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**INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL
RESEARCH**
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THE ROLE OF SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN THE PERCEPTION OF HATE SPEECH

Summary

Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental human rights and represents an important means for expressing diverse ideas and opinions.

However, challenges arise when an appropriate balance between the right to freedom of expression and the right to protection from discrimination is not maintained. This is particularly evident when expression conveys hatred toward individuals or groups based on personal characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or similar attributes. The aim of this paper is to provide a systematic overview of existing empirical research examining the role of sociodemographic factors in the perception of hate speech, with a particular focus on gender, age, level of education, and related variables. The analysis encompasses studies addressing the ability to recognize hate speech, perceptions of its acceptability, as well as assessment of the harmfulness and social consequences of such messages. Previous research findings suggest consistent, although not always unambiguous patterns of associations between sociodemographic characteristics and

the perception of hate speech. While differences related to gender and ethnic and racial background are frequently observed, the effects of age are often dependent on context, the type of hate speech, and intervening variables. The paper also discusses key methodological challenges in this field, including the operationalization of hate speech and the variability of research instruments used across studies. Given the continuing social relevance of hate speech, research on its perception remains highly important. The findings of such studies may serve as valuable basis for the development of effective public policies and educational interventions aimed at preventing and reducing hate speech.

Key words: hate speech, perception, gender, age, ethnicity, race.

1. INTRODUCTION

Freedom of speech is widely recognized as one of the core values of democratic societies. Citizens are expected to respect the right of others to express themselves publicly, regardless of whether they endorse the ideas being voiced. This principle is captured in the notion of political tolerance, defined as “the willingness to endure things one opposes... the willingness to permit the expression of opposing ideas or interests” (Sullivan et al., 1982, 2). Yet freedom of speech becomes a contested issue when it collides with discrimination and intolerance directed at particular groups or individuals.

Intergroup relations have long been characterized by tensions and conflicts, precluding the ability of societies to formally document them. Prejudice in its many forms has been a central focus of research for decades, and attempts to trace its origins and devise solutions to the seemingly intractable problems it generates have fuelled extensive theoretical debates and empirical inquiry (Brewer, 1994). Hate speech represents a distinct manifestation of prejudice.

There is broad agreement across social groups that sexist, racist, and otherwise offensive remarks constitute serious social problems (Nielsen, 2004). Although experiences of hate speech may differ, its consequences are harmful not only because of the impact on individuals but also because it undermines “inclusiveness in society as a public good” (Waldron, 2012, 4). Hate speech can reinforce prejudice, strip individuals of dignity, and install fear and distress among those targeted. When repeated, it may normalize harassment and discrimination against entire groups, ultimately paving the way for violence (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2016).

Although there is consensus on the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of hate speech, it is evident that certain factors contribute to significant differences in how this phenomenon is perceived. The aim of this paper is to provide a systematic overview of existing empirical research on the role of sociodemographic factors in shaping perceptions of hate speech, with particular attention to gender, age, educational attainment, and related variables. The analysis includes studies that examine the ability to recognize hate speech, perceptions of its acceptability, as well as evaluations of its harmfulness and broader social consequences.

2. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON HATE SPEECH PERCEPTION

The body of empirical research on the perception of hate speech is both extensive and diverse, making any attempt at a comprehensive synthesis inherently challenging. Although the aim of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive review of all existing studies, the conducted analysis allowed for the identification of several key lines of inquiry, which are presented in the following subsections: gender differences; ethnicity and minority status; personality traits and perception of hate speech by youth.

2.1. Gender differences in perceptions

One of the most influential scholars in this field, Gloria Cowan, has for more than two decades investigated the consequences of hate speech and developed specific instruments for its study. In an early study, Cowan and Hodge (1996) presented participants of diverse sociodemographic backgrounds with examples of hate speech targeting race, sexual orientation, and gender. They created 12 scenarios describing hate speech incidents. Findings revealed that men rated hate speech directed at women as less offensive than women did, and white men perceived hate speech against minorities as less harmful compared to minority participants. In contrast, white women perceived all forms of hate speech as more offensive and worthy of accountability, and they did not differentiate between types of hate speech. The authors explained this by suggesting that women may develop empathy and identify with hate speech targets due to similar life experiences.

Continuing this line of research, Cowan and colleagues developed two scales: the *Freedom of Speech Scale* and the *Harm of Hate Speech Scale*. Each scale

consists of 16 items measuring attitudes toward freedom of speech and censorship, as well as attitudes regarding the consequences of hate speech and the benefits of sanctioning it (Cowan & Mettrick, 2002). Subsequent studies examined these attitudes in relation to heterosexism (Cowan et al., 2005), gender differences (Cowan & Khatchadourian, 2003), and personality traits (Downs & Cowan, 2012).

Among sociodemographic variables, gender has consistently emerged as a significant predictor of attitudes toward hate speech, with strong empirical support across numerous studies (Cowan & Hodge, 1996; Cowan & Mettrick, 2002; Cowan et al., 2002; Cowan & Khatchadourian, 2003; Downs & Cowan, 2012; Craig & Waldo, 1996; Hunter & McClelland, 1991; Inman & Baron, 1996; McClelland & Hunter, 1992). Women are generally less tolerant of hate speech than men, whether attitudes are assessed through hypothetical scenarios or survey questionnaires. They also tend to hold the speaker, the perpetrator of hate speech, more accountable for their actions compared to men.

Because women and members of minority groups face a greater risk of exposure to hate speech, they typically evaluate such speech as more offensive and harmful, and perceive perpetrators as more responsible, than do white men (Cowan & Hodge, 1996, 358). Another explanation offered by researchers relates to differences in values: men are more likely to prioritize freedom of expression, whereas women place greater emphasis on the consequences of actions (Cowan & Hodge, 1996).

Some scholars argue that these differences can be explained by the notion that women are more relational than men. Relationality refers to heightened concern for close relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). A relational orientation may make women more sensitive to the impact of hate speech on targeted individuals compared to men. Women may be more attuned to the effects of hate speech on victims because they are often socialized to be caring and attentive to others (Inman & Baron, 1996).

Seeking to identify the mechanisms underlying gender differences in attitudes, Cowan and Khatchadourian (2003) examined relationality measures as mediators of gender differences in perceptions of hate speech consequences and the importance of freedom of speech. These measures included empathy, relational and collective interdependence, and connected versus separate ways of knowing. Their findings revealed gender differences in perceptions of hate speech consequences, freedom of speech, empathy, and separate ways of knowing. Women scored higher on the Harm of Hate Speech Scale and considered freedom of speech less important than men.

Moreover, perceived consequences of hate speech were positively associated with empathy, connected knowing, and interdependence, whereas freedom of speech was positively associated with separate knowing and negatively with empathy. Empathy was found to mediate gender differences in perceptions of hate speech consequences, while separate knowing mediated gender differences in valuing freedom of speech.

2.2. Ethnicity and minority status

With respect to ethnicity, findings indicate that white men place greater value on freedom of speech compared to members of other ethnic groups, whereas ethnic minorities perceive the consequences of hate speech as more significant. In contrast, no such differences were observed among women: both white and non-white women expressed similar attitudes regarding the consequences of hate speech and the importance of freedom of speech (Cowan & Khatchadourian, 2003).

Examining a specific minority group Boeckmann and Liew (2002) investigated how Asian Americans respond to insults targeting their group identity compared to other forms of offensive speech, and how reactions to hate speech differ from responses to antisocial behaviour with more tangible consequences. Their study included different targets of offensive speech (Asian Americans, African Americans, and overweight individuals), as well as varying types of offenses (petty theft versus offensive speech). Collective self-esteem and social identification were included as participant variables. Results indicated that hate speech directed at ethnic groups was judged as deserving harsher punishment than other forms of offensive speech or petty theft, and it elicited stronger emotional responses.

2.3. Personality traits and attitudinal factors

Among other predictors of hate speech perception, researchers examined personality traits and attitudinal factors such as intellect, individualism, separate knowing, and political orientation (authoritarianism vs. liberalism) (Downs & Cowan, 2012). Results showed that perceptions of freedom of speech were positively associated with intellect, individualism, and separate knowing, and negatively with authoritarianism. Perceptions of hate speech consequences were positively associated with intellect and liberalism.

2.4. Youth and hate speech perception

Discrimination and hate speech represent significant social problems among youth populations. Young people are a particularly vulnerable group who may play a role both in spreading extremist messages and in promoting tolerance and equality. Manifestations of hate speech among youth often take the form of attitudes supporting discrimination, exclusion from social activities, and even overtly aggressive behaviour toward those perceived as different.

In her study of high school students, Harell (2010) began from the assumption that exclusionary speech, such as incitement to racial hatred, Holocaust denial, and other forms of hate speech, constitutes a fundamental challenge to how we conceptualize and empirically examine political tolerance. She selected high school students in Canada and Belgium, arguing that youth in these countries had grown up during a period of unprecedented racial and ethnic diversity, alongside legislation that formally prescribes strict sanctions against hate expression. Findings generally supported the idea that young people balance the need for social inclusion with the right to free expression, rather than fully endorsing either absolute tolerance of individual rights or consistent censorship of speech. A significant proportion of youth viewed hate speech as outside the domain of legitimate democratic debate, while still tolerating the expression of other undesirable ideas.

In one of the few studies including both adolescents and adults, Bilewicz et al. (2017) examined the impact of two antecedents of willingness to support banning hate speech: right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1988) and social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994). Attitudes toward hate speech were measured using a set of statements compiled in two stages. First, researchers searched a database of over 2,000 examples of online hate speech created by a Polish NGO, selecting 180 representative statements targeting six stigmatized minorities in Poland: Jews, Ukrainians, Roma, LGBT individuals, Africans, and Muslims. An additional 12 well-known statements from offline media, made by politicians, artists, journalists, or public figures, were included. These examples were combined into a survey administered to 276 members of minority organizations in Poland, who rated the extent to which each statement was offensive to their group and whether they considered it hate speech. Based on these ratings, a final list of 18 hate speech statements was created.

The results of the study, conducted with both adolescents and adults, indicated that social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism were positively

associated with prejudice toward outgroups, but had different effects on attitudes toward banning hate speech. Social dominance orientation was positively related to acceptance of hate speech, whereas right-wing authoritarianism was positively related to support for banning it. The authors explained this outcome by noting that individuals scoring high on right-wing authoritarianism are particularly opposed to norm violations, meaning they are more likely to advocate for punishing speech that violates norms, such as hate speech.

The authors emphasized several reasons for including adolescents in their research. A critical moment in understanding political nuances and developing consistent tolerance toward outgroups occurs during adolescence (Sears & Brown, 2003). Adolescence is also an important stage in the formation of social identities (Erikson, 1950). Research on political development has shown that right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and attitudes toward freedom of speech are well established by the time individuals finish high school (Heaven, Ciarrochi, & Leeson, 2011; Zellman & Sears, 1971). Finally, numerous programs aimed at reducing prejudice and combating hate speech are implemented in schools and specifically target adolescents (Sears & Brow, 2003; Stefaniak & Bilewicz, 2014). Adolescents represent a developmentally specific group that is highly engaged in social media and online communities (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). At the same time, they are exposed to a variety of social influences, including tolerance education and hate speech prevention programs. For these reasons, the authors also included adults in the study to enable more comprehensive conclusions. Among domestic scholars, Popović-Ćitić et al. (2021) examined the perception of hate speech among youth within a broader study on equality and diversity as strategies for preventing hate speech and discrimination. Investigating the attitudes of high school students in Belgrade regarding the harm of hate speech, they highlighted several key findings:

- About one-third of students did not recognize the consequences of hate speech and failed to perceive its harmful impact on targeted individuals.
- The most recognized consequences were emotional distress and discrimination against members of targeted groups.
- The least recognized consequences (unacknowledged by nearly half of students) concerned systemic effects, which were less tangible for them.
- Students found it easier to empathize with the position of hate speech victims when given the opportunity, and this experience helped them better understand and internalize its consequences.

Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of examining young people’s knowledge of hate speech, whether they recognize its forms, consequences, and the victim’s position, as well as whether they have experienced or perpetrated it. Such data provide the foundation for designing appropriate activities aimed at raising awareness among youth about the problem of hate speech in the school context, where they spend a significant portion of their time.

Taken together, the reviewed empirical studies demonstrate that perceptions of hate speech are shaped by a complex interplay of sociodemographic and psychological factors. Gender consistently emerges as a strong predictor. Women and minority groups tend to perceive hate speech as more harmful and hold perpetrators more accountable, whereas men, particularly white men, are more likely to emphasize freedom of expression.. Ethnic identity further influences responses, as members of minority groups report stronger emotional reactions and greater recognition of harm compared to majority populations. Personality traits and attitudinal orientations, such as empathy, relationality, intellectual openness, and political ideology, also play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward both the consequences of hate speech and the value of free expression. Finally, age and developmental stage are crucial: adolescents, immersed in diverse social contexts and online environments, are simultaneously vulnerable to the spread of extremist messages and capable of fostering tolerance and inclusion. These findings underscore the importance of considering sociodemographic diversity and developmental specificities in both research and practice, highlighting the need for targeted educational and preventive programs that address the multifaceted nature of hate speech perception.

3. CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN THE STUDY OF HATE SPEECH PERCEPTION

The analysis of empirical studies on hate speech perception raises two significant issues, which have major implications for planning and conducting research in this field. One is the conceptual and operational definition of hate speech, while the other is related to methodological decisions regarding the choice of instruments for hate speech perception measurement.

3.1. Variability in the definition and conceptualization of hate speech

Despite the growing body of research addressing hate speech, one of the central challenges in this field remains the lack of a universally accepted definition. The concept of hate speech is inherently complex, normatively loaded, and context-dependent, which has resulted in a wide range of conceptualizations across legal, philosophical, and empirical domains. This definitional plurality has important implications not only for theoretical clarity but also for the comparability of empirical findings.

Early conceptualizations of hate speech were primarily grounded in the analysis of racial discrimination and inequality. Matsuda (1993) proposed one of the most influential definitions, identifying hate speech as a message of group inferiority directed at historically oppressed groups and serving the function of persecution, hatred, and degradation. This definition is notable for its emphasis on structural inequality and historical context, positioning hate speech as a mechanism that reinforces existing power hierarchies.

Subsequent authors have sought to broaden this perspective. Boeckmann and Liew (2002) expanded Matsuda's definition by replacing the notion of "racial inferiority" with the more inclusive concept of "group inferiority", thereby acknowledging that hate speech may target a variety of social categories beyond race. This shift reflects a broader trend in the literature toward recognizing multiple axes of discrimination, including gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disability.

In contrast to approaches that emphasize structural and group-based dimensions, some scholars have adopted more psychologically oriented definitions. For example, Leets and Giles (1999) conceptualize hate speech as a form of harmful speech, focusing on both the intent of the speaker and the perceived harm experienced by the recipient. This perspective highlights the subjective dimension of hate speech, suggesting that its classification may depend on how it is interpreted by individuals or groups.

Other definitions place greater emphasis on the communicative and performative aspects of hate speech. Gelber and Stone (2008) define it as expression that incites or promotes hatred and prejudice, thereby underscoring its potential to mobilize hostility and contribute to broader social dynamics. Similarly, Lawrence et al. (1993) describe hate speech as "words that serve as weapons", emphasizing its capacity to inflict psychological harm and its function as a form of symbolic violence.

Legal and normative approaches often conceptualize hate speech in relation to its social consequences. Waldron (2012), for instance, argues that hate speech undermines the assurance that all members of society are accepted as equals, thereby threatening the dignity and social standing of targeted groups. This perspective shifts the focus from individual harm to the erosion of social cohesion and public trust.

A particularly inclusive definition is offered by Nikolić (2018), who conceptualizes hate speech as any form of expression motivated by hatred and aimed at injuring or demeaning individuals or groups based on personal characteristics. Importantly, this definition acknowledges that hate speech does not necessarily stem from explicit emotional hatred but may instead reflect exclusionary discourse rooted in fear, stereotypes, and social distance.

Taken together, these definitions reveal several key dimensions along which conceptualizations of hate speech vary:

- Target of speech - whether hate speech is limited to historically oppressed groups or includes any social group;
- Intent vs. perception - whether emphasis is placed on the speaker’s intention or the recipient’s experience;
- Form of expression - whether only verbal communication is considered or broader multimodal expressions are included;
- Severity threshold - whether only extreme forms (e.g., incitement to violence) are included or also milder, everyday expressions;
- Social function - whether hate speech is viewed primarily as individual harm or as a mechanism of maintaining social inequality.

This conceptual variability has significant implications for empirical research. Studies that adopt narrow definitions (e.g., focusing only on explicit incitement to hatred) may report lower prevalence rates and different patterns of perception. In contrast, studies that include subtle or implicit forms of hate speech, such as microaggressions or coded language, often yield different results. Moreover, differences in definitions may shape participants’ responses, as individuals may vary in their interpretation of what constitutes hate speech.

In the context of research on perception, these issues are particularly salient. Perception itself is inherently subjective and influenced by cultural norms, socialization processes, and individual experiences. As a result, the same expression may be interpreted as hate speech by some individuals but not by others. This underscores the importance of clearly specifying the conceptual boundaries of hate

speech in empirical studies and of considering how these boundaries may influence findings.

3.2. Variability of instruments for measuring hate speech perception

In addition to definitional inconsistencies, research on hate speech perception is characterized by substantial variability in measurement approaches. Unlike more established constructs in social psychology, there is no standardized or universally accepted instrument for assessing perceptions of hate speech. Instead, researchers have employed a wide range of methods, each with its own advantages and limitations.

One of the most common approaches involves the use of scenario-based measures, in which participants are presented with hypothetical situations depicting instances of hate speech and asked to evaluate them. For example, Cowan and Hodge (1996) developed a set of scenarios targeting different social groups and asked participants to assess the offensiveness, acceptability, and consequences of the speech acts. This method allows researchers to systematically manipulate variables such as the target group, severity of the message, and contextual factors.

Scenario-based approaches offer high ecological validity, as they simulate real-life situations and enable participants to engage in evaluative judgments. However, they are also sensitive to framing effects, as small changes in wording or context may significantly influence responses. Additionally, such measures often rely on researcher-defined examples of hate speech, which may not align with participants' own understandings.

Another widely used approach involves self-report scales that assess general attitudes toward hate speech and freedom of expression. Notably, Cowan and colleagues developed the Freedom of Speech Scale and the Harm of Hate Speech Scale, which measure individuals' support for free expression and their perceptions of the consequences of hate speech. These instruments enable the assessment of stable attitudinal orientations and facilitate statistical analysis of relationships with sociodemographic and psychological variables.

While self-report scales offer reliability and comparability within studies, they may lack contextual specificity. Participants' responses may reflect abstract beliefs rather than reactions to concrete situations, which can lead to discrepancies between expressed attitudes and actual behaviour.

A third approach involves the use of experimentally constructed stimuli, including real or simulated examples of hate speech. For instance, Bilewicz et al. (2017) compiled a dataset of authentic hate speech statements from online sources and asked participants to evaluate their offensiveness and classify them as hate speech. This method enhances ecological validity by incorporating real-world content, but it also raises challenges related to standardization and ethical considerations.

In recent years, researchers have increasingly used multidimensional measures to capture different aspects of hate speech perception. These include recognition, emotional responses, cognitive evaluations, and normative judgments. This multidimensional approach reflects the complexity of hate speech perception but also contributes to variability across studies, as different researchers prioritize different components.

Another important source of variability concerns the operationalization of key constructs. For example, “perceived harm” may be measured in terms of emotional impact, social consequences, or moral evaluation, depending on the study. Similarly, “acceptability” may refer to personal approval, perceived social norms, or legal permissibility. These differences complicate the comparison of findings across studies.

The target of hate speech is also a critical factor in measurement design. Studies vary in whether they focus on specific groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals) or include multiple targets. Research has shown that participants’ responses may differ depending on the group being targeted, which further limits comparability when different studies use different target groups.

Moreover, cultural and contextual factors play a significant role in shaping measurement instruments. What is considered hate speech in one cultural or legal context may not be perceived as such in another. As a result, instruments developed in one context may not be directly transferable to others without adaptation.

Finally, the rise of digital communication has introduced new challenges for measurement. Online hate speech often takes forms that are indirect, ironic, or embedded in memes and visual content, making it more difficult to operationalize and assess using traditional instruments. This has prompted the development of new methodologies, including content analysis of social media data and the use of multimedia stimuli in experimental designs.

3.3. Implications for research on sociodemographic differences

The variability in definitions and measurement instruments has important implications for the study of sociodemographic differences in hate speech perception. Observed differences between groups (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity) may partly reflect differences in how hate speech is conceptualized and measured, rather than true differences in perception.

For instance, studies that employ broad definitions and include subtle forms of hate speech are more likely to detect differences related to empathy and social sensitivity, which are often associated with gender. In contrast, studies focusing on extreme forms of hate speech may yield more uniform responses across groups, as such expressions are widely recognized as unacceptable.

Similarly, the use of abstract attitudinal measures versus concrete scenarios may influence the observed effects of education and age. More educated individuals may express stronger normative opposition to hate speech in abstract terms, while situational judgments may be more nuanced and context dependent.

These considerations highlight the need for greater methodological transparency and standardization in this field. Researchers should clearly define the concept of hate speech, justify their choice of measurement instruments, and consider the potential impact of these choices on their findings.

At the same time, the diversity of approaches should not be viewed solely as a limitation. Rather, it reflects the multifaceted nature of hate speech as a social phenomenon. Future research would benefit from integrating different methodological approaches and developing more comprehensive frameworks that capture the complexity of hate speech perception across diverse populations and contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

The present paper sets out to provide a systematic overview of empirical research on the role of sociodemographic factors in shaping the perception of hate speech. The reviewed findings indicate that such perceptions are not uniform, but rather reflect a complex interplay of individual characteristics, social positions, and broader normative frameworks. Among the examined variables, gender consistently emerges as one of the most robust predictors, with women generally demonstrating lower tolerance for hate speech, greater sensitivity to its harmful consequences, and

stronger support for accountability. Similarly, ethnic and minority status play a significant role, as members of marginalized groups tend to perceive hate speech as more harmful and more personally relevant compared to members of majority populations.

In contrast, the effects of age and educational attainment appear to be more context dependent. While younger individuals are often more exposed to hate speech, particularly in online environments, their evaluations of such content vary depending on developmental stage, socialization processes, and the influence of educational and preventive programs. Education, in turn, is associated with greater awareness and more critical evaluation of hate speech, although its effects are not always consistent across different measurement approaches.

Importantly, the paper highlights that observed differences in perception cannot be fully understood without considering the conceptual and methodological diversity that characterizes this field. Variations in the definition of hate speech, as well as differences in measurement instruments, significantly influence research findings. Several methodological choices shape how participants interpret and evaluate hate speech. These include whether hate speech is operationalized narrowly or broadly, whether it is assessed through abstract scales or concrete scenarios, and which target groups are included. Consequently, some inconsistencies in empirical findings may reflect methodological differences rather than substantive disagreements.

These insights point to the need for greater conceptual clarity and methodological consistency in future research. Developing more standardized yet flexible instruments that capture the multidimensional nature of hate speech perception would enhance comparability across studies. At the same time, sensitivity to cultural and contextual differences remains essential, particularly in an increasingly global and digitally mediated communication environment.

From a practical perspective, understanding how different social groups perceive hate speech is crucial for the design of effective interventions and public policies. Educational programs aimed at increasing awareness, fostering empathy, and promoting critical media literacy may play a key role in reducing the normalization of hate speech, especially among younger populations. Ultimately, addressing hate speech requires not only legal regulation but also a deeper understanding of the social and psychological processes that shape how it is perceived, interpreted, and responded to in everyday life.

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УЛОГА СОЦИОДЕМОГРАФСКИХ ФАКТОРА У ПЕРЦЕПЦИЈИ ГОВОРА МРЖЊЕ

Сажетак

Слобода изражавања једно је од елементарних људских права и представља важан начин изражавања различитих идеја и мишљења. Међутим, до проблема може доћи уколико не постоји одговарајући баланс између права на слободу изражавања и права на заштиту од дискриминације, нарочито када чин изражавања преноси поруку мржње према појединцима и групама на основу личног својства, као што су раса, пол/род, етничка припадност, сексуална оријентација, инвалидитет и слично. Циљ овог рада јесте систематизација досадашњих емпиријских истраживања која испитују улогу социодемографских фактора у перцепцији говора мржње, са посебним фокусом на пол, старост, ниво образовања и сродне варијабле. Анализа обухвата студије које се баве способношћу препознавања говора мржње, проценом његове прихватљивости, као и проценом штетности и друштвених последица таквих порука. Налази досадашњих истраживања указују на постојање конзистентних, али не увек једнозначних образаца повезаности између социодемографских карактеристика и перцепције говора мржње. Посебно се издвајају разлике повезане са полом, етничким и расним пореклом, док су ефекти старости често зависни од контекста, типа говора мржње и интервенишућих варијабли. У раду се разматрају и кључни методолошки изазови у овој области, укључујући операционализацију говора мржње и варијабилност истраживачких инструмената. Обзиром на трајну друштвену релевантност феномена, истраживања перцепције говора мржње остају и данас изузетно актуелна. Налази оваквих студија могу представљати солидну основу

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за развој ефикасних јавних политика и образовних интервенција усмерених на превенцију и сузбијање говора мржње.

Кључне речи: говор мржње, перцепција, пол/род, старост, етничка припадност, расна припадност.