

Call for Papers

International Symposium

‘Hate speech at the crossroads of aggression, anxiety, and resonance: from linguistics to politics and beyond’

Instituto Cultura y Sociedad (ICS)
Public Discourse Research Group
Universidad de Navarra, Spain
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Keynote Speaker:

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Nowadays, prototypical instances of hate speech originating in extremist circles coexist with many other more implicit messages that spread through mainstream media and actors. Since these resonate with various groups in society, they often end up being shared by many different users in social networks. This has led to the trivialization of verbal aggression and exclusionary discourses, and promotes an underlying atmosphere of anxiety and insecurity that has an impact on everyday life. This symposium aims to create an interdisciplinary venue for discussion to explore more closely the relations between aggressively exclusionary discourses with a special focus on hate-speech and perceptions of insecurity accompanied by feelings of anxiety and alienation.

The phenomenon of hate-speech extends from populist, nativist, ultra-nationalist and xenophobic political discourses to everyday interaction within civil society, and from media communication to ordinary people’s practices in social media or face to face. In order to understand the far-reaching spread of hate-speech, this call is especially interested in, but not limited to, research on the linguistic, pragmatic, semiotic or discursive characteristics of hate-speech; on the underlying social, psychological and socio-economic factors or possible social and political consequences of hate-speech; on how discourses of hate and exclusion resonate with specific individuals or groups and why; on how such discourses tap into and amplify pre-existing anxieties and insecurities or even create new ones for the targeted and targeting groups.

In recent years, a large volume of research on this subject has been produced by scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. From a linguistic perspective, for example, one relevant area is how hate speech is verbally constructed and performed, with particular attention to the different linguistic and discursive patterns used to express hatred or contempt (Assimakopoulos et al. 2017; Knoblock 2022), including slurs (Technau 2018), dehumanising metaphors (Sakki & Castrén 2022) and other impoliteness strategies (Culpeper 2021; Guillén-Nieto 2023). Other studies have approached covert hate speech (Baider 2022) by deconstructing the implicit strategies used in its construction, such as humour, irony (Baider & Constantinou 2017; Fuchs & Schäfer 2020) or hedging (Baumgarten et al. 2019: 95-97).

On the other hand, ontological security studies in political science already take seriously both the structural and the psychological aspects of exclusionary discourses and add to the literature on belongingness and rejection by looking at the perceived or imagined anxieties of individuals and groups (Kinnvall, 2019). Such research explores the ways in which the stigmatizing and dehumanizing discourses against ‘others’ may convey unity, certainty and safety to in-groups (Kinnvall, 2004). The current research in the area also studies how ontological security is continuously challenged for the groups who are victims of stigmatization and hate speech, how discursive violence against marginalized groups and social minorities promotes anxieties, fear and distrust (Anouck Côte-Real Pinto & David, 2019; Botterill et. al., 2019), or how hate speech against LGBTI+ both derives from the challenged ontological security of one group but also leads to ontological insecurity within the other group in a polarized political environment (Ozduzen & Korkut, 2020).

Hate speech is a such complex, multifaceted phenomenon that it cannot be fully understood within the boundaries of a single discipline but needs to be addressed from an interdisciplinary approach. In addition to Political Science and Linguistics, many other disciplines, such as Law, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, Humanities, Psychology, Sociology or Big Data, have also shown interest on this topic. This conference aims at bringing together advances on research about hate speech carried out from different disciplines and methodologies at the intersection of insecurity, anxiety and resonance. We welcome presentations that provide innovative answers to these research questions (the list is not exhaustive):

- How is hate speech defined and distinguished from other types of abusive language and verbal aggression? Which parameters (e.g. linguistic, sociologic, political, legal, etc.) might be useful to better identify it?
- How is hate speech performed and construed? Where and how does it spread? What makes some types of hate speech so influential?
- Which social actors are involved? What are the social and psychological effects triggered by hate speech?
- How does hate speech interfere with the social perception of (in)security and anxiety? How can IR studies contribute with the notion of “ontological security”?
- Where should the borders be set between hate speech and freedom of speech? How can different disciplines (Law, Linguistics, IR, among others) contribute to this debate?
- How is hate speech being countered? How can different disciplines use their expertise to reduce the influence of hate speech?
- What are the underlying social, psychological and socio-economic factors behind hate speech, and what are its possible social and political consequences?
- How do discourses of hate and exclusion resonate with which individuals or groups and why?

- How do exclusionary discourses (stigmatizing, dehumanizing, racist, misogynist or islamophobic discourses) amplify already existing anxieties and insecurities, or create new ones for the targeted and targeting groups?

- How could more interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches and methodologies be developed to study hate-speech and how would this contribute to the research in the area?

We very much look forward to your paper submissions and presentations for the upcoming hybrid symposium at the Instituto Cultura y Sociedad, Universidad de Navarra.

Format: The symposium will be held in hybrid format (online and in-person) and hosted by Zoom Meetings (to be confirmed).

Submissions: Submissions will be evaluated by the scientific committee of the conference. Invited speakers will have 20 minutes to present their paper. Those interested in participating should send a 300-word abstract to makkaracako@unav.es by 30 April 2023. The conference will be held in English and attendance is free. Certificates of attendance and participation will be provided.

For questions and inquiries, you can write to makkaracako@unav.es.

IMPORTANT DATES

Submission deadline: April 30, 2023

Notification of acceptance: May 10, 2023

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