would have banter with people and say things I shouldn't say and people would say things to me that they shouldn't really say and now, as I've gotten older, done my research, and I've become more aware of what's ok and what's not ok. So if anyone ever said anything to me that felt was out of order now then I'd 100% report it. I mean our generation is the 'woke' generation.*

(Interviewee 9)

Amongst our interviewees, hate speech has taken a bolder, more radical definition. This new perception of hate speech embraces EU and UN definitions of hate speech, yet expands upon them. Racist hate speech is no longer regarded as comprising racial slurs alone, but also as including post-colonial nuances. Furthermore, interviewees incorporated stigma against sexuality, gender and particularly transgender rights in their definition of hate speech. All in all, the 'woke' generation recognise hate speech as a by-product of societal power imbalances, which an interviewee explains as follows:

- (46) *Hate speech is something which uses someone's privilege and power in society against someone without that privilege. Different characteristics have different markers of power in society and people use those characteristics to insult someone and go against someone; that would be hate speech.*

(Interviewee 2)

Being 'woke' involves introspection and an acute awareness of one's own power, or 'privilege' in society due to the intersectional attributes of their identity;

⁸Twelve individual interviews with young people in the UK were carried out following the common C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology.

most notably their race. ‘Privilege’ refers to unequal opportunities by virtue of one’s identity and subsequent immunity to discrimination (McIntosh 1989). On this front, interviewees suggested that being ‘woke’ requires ‘checking’ one’s privilege constantly, and recognising where their life experience exempts them from an understanding of racism, sexism, homophobia and other prejudices. In the following example, one interviewee reflects on how his privilege exempts them from experiencing hate speech:

(47) *I haven’t experienced hate speech as a white cis male*

(Interviewee 3).

There is general consensus in ‘woke’ circles that white people cannot be subject to racism, as self-identifying men cannot be subject to sexism (Houlston 2017). For example, an interviewee described an incident where a student officer at the notably ‘radical’ Goldsmiths university provoked controversy by tweeting “#KillAllWhiteMen” (Telegraph 2015). In keeping with ‘woke’ conceptions of hate speech, she argued that as a woman of colour she could not be racist. With power and privilege in mind, the interviewee here highlights this incident as an example of imbalances in police protection and scrutiny on the basis of patriarchy and racism:

(48) *It’s like that Baha Mustafa thing; someone will say kill all white men and then all of a sudden they are under investigation.*

(Interviewee 4)

Interviewees strongly agreed on the importance of giving the victim the right to choose how to respond to experiences of hate crime off their own accord. One interviewee who had experienced hate speech argued that direct person attacks often prevent the victim’s ability to ‘call out’ hate speech due to emotional distress and exhaustion.

(49) *I, as a woman of colour, really struggle speaking to someone I would define as racist because I don’t think it’s my job to make them less racist.*

(Interviewee 10)

The interviewee here raises the issue of responsibility, and the concept of ‘allies’ which is well-known in millennial ‘woke’ circles. An ‘ally’, in this context, is someone who claims no authority in understanding this discrimination, yet can call out and educate a perpetrator unaffected by an issue by virtue of their identity (Hess 2016). In turn, another interviewee elaborated on the importance of allies using their privilege in order to resist hate speech:

(50) *I don’t think it should be hijab Muslim women who go and speak to BNP sympathisers, but your nice average white liberal man who just wants to do something could have that conversation. The work of having those conversations is left to the people who are most likely to experience the intolerance and allies in the room get to say nothing and not be awkward or disruptive.*

(Interviewee 4)

The practice of 'safe spaces' and 'no-platforming' across universities and millennial communities in the UK is intended to banish those who advocate language considered to mark hateful assaults to people's dignity. Critics, including Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, have attacked millennial's attempts to curtail what they perceive as hate speech as assaults on freedom of speech itself (Hughes 2016). Yet interviewees were highly sceptical of this argument:

- (51) *Private individuals saying 'don't say that, that is racist' is not censorship! It's totally legitimate; it's not the government saying people can't speak; it's you can speak where you want but we won't be there to listen. Ultimately I think that there is a false dichotomy set up between lovers of freedom of speech and so called safer spaces crews, and it plays into all kinds of nefarious agendas.*

(Interviewee 4)

Turning to references to the millennial generation as generation 'Snowflake,' following the EU-referendum and Donald Trump's election campaign (Nicholson 2016), the term 'Snowflake' has often been used by 'Brexiteers' such as Michael Gove (Waugh 2017).

Snowflake, noun

informal, derogatory: an overly sensitive or easily offended person, or one who believes they are entitled to special treatment on account of their supposedly unique characteristics.

'these little snowflakes will soon discover that life doesn't come with trigger warnings'

(Oxford Living Dictionaries 2017a)

The term 'snowflake' is essentially an insult to the millennial generation, as it describes them as self-righteously believing that they are as precious and unique as snowflakes. Furthermore, the delicate, breakable metaphor of a snowflake indicates how easily offended the millennial generation are by perceived hate speech.

Far beyond questions of freedom of speech, advocates of the insult 'snowflake' have been known to sneer at the focus on the emotional effects of hate speech which millennial interviewees identified:

- (52) *Hate speech is any kind of speech or incident where someone is making you feel lesser than them or undermined or angry or upset in any way.*

(Interviewee 8)

Interviewees of colour expressed particular concern regarding the rise of hate speech following the EU referendum:

- (53) *Black and brown people are terrified. There's a lot of fear mongering with regards to Muslim people and the Muslim communities. And white people are afraid because they've been told to be.*

(Interviewee 5)

The term ‘snowflake’ has been used prolifically worldwide as an insult by far right groups such as alt-right (Roy 2016). This has for some, including this interviewee, resulted in a loss of confidence in reporting hate speech:

- (54) *[Reporting hate speech] made me lose faith. It also makes you feel like a bit of a tell tale and particularly at the moment the whole narrative of being a left liberal elite snowflake made me feel not so great.*

(Interviewee 11)

Our interview participants regarded digital spaces as places of community where resistance to hate speech can be easily co-ordinated and galvanised. A community responsibility was seen as an alternative way to resist online hate without regulation from the police or social media corporations:

- (55) *There’s a group that I’m part of on Facebook which is for women and none-binary people which is this inclusive space that often there are campaigns on that group to flag up a particular group to get behind supporting something in a short space of time. There’s a community responsibility to flag things up.*

(Interviewee 6)

Yet, there was also scepticism concerning whether online collective resistance against hate speech effectively changed the minds of perpetrators in a productive manner:

- (56) *One has to think very carefully about the difference between expressing outrage in solidarity that can have value and actually communicating in a way that is actually going to change somebody’s mind and both of those things often need to happen.*

(Interviewee 4)

As there was also concern that involvement in online resistance to hate speech may prevent millennials from resisting hate speech offline in their personal lives. Those in question are often described as ‘keyboard warriors’.⁹

- (57) *The hard work of engaging with people often doesn’t get done because people think well I’ve tweeted in solidarity my job is done and all the time in real life they don’t have those difficult conversations with people around them.*

(Interviewee 4)

Finally, whilst interviewees were strong advocates of community-regulation, most were highly sceptical of any sort of government intervention against hate speech:

⁹A person who makes abusive or aggressive posts on the Internet, typically one who conceals their true identity (Oxford Living Dictionary 2017b).

- (58) *The government cannot be trusted with people's data! The government have their cards on the table as to who they care about and who they don't so I don't really trust the government to police online platforms well. I think we need to organise ourselves as private individuals to deal with things like this.*
(Interviewee 4)

All in all, the qualitative results of the British C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interviews reflect a microcosm of a wider geo-political youth movement which may in turn shift definitions of hate speech whilst the millennial generation increasingly adopt positions of socio-political power. Contemporarily, the evolved definitions of hate speech discussed are likely to be too radical for the general population to be regulated into law. Yet, the millennial generation show no explicit interest in legislation on three counts;

1. scepticism as to whether laws would be fairly enforced
2. a preference for community resistance
3. self-induced moral obligations to 'stay woke' and reject hate speech are stronger than legal obligations.

This raises wider questions surrounding tackling hate speech. A tendency to heavily rely on the law ignores the fact that juridical punishment often fails victims of hate speech, and provides no moral lesson for perpetrators. What the 'woke' generation demonstrates is that tackling hate speech requires the work of communities to promote a moral obligation to treat one another with dignity, with a retrospective awareness of the historical origins of hate speech and "structural violence" (Galtung 1969). With this grassroots or bottom up approach, law can be more trusted, and respected.

4.3 Folk Characterisations of Hate Speech

Sharon Millar, Rasmus Nielsen, Anna Vibeke Lindø and Klaus Geyer

Brown (2017) argues that hate speech as a concept is no longer confined to academic and legal circles, but has currency among the general public and, hence, requires new lines of investigation from the lay perspective. To this end, he proposes that hate speech might be best approached in terms of prototypical characteristics: are there elements that people tend to associate with hate speech, such as minority groups, insults, the possibility of regulation? Since there has been little work done on the perception of hate speech in the Danish context, the data presented here, deriving from five focus group interviews with 20 university students, can be seen as a modest beginning. In this section, we make no claim to prototypicality, but will attempt to identify those characteristics that the interviewees homed in on, first when asked to define hate speech themselves and later when

presented with already formulated definitions. More specifically, we will focus on popular or folk conceptual understandings of hate speech, mindful of research that emphasises the lack of transparency surrounding hate speech as a concept, since, as Boromisza-Habashi correctly notes, hate speech is imbued with local meanings and has its own “cultural life” (2013: 5).

When participants were asked what they understood hate speech to be, the majority either explicitly or implicitly referred to groups (group membership, group identity) or group processes (stereotyping, generalising):

(59) *hate speech which when there is someone who openly talks down to groups of marginalised people.*

(P3, FG4)

(60) *when you specifically and on purpose attack somebody for their personality which is like you know for example sexuality or gender or skin colour or that kind of thing.*

(P2, FG1)

(61) *you talk about women or Muslims in general or Jews in general instead of thinking that there can also be lots of different people*

(P3, FG3)

(62) *stereotypical things you like put on some person or other ... in a condescending, wicked way*

(P3, FG1)

Within these definitions, we see named group characteristics, such as gender, religion, skin colour, or broader labels, such as marginalised people. A few participants, however, also emphasised very specific groups:

(63) *more discriminatory about other races*

(P4, FG2)

(64) *gender and sexuality. Often if it is gender so women who get attacked by men if they dare to be part of a public debate.*

(P2, FG3)

Participants also gave indications of how hate speech manifests itself, but this was mostly expressed in broad terms. Hate speech can be condescension, attacking, generalising, stereotyping, talking in a nasty or wicked way. One participant was more specific, focusing in on threat and incitement to violence:

(65) *It's you know the degree to whether it invites violence or not. And to whether it is threatening or just a prejudice*

(P3, FG5)

The idea of intention, a thorny subject in the legal literature, also occasionally appears: hate speech is done “on purpose” (P2, FG1) or has “an evil intention behind it” (P1, FG1).

Turning to how participants responded to the four differing definitions of hate speech they were presented with, including the issue of whether such speech should be legislated against, it should be noted that all definitions specified the same protected grounds (nationality, skin colour, ethnic origins, religion, gender and sexual orientation). Definitions 1 and 2 described hate speech in terms of, respectively, making negative, prejudiced remarks, and offending/insulting (Danish verb "*fornærme*"). The reactions to these two definitions were very similar. The majority felt that they both captured the idea of hate speech, but one participant did not consider prejudiced remarks to come under the hate speech umbrella. Everyone agreed that both definitions should not be subject to any form of legislation for ideological reasons concerning freedom of speech and practical reasons in relation to the wording and enforcement of any such laws:

(66) *Again, one is moving into a dangerous zone. Okay what can one say and what can one not say. So it'll become a totalitarian state.*

(P3, FG2)

(67) *I mean I think it would be really, really difficult to formulate some kind of proposed law against this type (prejudiced remarks)*

(P1, FG2)

Interestingly, however, in relation to definition 2 (insulting/offending), there was a sense in one focus group that this was more of a grey area in relation to legislation:

(68) *This is a bit more serious you know because it is, it when you consciously...*

(P4, FG2)

(69) *Yeah so you almost attack.*

(P3, FG2)

Insulting/offending then is perceived as more serious than making prejudiced comments as this involves a deliberate attack on someone. Context is also seen as important when it comes to regulating this form of hate speech; it all depends on who initiates the hate speech and why (e.g. Is it individuals or hate groups? Is it due to emotion or ideology?)

(70) *When you are upset with someone, so you can also say some hate speech things, can't you? But I mean there is again this limit because there are these, like, for example, gangs, like, for example, White Pride and things like that, which are practically an organisation based on hate. Where again, where is the limit?*

(P4, FG2)

The third definition encompassed the notion of threat, which was rarely mentioned explicitly by participants when giving their own definitions of hate speech. Part of the reason for this may be that threats seem to be viewed as possible criminal actions.

(71) *When you threaten somebody so you are actually all of a sudden in a completely different place than if you just say bad things about their religion or skin colour or sexuality but if you directly threaten people so I think that is something completely different.*

(P3, FG1)

(72) *So you go over and it becomes like a hate crime*

(P2, FG1)

(73) *to threaten it, it is also hate speech but I think also you (mumbling) the border to hate crime where it begins not to be just words*

(P4, FG2)

There was complete agreement that this definition of hate speech required legislation, although mitigating contextual issues, such as empty threats made in the heat of the moment, were also touched upon.

The final definition covered incitement to violence and hate, which was only referred to by one person when discussing personal understandings of hate speech. Reactions to this definition were more ambiguous. It was acknowledged as covering hate speech, but one focus group considered it a more indirect type.

(74) *It is not direct hate speech to a person.*

(P4, FG2)

(75) *It is of course some form of hate speech but it isn't... it is more indirect... Because it, yeah, if it was me and I said to this here (mumbles)... Go over there and thump him. So I didn't say it directly to the person over there and so like the way I have understood it on the face of it, it's not direct hate speech.*

(P3, FG2)

Views on legislating this form of hate speech were divided as it was seen as a very grey area, dependent on context (such as when it is hate groups inciting to violence), and individual interpretation. There were fears that it could end up in a “blame game” situation (P4, FG2) involving “your word against mine” (P1, FG2).

To sum up, the participants' own understandings of hate speech generally point to the group nature of the concept and describe its characteristics in broad terms, such as using condescending, nasty language, stereotyping and generalising. Their understandings for the most part fit with definitions of hate speech that deal with prejudice and offence/insult. Notions of threat and encouraging violence were not explicitly raised by students themselves, although one participant did see these as defining features of hate speech. Threatening behaviour, however, was considered to be very serious and criminal. This was the only definition of hate speech that provoked consensus in favour of legislation. Perhaps surprisingly, the definition of hate speech as incitement to violence and hate was met with some ambivalence.

4.4 Thoughts on Regulating Hate Speech

Tatsiana Chulitskaya

In recent years, hate speech has become a recognised problem to be addressed at both the national and international level. Regulations of hate speech are “connected with the use of words which are deliberately abusive and/or insulting and/or threatening and/or demeaning directed at members of vulnerable minorities, calculated to stir up hatred against them” (Waldron 2012: 8–9). However, such regulations provoke extensive debates as to whether liberal democracy must take affirmative responsibility for protecting the atmosphere of mutual respect against certain forms of attacks. If it must, then what are the proper forms, and where are the limits of hate speech regulations?

Herz and Molnar (2012) claim that in the West the maximalist idea of an offense-free society is shaped by the long-existing tradition of freedom of expression, which is embedded and practiced in mature democracies. But even there, the scope of hate speech laws should not be taken for granted and needs to remain in the focus of public reflection. For instance, in the past few decades, laws forbidding Holocaust denial have at times been criticised as controversial limitations on freedom of expression (Bleich 2011). In order to avoid such controversies, some authors claim that it is necessary for hate speech regulations to be developed on a case-by-case basis, rather than being entirely content-based (Hertz and Molnar 2012), since the domestic political context of an era needs to also be taken into account (Bleich 2011). This approach, that is, a case-by-case evaluation of hate speech instances while placing them in the current political context, seem extremely important for Lithuania.

On the basis of the focus group interviews that we conducted following the common C.O.N.T.A.C.T. methodology,¹⁰ I will now briefly discuss how local participants, who are not only Lithuanian nationals, but also representatives of other nationalities—in particular, of the Russian-speaking minority, understand hate speech and where they stand in relation to the free speech debate.

In our focus group discussions, hate speech was defined and characterised as the usage of specific words, expressions and intonation that targets human dignity (example 76), while reference was also made to stereotyping and having biased opinions (example 77). Apart from this, the perpetrator's intention to cause harm through hate speech was particularly underlined (example 78),

(76) *When somebody tells you, that you are different and that's why you are worse than they are.*

(P3, FG1)

¹⁰We conducted two focus groups in Lithuania, with 10 participants in the first and 15 in the second.

(77) ... usually when we speak about 'hate speech', we mean a negative assumption based on different backgrounds. [You don't focus] on the fact that somebody just offended you, but [on the fact that] they used a biased opinion, a stereotype, which was not created by you yourself, but by society.

(P4, FG1)

(78) The worst scenario is when hate speech is a deliberate [action].

(P1, FG2)

According to our interviewees, hate speech includes both threats and insults (examples 79 and 80)—to such an extent that some even consider the boundaries between hate speech and verbal abuse blurry (examples 81 and 82). Yet, not all instances of discriminatory discourse are considered prosecutable: some qualify as hate speech in the legal sense, while other are just cases of intolerant, yet permissible, talk (example 83).

(79) I just cannot understand why we need to differentiate between an insult, a threat and hate speech, when in fact they are quite the same.

(P8, FG2)

(80) I just realised that hate speech is a broad concept for defining what people do in order to show their dislike and hatred towards some other groups of people. It includes insults, and humiliation, and threats.

(P2, FG1)

(81) In the Criminal Code, there has already been an article against insulting. I don't really understand why we need to define 'hate speech' separately...

(P7, FG2)

(82) I don't really understand why we need to define 'hate speech' separately because of religion, if it's wrong to insult someone anyway.

(P9, FG1)

(83) [the difference between suggested definitions of hate speech] is in the degree of hatred. If [some definitions] are about expression of thoughts, then [other definitions] are about something more serious concerning crimes or some criminal actions.

(P2, FG2)

Turning to the issue of how the regulation of hate speech affects freedom of expression, most participants thought that "freedom of speech should be guaranteed" (P5, FG2); yet, some also expressed fear about how people actually use this freedom:

(84) [reading hate speech comments] "I think about freedom of speech and I get scared. That's why I never read comments to news. And thank God for that, if they are writing such things there. Why should you waste your time on such things? ... I have difficulty with formulating my thoughts, when I see such expressions, or hear somebody say something like this... When people are insulted – I just lose ability to speak... I cannot think clearly".

(P4, FG2)

The same pattern is also evident when it comes to the necessity of legally regulating hate speech. As we have already seen, there are, on the one hand, some participants who question the need to legally define hate speech as a separate crime, and think that cases of hate speech should be incorporated into other laws as aggravating circumstances, rather than targeted by a separate law. But on the other, there are others who were supportive of the separate legislation on hate speech.

(85) *I agree that it is possible to create a separate law on hate speech.*
(P10, FG1)

(86) *I agree that we need them [laws on hate speech], because we should combat insults in general.*
(P6, FG2)

At the same time, respondents also expressed doubts about the proper implementation of the existing legislation in Lithuania. To begin with, they believe that even though such laws may exist, people are not always aware of them, and they are not typically followed in everyday life. So, victims are often forced to press charges in order to get justice.

(87) *I just think that in order for the laws to work, people need to get [the hate speech cases] to the court. Because the problem [of hate speech] exists, but not all the people will go to the authorities and point it out.*
(P4, FG1)

In parallel, the importance of making the general public familiar with laws against hate speech was also underlined (example 88), but almost everyone agreed that the most important role in combating hate speech lies with education (example 89).

(88) *... [what is needed is] to popularise it [the law against hate speech] through the media in order to change the situation somehow. Maybe this will increase the cultural level [sic] of the people.*
(P2, FG2)

(89) *Preventive measures are better than punishment. I mean education, inter-cultural discursive ethics, trying to explain to kids from a young age that everything is fine and people can be different...*
(P9, FG2)

Striking a balance between freedom of expression and regulation of hate speech is a difficult task in any national context. Being part of a predominantly academic debate, this problem remains mostly unresolved on the practical, political and legal level, which are more focused on defining hate speech content, and finding appropriate tools for combating it, rather than on its actual contextualisation. Overall, the results of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. research in Lithuania demonstrates that while our interview participants are in general familiar with the concept of hate speech, they make no particular distinction among the actions that constitute hate speech, and express doubts about how the legislation of hate speech is actually implemented in practice. So, they see the media, education and public awareness campaigns as more important tools for dealing with hate speech than legal measures.

4.5 It All Depends on Who Discrimination Targets

Stavros Assimakopoulos and Rebecca Vella Muskat

As already mentioned in Sect. 2.1 (cf. footnote 14 there), much like in other countries of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project, our research in Malta showed that xenophobia is far more widespread than homophobia in the local setting. What was rather surprising, however, was that the results of the online questionnaire that was administered locally gave us a clear indication that participants were much more willing to label homophobic, rather than xenophobic comments as hate speech. This was particularly odd, since all the examples of ‘potential’ hate speech that were provided in the questionnaire were selected on the basis of the same criteria for both kinds of discrimination. So, during the interview¹¹ phase of our research, one of our main aims was to discover why that might be the case, and a number of interesting points were indeed raised by our interviewees.

According to most focus group participants, while the LGBTIQ community has moved forward in legislation and general acceptance within the Maltese society in recent years, migrants are still very much left on the periphery. Progressive laws and strong activism has ensured that members of the LGBTIQ community are granted rights and privileges that are the same as their heterosexual, cisgendered peers. In turn, this has also granted the LGBTIQ community widespread positive publicity. In addition to the positive narrative surrounding the LGBTIQ community in Malta, our interviewees also pointed out that persons of LGBTIQ identities are part of the Maltese fabric, as family members and friends, while migrants are viewed with suspicion, as outsiders.

(90) ... nowadays, it's not such a taboo topic anymore, so people are coming out of their shells, like 'hey I'm gay' ok, so now it's acceptable. And now families, like Maltese families, they have family members who are also gay, so they've become more acceptable. So, that's closer to home I guess, because they're part of us, they're our family. So, ok, we can accept them, but they're from another culture, they're Arabs, Muslim... so no.

(P5, FG1)

(91) ... because they are Maltese people, definitely, like they're born here so it's fine. They identify as homosexual and that's ok. Immigrants, they came here, we're letting them stay here. So it's like they should be ok with everything, they shouldn't ask for anything, it's enough that we're keeping them here so the kind of mentality is that they do not belong here ... the LGBTIQ community obviously in the last few decades raised a lot of awareness and people are understanding more now the dynamics of it ... Immigration, I think, it's because they are not nationals, the ideology that they do not belong here.

(P4, FG4)

¹¹For this part of the project, we conducted 4 focus group interviews with 5 participants each. It should also be noted that 4 of our participants were slightly over 35 years of age.

- (92) *And I think also politics or mass media has an effect on this, like if you look at recent times ... there have been progressive laws so the introduction of civil [union] rights and now it's being discussed to include [gay] marriage whereas when we are speaking about immigration we take this kind of stance ... they do not belong here, let's find a place where to put them. So the state is already giving kind of this ideology of LGBTIQ is ok, immigration isn't...*
(P4, FG4)

Hence, people are less likely to tolerate speech that discriminates against one of their own, than speech that victimises a person that they deem to be unrelated to them. Moreover, as one participant also pointed out, since there is this propensity in recent years to actively not discriminate against LGBTIQ community in Malta, even people who are less inclined to accept the community are less willing to tolerate hate speech targeted at them out of peer pressure.

- (93) *Cause people don't want to seem homophobic. If the rest of society is not homophobic, they don't want to be the odd one out, so, if society is progressive will act progressive like it, but still have their own views...*
(P3, FG1)

Turning to why our interview participants feel that there may be a greater acceptance of xenophobic comments in our data, the most common explanation given was that migrants bring a strong feeling of perceived threat among the Maltese; a perceived threat that can be attributed to a number of reasons.

- (94) *I think most people in Malta, I mean with immigration, they see immigrants like "ah they're taking what's ours"*
(P1, FG2)
- (95) *They're taking something away, some people feel so.*
(P4, FG2)

The most commonplace argument among our interviewees appears to be that the fear of migrants partly stems from a fear that migrants will take the jobs that the Maltese are vying for and there would, therefore, be a shortage of jobs on the market, thus leaving many Maltese unemployed:

- (96) *... this idea that immigrants like don't belong here and that it's much stronger than in the comments in the street like "send him back to his country", "they're taking our jobs" and stuff like that so, they're more likely to witness it.*
(P4, FG4)
- (97) *In fact, I don't know what some of the comments were, most of the comments which I've read are all about "oh they're taking away our jobs."*
(P4, FG2)

At the same time, there appears to be the perception that, along with so-called "genuine" migrants, there are also too many "illegitimate" migrants, who are either

criminals and/or simply trying to take advantage of the system and scrounge off the state:

(98) *... you have a whole spectrum of people, immigrants. You get refugees, people who are genuinely out for better opportunities, and then you get, um, maybe, um, younger people. Generally they tend to be young men who simply, who are simply looking for opportunities, but maybe because of the system or whatever, they become idle and they fall in, I don't know, circumstances, um, resulting in them falling in with the wrong crowd or them doing petty crimes because as well of the system ...*

(P1, FG1)

(99) *And just the good ones, which are more, get stuck and get a bad reputation because of others ...*

(P2, FG2)

(100) *many people who are here and who are taking, in air quotes, our jobs aren't really illegal immigrants or immigrants from certain countries, you know ... There's a mix. ... obviously in everything in life there are the good ones and the bad ones.*

(P2, FG2)

However, apart from reasons that have more to do with practical aspects of everyday life, our interviewees also pointed out that migrants are bound to face more discrimination than other minorities in Malta due to cultural differences too. In congruence with much mainstream political discourse, as noted by one of our interview participants (see example 102), there appears to be the idea in society that migration will erase or damage Maltese culture and, as such, many Maltese reject multiculturalism.

(101) *This is a very sensitive issue, um, I think. This issue of the, you know, multiculturalism in Malta. We've only been monocultural for many years. It's only in recent decades that I think, or... with this thing of immigration has only been a hot issue in the last 10, 15 years maybe. So now, um, I think it's, the Maltese are very insular ... and they don't take well to change, as any society I imagine ... Multiculturalism is new, therefore.*

(P1, FG1)

(102) *But the mainstream political discourse on the subject of multiculturalism and immigration actually reinforces racism.*

(P5, FG3)

(103) *The issues that arise out of multiculturalism affect all areas of life cause there's culture, there's religion, there's...*

(P3, FG3)

And, indeed, as the comment in (103) mentions, religion is often considered a main feature of the Maltese identity. Malta has a long Catholic tradition, which has, throughout recent history, been protected dearly, and which is still very present in everyday practices. With over 90% of the country being Catholic and also

following the recent spike of religious terrorism across the EU, several Maltese people have started to develop an Islamophobic attitude:

- (104) *... even for people who have no problems with Muslims per se, but then, when you start seeing your, I guess, people feel nervous when they see their neighbourhood being transformed um, you know, with the appearance of a mosque for instance, um, they feel uncomfortable with that. So, ... less people would be inclined to defend immigrants who are calling for these changes.*

(P1, FG1)

- (105) *And it used to be "take over, you know, Muslims will come and they will take away our strong catholic.. And everything..." They take...*

(P3, FG3)

- (106) *Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what they do all the time. We're not against muslims, we're against Islam as a religion or whatever...*

(P2, FG3)

Overall, collectively looking at these points raised by our interviewees, what seems to be the underlying cause for the notably different perception of—and attitude towards—the LGBTIQ and migrant minorities is a strong and rather homogeneous sense of *social identity* that the Maltese appear to have; a social identity that filters migrants (or to put it more aptly, some particular groups of migrants) out and retains the LGBTIQ community as part of the Maltese in-group. Given that "one's social identity is a product of the social relations one is embedded in" (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002: 132), this is not entirely surprising, if one takes into account the extremely small size of the country and the additional premise that "in Malta there has been a historical fear of invasion by non-Europeans and non-Christian people that has lasted throughout the centuries" (van Hooren 2015: 91). That said, not all is lost on this front, since, by definition, social identities are "processes of continuous 're-writing' of the self and of social collectives" (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002: 132). Thus, it seems that the more the Maltese are exposed to multiculturalism, as they have increasingly been in recent years, the harder it will become for them to tolerate xenophobic speech altogether.

4.6 The Conceptual Contiguity of Race and Religion

Fabienne H. Baider, Anna Constantinou and Anastasia Petrou

When referring to religion in the context of hate speech in the EU these days, Islamophobia inevitably comes to mind. In the particular setting of Cyprus, where religion is a central part of the collective identity, it seems to be a major factor in most processes of Othering, sometimes even trampling on other criteria, such as race

or ethnicity. During the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interviews in Cyprus,¹² interviewees had to react to our online questionnaire results that included online comments like ‘*This is the race that needs to be annihilated from this planet. Shh*’ and ‘*Only a dead Muslim is a good Muslim*’. And what their reactions revealed is that, in their mind, Islam is predominantly confounded with a particular ethnicity: that of the Turks.

Our present analysis is grounded on the concept of *salience* (Giora 1997, 2003), which is often described as the primary contributing factor in the production and interpretation of lexical units and phrases. Since “salient meanings are processed automatically [...] *irrespective of contextual information*” (Giora 2003: 24, our italics), salience is linked with the relative importance of a concept in a language user’s memory.

A particular meaning’s salience can be assessed on the basis of various factors, such as frequency, familiarity, conventionality or prototypicality. According to Giora, it is familiarity that plays the most important role, when it comes to making a semantic unit accessible (2003: 23), but in studies examining the common ground on which a community builds expectations, judgments and attitudes, frequency was also shown to be equally important (cf. Baider 2013). That is why, we will be employing the criterion of frequency as the main identifier of salience in this section.

Using the freeware concordancer AntConc,¹³ we identified the most frequent lexical units across our interview transcripts (Table 4.1).

What was striking was that while the lexical unit ‘*race*’ appeared, quite expectedly, high on the list, the lexical unit ‘*religion*’ did not only achieve a

Table 4.1 Most frequent lexical units in the Cypriot interview transcripts

Total no. of word types: 1774			
Total no. of word tokens: 17,337			
1.	21	158	People
2.	34	99	Believe
3.	36	93	Think
4.	37	71	Race
5.	55	62	Religion
6.	64	51	Cyprus
7.	72	44	Sexual
8.	95	33	Community
9.	96	33	Threat
10.	98	32	Marriage
11.	103	31	Nationality
12.	105	30	Cypriots
13.	106	30	Gender

¹²20 individual interviews, predominantly with Greek Cypriot participants, were carried out by our partners in AEQUITAS. Further interviews have been being conducted by the UCY team with members of the LGBTIQ as well as the migrant communities so as to balance out our sample, but we have not taken them into account in the present analysis.

¹³<http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/>.

comparably high frequency, but also mirrored 'race' in syntactic and semantic contiguity, i.e. in most cases where the word 'religion' was mentioned, reference was also made to 'race' in the same participant turn.

Having identified the most frequent lexical units and the pattern that this section focuses on, we needed to analyse the meaning of 'race' and 'religion' in context. To do so, we implemented the notions of *semantic preference* and *semantic prosody*, as these are found in Bednarek (2008). In order to search for the semantic preference of a lexical unit, we considered the most common collocates found in its co-text, while we turned to the axiological value of its context of use (e.g. positive, negative, etc.) to identify its semantic prosody, that is, the typical 'tone' of the textual passage in which the word is used. For example, in interviewee reactions to the comment "*This is the race that needs to be annihilated from this planet. Shh,*" the semantic preference for words related to the Turkish nation is overwhelming,¹⁴ while the semantic prosody is definitely negative, as manifested by the use of lexical items like 'thief', 'imprisoned', 'clashes', 'bad thoughts':

- (107) *Well, because we live in Cyprus I think any person would expect this kind of comment. I mean we've seen throughout the history clashes between the communities of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots*

(Interviewee 16)

- (108) *Having in mind that someone is from a different race, we automatically have bad thoughts about them. For example, when I hear that a person is Turkish, I automatically, in my mind, think that he is a thief, yes, this is what I believe hate speech is...*

(Interviewee 15)

- (109) *It's not acceptable ... I don't think it's right, because perhaps we have "hate" against Turkish people because they imprisoned our island, and against some foreigners who work in our country and as a result we don't have jobs.*

(Interviewee 18)

Notably, the lexical/semantic contiguity of race and religion (examples 110 and 111) runs parallel to the lexical/semantic contiguity of Turks with fanaticism and Muslims with terrorism, as seen in examples (112) and (113) respectively, which suggests that such contiguities create a vast amalgam, or 'reference chain' of stereotypes; a point acknowledged even by some interviewees, as in (114):

- (110) *[Discussing the definition that equates hate speech with insults]
Generally yes, but as I told you I don't care what the race is, [I care] only about religion.*

(Interviewee 21)

¹⁴When asked "Which race do you think this comment refers to?", several interviewees immediately hypothesised it was "*The Turks*." On some occasions, even the interviewers themselves assumed the same.

- (111) *[Discussing hate speech/hate crimes in relation to Muslims that live in Cyprus]*

Interviewee We have some differences, because of religion.

Interviewer Were you or do you know a person that was a victim of hate speech?

Interviewee Yes many people.

Interviewer Can you tell us an example or two that you personally know?

Interviewee Yes, I heard many times in schools these threats that occur. If a kid is different.

Interviewer Different from a different race?

Interviewee Yes different race or another sexual orientation.

(Interviewee 16)

- (112) *I believe that it's a bad race [the Turks]. Perhaps not all of them, but most yes.*

(Interviewee 18)

- (113) *Interviewer* You said there is fanaticism [of them against us] that is developed from a very young age.

Interviewee Yes, but it's the same from our side, and it's something that I don't think can be fixed.

(Interviewee 18)

- (114) *I think these results [in relation to the comment "Only a dead Muslim is a good Muslim"] make sense, if we take into account the Cypriot history; because I think most people do just that. When most people hear talk about Muslims, they think one is talking about terrorists. Basically, they don't know that Muslims also have a problem with terrorists too. And all this is also associated with Turkey, because of the invasion, and they don't see Muslims as individuals.*

(Interviewee 16)

It, therefore, seems that, much like race, our interviewees also take religion to be a fundamental element of an individual's identity, which may not define him/her as a person, but will at least define the relationship they will have with him/her. In example (115), a member of the Christian Arabic minority, called the Maronites, is described as being the victim of threats and abuse, only because of his or her religion:

- (115) *Interviewee* In my class we had a Maronitis, they are a minority in Cyprus. They were the black sheep of the class. There was hate speech and threats and what we mentioned above.

Interviewer What threats did that person get?

Interviewee 'Don't sit down to eat with us because we will beat you', that's a threat. An insult: 'you Maronitis leave from here!', 'You were baptised with the lard of a hog, not with holy water'. It's an insult that insults traditions and generally their religion as a Maronitis.

(Interviewee 13)

At the same time, and quite paradoxically, despite asserting that they customarily judge people by their religion, most of the interviewees also noted that religion is somehow the source of all evil. Indeed, in reference to religion, the semantic prosody is extremely negative, as manifested by the use of lexical items like 'fanaticism', 'stereotypes' or even 'war':

(116) *[Discussing the comment "Only a dead Muslim is a good Muslim."]*
Of course, to my mind, the number of people who said that this is somewhat acceptable is not that high, if one considers that, in the Cypriot community, we are very fanatical towards our religion. After all, many crimes were committed in the name of Christianity.

(Interviewee 19)

(117) *[Discussing who's responsible for negative stereotypes]*

Interviewee 6 At home, it's the parents.

Interviewer Before you also mentioned the church.

Interviewee 6 Yes! Because even in Religious Studies class, we are not taught about all religions. I think all students should learn about all religions, so that they can choose [which to follow].

(Interviewee 6)

(118) *[Discussing the compulsory Religious Studies unit in state schools]*
Religious studies is a good fairytale, but it does not stop creating problems. If we take a look at history, all wars have begun because of religion and its squabble. I believe there are more important courses that could be taught at school than Religious Studies.

(Interviewee 17)

All in all, it is well known that foreign presence can challenge social values and collective beliefs. In this context, gut reactions, like racist statements and social exclusion practices can be interpreted as signs of a community that feels as if it is politically, socially, and psychologically under siege. And while our interview analysis showed that the youth in Cyprus may be prone to confounding race with religion, it also revealed, surprisingly, a pretty extreme self-deprecating attitude, that can be easily summarised in the following two characteristic comments provided by our interviewees:

(119) *This is Cyprus, and no matter how many years pass by, we will still remain idiots*

(Interviewee 14)

(120) *We are a little behind other European countries in our mindset.*

(Interviewee 17)

The use of the pronoun ‘we’ in cases like the ones above does not seem to be self-referential, since these opinions were expressed by the most liberal interviewees in relation to those questionnaire respondents who found phrases like “*Only a dead Muslim is a good one*” acceptable. It thus looks like the official political divide hides a social one as well.

4.7 Hate Speech and the Communication Medium

Ernesto Russo and Valentina Oliviero

The fundamental role of the communication media in our society, given their influence on the form and content of the information we have access to is underlined by McLuhan, in his famous statement that “in a culture like ours [...] the medium is the message” (McLuhan 1964: 28). So, since the personal and social consequences of our communication are the result of the specific means we use, modern ‘automation technology’ should bear prime responsibility for the meaning that it communicates.

During the interview stage of our research in the framework of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project,¹⁵ one of our aims was to understand how the Italian youth read and interpret the information they come across online. In this section, we will briefly report on how our interview participants reacted when faced with potential online hate speech, as this was present in three comments to newspaper articles that were included in the Italian C.O.N.T.A.C.T. questionnaire, while focusing on the role that they attribute to the media in relation to this issue.

The first comment we will discuss here followed an article about the arrival of refugees from Africa and the Middle East on the Italian coast:

(121) *Vanno rimpatriati in massa, salvo i pochi con diritto d’asilo. Se no è una invasione (e, ancor peggio, in gran parte una invasione di musulmani, che portano una religione e una cultura pericolose e violente). L’Europa non deve e non può tollerare invasioni.*¹⁶

¹⁵Within the remit of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project, we ran one focus group with 13 participants in a youth centre in Rome, and 7 individual interviews. The present section is based on the focus group interview, as at the time of writing the individual interviews had not yet been transcribed.

¹⁶Comment located at: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/06/27/news/migranti_alfano_-117817237/.

They need to be sent back en masse except those few ones with asylum rights; otherwise it's an invasion (and even worst, an invasion of Muslims bringing their dangerous and violent culture and religion). Europe must not and cannot tolerate such invasions.

This comment stirred up different reactions among our interviewees. On the one hand, they condemned what they called a “stereotypical position” which is “radically underinformed” and, thus, “formed quite superficially” (P2, FG1). On the other, they acknowledged that such cultural prejudice is very hard to overcome, unless our educational models change in order to provide us with the right instruments to do so. Of course the media role was also emphasised as a primary bearer of such a change, given the way in which it continuously affects the opinion of people of all ages. More specifically, they suggested that our society needs a “new common sense” (P6, FG1), according to which, everybody should have the opportunity to live without borders. So, rather than giving this particular opinion any weight, our interviewees swiftly dismissed it as ignorant and an example of an unacceptable marked stereotype. What they counter-argued was that anyone who expresses an opinion like this should be reminded that these “poor people” are “just trying to have a better life” (P3, FG1).

The second comment, which is another example of a xenophobic remark, this time against the particular ethnic group of Roma people, was a response to an article reporting the attempted robbery of a jewellery store by a Sinti woman.

- (122) *Seppellitela in galera e buttate la chiave. Data l'età non dovrebbe avere figli piccolissimi che possano farle da scudo. Dimenticavo. Era una rom di etnia sinti? Ebbene, i sinti sono i peggiori e più pericolosi fra gli zingari perché sono quelli che più degli altri si sanno mimetizzare fra la gente comune. In ogni caso sempre ladri e delinquenti rimangono.*¹⁷

Lock her up in prison and throw the keys away. Given her age, she probably hasn't got children who can act as a shield for her. Ah I almost forgot, was she a Sinti? Well, Sinti are the worst and most dangerous among Roma, as they can blend in among common people better than others. Anyway, they're all thieves and outlaws.

This comment spurred the interviewees' feeling of disappointment even more. While acknowledging that the stereotyping of Roma people as thieves is quite widespread, both in Italy and beyond, they underlined the necessity of focusing on the act of stealing rather than on the specific ethnicity of the thief. They then highlighted the “carelessness and inaccurate attitude of news reports” (P4, FG1); they underlined the responsibility that journalists and media reporters carry, as far as the conditioning of the general public's perception of current events goes,

¹⁷Comment located at: <http://tv.liberoquotidiano.it/video/libero-tv-copertina/11893443/La-rom-in-gioielleria-ruba.html>.

suggesting that they continuously report news in a way that “paints certain ethnic groups, like the Roma, in a bad light” (P3, FG1). So, they suggested that both online and traditional media need to be controlled more, and that a better monitoring mechanism that would “deter them from diverting people’s beliefs into dangerous territory” (P4, FG1) should be in place. Of course, they also noted that, apart from the lack of the right instruments or mechanisms in place, it is the lack of education among members of the public that “leaves the ground fertile for such opinion conditioning” (P4, FG1).

The last comment we will discuss is a homophobic one, taken from an article about the pro-civil union and same-sex adoption rally in Italy:

- (123) *NON MI SEMBRA CHE LA LEGGE SUI «DIVERSAMENTE ORIENTATI SESSUALMENTE» E LE ADOZIONI GAY SERVANO MOLTO ALL’ITALIA!!!*¹⁸

I don’t think that laws on “different sexually-oriented” or gay adoptions are really useful to Italy!!!.

This comment generated another interesting debate, since the topic was linked to what our interviewees felt was a change that is needed for the country and its citizens. Disregarding the marked use of the label ‘*different sexually-oriented*’ that echoes the Italian phrase for disabled people (‘*diversamente abile*’), the group focused on the political undertone of the commenter’s proposal, justifying it to a certain extent on the grounds of the ideological radicalisation of the national outlook on the matter. More specifically, they claimed that since homosexuality is invisible—or, even worse, clearly discriminated against—in both the media landscape and virtually all the big companies’ marketing campaigns, it is to be expected that positions like this, which show “Italy’s social decay and fragmentation” (P13, FG1), are encountered in newspaper comments.

On the basis of this analysis of our focus group interview data, we can draw the conclusion that our interviewees are not only sensitised in relation to the influence that the media has on public opinion, but also very critical of it. However, they still seem to not be completely aware of what hate speech is and how detrimental its impact on the specific people targeted by it can be. We suspect that this is because they are not adequately familiarised with human or citizenship rights provisions, since their cultural and educational paths have not provided them with the necessary stimuli that will motivate them to stand up to hate speech. What is clear, however, is that they do recognise the imperative need to equate the online communication of ideas and opinions to that found in more traditional media and put both these venues on the same level, when it comes to policies against hate speech.

¹⁸Comment located at: <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/renzi-sfida-family-day-no-ai-veti-sulle-riforme-1230715.html>.

4.8 Hate Speech, Cyberbullying and Online Anonymity

César Arroyo López and Roberto Moreno López

ICTs and internet access are a defining element in the lives of young people. In Spain alone, daily internet use among young people aged 16–35 is above 90% (INE 2016). The online experience, however, is not always positive, and as some recent studies indicate, traditional school bullying has taken a leap into the digital world, to the point that the number of incidents in both settings is practically the same (Calmaestra et al. 2016).

While it is true that cyberhate, the online variety of hate speech, and cyberbullying are not the same thing, as the former targets certain groups on the basis of a common characteristic and the latter targets individuals usually in the setting of a particularly community (like a school or a workplace), the two concepts are definitely intertwined in the mind of young people. Bullying can be defined as “a type of behaviour aimed at doing harm, repeated over time and occurring in the midst of an interpersonal relationship characterised by an imbalance of power” (Olweus 1999: 25). Cyberbullying resembles bullying in that it, too, is intentional, aggressive and repeated over time, but with the particularity that those who engage in it do so through the use of electronic means. As Del Río et al. (2010) note, cyberbullying, as a mode of harassment, has characteristics that make it particularly intense, like the absence of temporal limits, the imperishability of online content, its capacity to be instantaneously witnessed by a vast audience and the perceived anonymity of its instigator. What is more, the consequences of cyberbullying have been analysed in several studies (cf. Garaigordobil 2011), and their connection with the effects that hate speech has on its victims is clear (cf. Ayto. Barcelona 2017).

During the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. interviews in Spain,¹⁹ as many as six interviewees directly linked their experiences of hate speech to (cyber)bullying:

(124) *Interviewer* Have you had any experience with hate speech?

Interviewee 2 Yes, what I said about bullying in the first years of high school with my nose problem, adenoids, they harassed me about my tone of voice and such things.

Although in the particular case in (124) the motivation for the incident was not some protected characteristic of the victim, as is typically the case in instances of hate speech, in other reported cases, the cause of the harassment was precisely that:

(125) *Interviewer* Maybe it was done to people around you?

Interviewee 4 Yes (...)

Interviewer Did they harass them about something particular or just because (...)?

¹⁹For the purposes of this part of the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project we carried out 20 individual interviews, with young people in the provinces of Toledo and Madrid.

Interviewee 4 No, it was with me and another girl, no, and also with a guy who was disabled.

Interviewer Was it because of his disability?

Interviewee 4 Yes

In this respect, our interviewees' perceptions coincide with research that has shown that racial and sexual prejudice often appear as causes of cyberbullying (cf. Hoff and Mitchell 2009).

(126) *Interviewer* What other reasons do you find being used on the Internet that lead to such comments?

Interviewee 5 Physical appearance, race, homosexuality, culture, there are so many issues that people are always (...) disability, they chase those groups a lot, so to speak in quotes, to crush them, and, really, there is no reason.

A further analysis of the interviews revealed that most interviewees believed that the main pretext behind both cyberbullying and online hate speech was that perpetrators take advantage of the perceived anonymity of the internet and therefore feel free to utter and spread insults, vexations and extreme opinions; things that might not be as easy to do in the offline world. In the words of one of the interviewees,

(127) *Because they do not really show their face, they are through a screen they do not give the face and put the first thing that occurs to them. When they are facing you, maybe if you are going to say it, to a friend of you by WhatsApp or by social networks, you put a thing and if then if you had to say it to the face, you would not say the same thing or you wouldn't say it in the same way.*

(Interviewee 1)

So, what is the role that anonymity plays in the spread of intolerance and hate speech in social networks? In the case that concerns us, that is, of young users who communicate through the Internet, the perception among our interviewees was that, simply because it is not face-to-face, much of the communication that takes place on the Internet is not as 'filtered' as it would otherwise be:

(128) *For the anonymity or shame of saying it face-to-face and you do it for social networks then it's like, I do not know, that we hide, it's like we put on a mask and as a carnival you wear a mask and you can do everything you want. This is the same but over the Internet.*

(Interviewee 1)

Indeed, several of the young people interviewed believe that posting anonymous comments online allows people to openly express intolerance, reject difference and embrace racism without the social limitations that exist in offline communication. For example:

- (129) *There is less [hate speech] on the street, but I think that this is because of shame, because he does not like to show his face. However, through a social network I put it [the comment] on and that's it. Saying things behind [other people's backs] is much easier.*

(Interviewee 2)

Current research has shown that there is no single profile of a hater or cyberbully who is concealed under the cloak of anonymity. Even though there are organised groups that seek to promote hatred online, in most cases the people that hide behind hateful or discriminatory trolling messages are not linked to openly intolerant ideological movements (cf. Isasi and Juanatey 2016), but are instead users who just do not realise the potential impact of their digital activity, and the effects that it can have in the offline world (cf. Stein 2016):

- (130) *Because on the Internet it seems that the thing is diluted, people feel shielded behind their computer, and I am here in my house in Toledo, no matter who reads this. The one who reads it will be far away, so nothing will happen.*

(Interviewee 14)

Our interviewees also discussed the impact of hate speech and cyberbullying on the victim:

- (131) *Interviewer But in the event that it (hate speech online) takes place how you think it affects the people who are targeted by it?*

Interviewee 3 Well, I suppose that it is bad. Evidently you won't like anyone who speaks badly about you. Surely then that, as we are in the society that we are, will affect your private life. I don't know, I imagine, I don't know what measures should be taken: closing Facebook or changing names or changing friends on Facebook. I want to say, I don't know, or don't see it in some way or, I know, I guess it will affect and I don't know, your security will not be the same if you are being insulted.

- (132) *I think so, because they already make comments that can affect the other person psychologically and physically (...).*

(Interviewee 17)

Hatred towards certain groups, which underlies both online and offline hate speech, can also manifest itself in other modes of expression of violence and intolerance, such as that of (cyber)bullying. Through their personal experiences, some of our interviewees showed that the expression of hate is intimately linked to the experience of (cyber)bullying, and more specifically, that a person's identity is often used by perpetrators as a weapon to exercise (cyber)bullying. Keeping in mind that (cyber)bullying is typically tied to the school context and considering at the same time that the educational context should be the primary place where the causes of violence, intolerance and hatred against those who are perceived to be

different are dealt with, it just seems sensible to us to propose that more focus is placed on embracing diversity, implementing a human rights approach and carrying out activities within the realm of citizenship and intercultural education.

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Chapter 5

Concluding Remarks

Fabienne H. Baider, Stavros Assimakopoulos and Sharon Millar

The present volume has explored a number of themes that are inextricably linked to discriminatory discourse. As made clear from the beginning, its main objective has not been to provide an exhaustive account of hate speech, but rather to show that research from the perspective of discourse analysis can shed further light on this social phenomenon that has, unfortunately, been increasingly gaining momentum lately. What we hope to have made evident through all the preceding argumentation is that there is much more to hate speech than meets the eye. This is especially true in the online setting, which is typically characterised by intense emotional content and expression, especially when it comes to posts made by the general public in reaction to current affairs (cf. Yus 2011; Musolff 2017; Santana 2014).

The central objective of this volume has been to show that legislation against hate speech in the EU may be an effective first step towards combatting the phenomenon, but it might not be adequate on its own to contain the present situation. This is because hate speech has multiple ways of being expressed. In this volume, we have identified several strategies of Othering that can be used to express such an unfavourable position towards members of a minority: categorisation and stereotyping, hate concealed as patriotism, metaphorical language, sarcasm, allusions and constructed dialogue can all be ‘subtle’ ways in which discrimination emerges in public discourse. And while we are not in a position, as linguists, to suggest that such strategies belong to the category of prosecutable hate speech, we think that it is safe to assume that they do form part of what we have dubbed soft hate speech in Chap. 1. The reason for this is that all these strategies create a fertile ground for hard hate speech to emerge since they slowly but steadily legitimise discrimination and potentially even violence against vulnerable groups. As Waldron (2012: 4) puts it,

[the] sense of security in the space we all inhabit is a public good, and in a good society it is something that we all contribute to and help sustain in an instinctive and almost unnoticeable way. Hate speech undermines this public good, or it makes the task of sustaining it much more difficult than it would otherwise be. It does this not only by intimating discrimination and violence, but by reawakening living nightmares of what this society was like – or what other societies have been like – in the past. In doing so, it creates something like an environmental threat to social peace, a sort of slow-acting poison, accumulating here

and there, word by word, so that eventually it becomes harder and less natural for even the good-hearted members of the society to play their part in maintaining this public good.

Indeed, in all the national corpora that have been collected for the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. project, one can see that such indirect means of calling for discrimination against a minority group are commonly encountered across the board. And even though we identify them as ‘soft’ hate speech, they may have the same perlocutionary effect as hard hate speech. To mention an example, well-known conceptual metaphors such as PARASITES were often used in Nazi speeches with a view to outcasting and demonising the Jewish community, and have been found to be conducive to the abhorrent behaviour to which this particular minority group was subjected during the Second World War (cf. Billig 1977; Wodak and Richardson 2013). Such metaphors seem to be reworked into apparently ‘mild’ negative qualifications in our data too; and although they may seem mild at first, they have the potential to lead to some destructive behaviour too. For instance, in both the Lithuanian and Cypriot datasets, homosexuals are described as being ‘*selfish*’ or ‘*useless*’ in statements that may seem puzzling at first. However, when looking more closely at the relevant comment threads, these characterisations seem to be based on the assumption that same sex couples cannot straightforwardly reproduce and therefore do not contribute to society at large. Such statements can be taken to communicate many inferences, with a simple one being that since same sex couples benefit from the community in which they live without contributing new members to it, they behave like leeches, which are after all a type of parasite. Therefore even though the terms ‘*leeches*’ or ‘*parasites*’ are not used, similar actions and reactions could emerge on the basis of such inferences (cf. Baider forthcoming). Working on creating counter narratives based on these inferences may then succeed to debunk the implied consequences as well as the fallacies conveyed therein. Clearly, further research should focus on the inferences that can be drawn from other comments in the relevant threads and their possible contribution to a potential escalation of violence in order to test the above hypothesis (cf. KhosraviNik 2017).

Linguistic creativity in instances of both hard and soft hate speech is also a common characteristic across the board. For instance, we observed in the Italian data the linguistic and ironic calque of ‘*different sexually-oriented*’ (‘*diversamente orientati sessualmente*’), which echoes the Italian phrase for ‘*disabled people*’ (‘*diversamente abile*’), implying therefore that homosexuals are incapacitated in some respect. Moreover, researchers working on online exchanges among members of extreme-right groups have noticed that they are often prone to using codified language, which will enable them to avoid being tracked by automatic hate speech detection software: e.g. using ‘*juices*’ instead of ‘*Jews*’, ‘*jewrope*’ instead of ‘*Europe*’, etc. (cf. Baider and Constantinou 2017). Irony and humour are also sure ways to get the attention of further readers and build connivance outside the already convinced circle of followers. In any case, this ‘playful’ dimension of hate speech would also be well worth exploring; if nothing else, it would enable us to tweak already existing software for the automatic detection of hate speech so that they also take such comments into account.

Apart from the identification of this repertoire of strategies, which is arguably not exhaustive, we have also attempted in this volume to show that the general public's perception of what actually constitutes hate speech and how it should be regulated is far from uniform. So, even though the young people we interviewed are, quite expectedly, ardent supporters of freedom of expression, they still generally feel that hate speech is an issue that needs to be combatted. Yet, many do not seem to be sensitised towards what exactly hate speech is and also justify at times the negative sentiment of the general public towards a particular minority. To our mind, this carries two implications. On the one hand, even though the EU is pushing for the regulation of hate speech at a transnational level, it seems sensible for it to leave space for each member state to target hate speech within its national context, with its own particularities and needs. On the other hand, it seems that while legislation does help, it is not enough on its own to contain the situation, since most participants in our interviews showed ignorance of the relevant laws and repercussions for the expression of hate online. What emerged from the interviews, instead, was that the most effective weapon in the fight against hate speech is education, broadly construed.

Against this background, when it comes to policy-making, the C.O.N.T.A.C.T. consortium can therefore make two recommendations. For one, it is necessary to conduct extensive research on the different forms that hate speech can take, both online and offline, as well as the underlying reasons for the emergence of such speech. It may sound banal to point this out, but it is only through the profound understanding of these reasons in the first place, at both the national state and transnational levels, that effective policies of inclusion can be developed; and this is something that seems to be often disregarded by those in charge. Then, it is equally, if not even more important for the general public to develop an awareness on matters of discrimination. This is something that can only be accomplished through wide-reaching awareness-raising events, a responsible approach to the relevant issues by the media, and, of course, the establishment of an agenda that promotes inclusion and tolerance at all levels of education. The latter has also been pointed out in a very recent European Agency for Fundamental Rights press release, according to which, "promoting inclusion and mutual respect through education and strong positive narratives are essential to prevent incitement to hatred and counter hate speech in the digital age" (FRA 2013: 1).

In closing, we hope to have shown that linguists have an important role to play in this picture (cf. Olsson and Luchjenbroers 2013). Since it is intention that lies at the very core of most legal definitions of hate speech, contextualising and qualitatively analysing such speech seems central to not only tackling this complex phenomenon but also to safeguarding freedom of expression on the many platforms that the internet offers. We therefore believe that this is an endeavour that can only be accomplished by encouraging collaboration and constructive dialogue between policy makers, legal practitioners, linguists and computer scientists specialising in the automatic detection of hate speech, as well as involving higher education institutions more directly in the implementation of the relevant EU agency directives.

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