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The phenomenon of hate speech in public discourse:
the case of Greece
Is hate speech correlated with hate crimes in Greece?

Author: Vodjona Voda
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Koen Lemmens

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Abstract

In this paper, we delve into the phenomenon of hate speech within the realm of public discourse in Greece, with a particular focus on its potential correlation with hate crimes. By meticulously exploring historical, societal, and contextual factors, we aim to decipher whether hate speech is a precursor to hate crimes within the Greek context. Our investigation commences with an intricate examination of hate speech, encompassing its definition and conceptual frameworks. Drawing from diverse theoretical perspectives such as the Liberal approach, Critical Race Theory, and Speech Act Theory, we build a comprehensive understanding of hate speech's nuances. Moving on, we provide a detailed overview of hate speech in Greece, elucidating its historical roots and societal dynamics. We analyse its manifestation across various platforms, from mainstream media to the digital realm of social media. We gauge its impact on different segments of Greek society through empirical insights. At the heart of our research lies the exploration of a potential link between hate speech and hate crimes. Through a systematic breakdown of hate crimes, their classifications, and case studies, we endeavour to establish whether hate speech contributes to the perpetration of hate crimes in Greece. Guided by Human Rights Theory and the principle of human dignity, we propose a comprehensive framework to counteract hate speech. We examine Greece's legal landscape, civil society organisations' roles, and the influence of European Union measures in effectively curbing hate speech. In summation, our study unravels the intricate interplay between hate speech and hate crimes in Greece. We illuminate a potential correlation between these phenomena by unravelling historical roots, analysing contemporary manifestations, and providing a robust theoretical framework. Our recommendations offer practical insights into combatting hate speech and, consequently, mitigating the risk of hate crimes in the dynamic landscape of Greek public discourse.

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1. Introduction

Hate speech has become a pressing and pervasive issue in our modern-day globalised societies. It is a phenomenon expressed through a variety of ways ranging from verbal expressions to other forms of communication that facilitate hostility, discrimination, and hate towards certain people or specific groups on the basis of their particular characteristics, be it gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. The rise of social media has added an extra layer to this phenomenon by enabling the dissemination of information and ideas that perpetuate stereotypes, have an impact on attitudes, and even result in inducing harm. As a consequence, this newfound freedom of expression has delivered a breeding ground that allows hate speech to blossom, leading to substantial effects on individuals' lives, communities, and society as a whole.

The strength of hate speech lies in its ability to degrade and dehumanise individuals and groups, as well as in its power to construct an environment of exclusion, fear, and division. For this reason, addressing this phenomenon goes hand in hand with understanding and acknowledging its impact on several levels. At a rudimentary level, hate speech erodes fundamental notions of human rights and human dignity, which support that everyone deserves to be treated with respect regardless of any other factors or characteristics. Hate speech rejects this idea by encouraging damaging stereotypes, strengthening biases, promoting bigotry, and posing a threat to social cohesion and balance. The subsequent result is the marginalisation of targeted communities and individuals and the exacerbation of social divisions that impede progress.

What is more, hate speech has been found to have effects that spread far beyond the sphere of rhetoric, having a connection with the increase in hate crimes and acts of violence. This is due to the fact that the use of speech promoting hate has been connected with the furnishing of the justification of

physical harm and the radicalisation of individuals resulting in the propagation of extremist doctrines and violent behaviours. Subsequently, hate speech undermines the broader foundations of our democratic societies, where a balancing exercise is taking place between the freedom of expression and the duty to guarantee the well-being and protection of all citizens.

Bearing this consequential impact in mind, a multi-faceted approach is necessary to deal with hate speech. The aim of the present paper is to analyse the phenomenon of hate speech and its relation to hate crimes, with a particular emphasis on the context of Greece. By examining the definition and conceptualisation of hate speech, its impact on society, and the historical and societal factors contributing to its prevalence in Greece, it seeks to understand this intricate issue comprehensively. More specifically, the paper will examine whether hate speech correlates with hate crimes in Greece.

Methodology

To address this question, the research methods are based on a combination of methodological instruments and various interdisciplinary research techniques; more specifically, it would be based on social and political science, philosophical and critical legal studies approaches. The methods used for the research include a descriptive literature review, including a review of legal literature, academic and non-academic literature, and secondary data review, for example, material from NGOs, relevant public organisations, representative studies, legal databases, and national statistical reports.

Given the primary purpose of the research, which is to present the phenomenon of hate speech in public discourse in the Greek context, and to examine the correlation between hate speech and hate crimes in Greece, the research methodology employed in this thesis is a comprehensive methods approach. This approach is chosen to provide a holistic understanding of hate speech, its impact, and potential countermeasures in the Greek context. The initial phase involves an extensive review of scholarly literature, legal documents, and reports related to hate speech, hate crimes, and their correlations. This review aids in building a strong conceptual framework for understanding hate speech, its theoretical underpinnings, its impact on society, and the various strategies for combating it.

A content analysis of academic literature will be performed to explore the liberal approach, Critical Race Theory, and Speech Act Theory in understanding hate speech. This analysis will provide a nuanced understanding of these frameworks and their applicability to hate speech in Greece.

Content analysis of media reports, social media posts, and public discourse will be conducted to identify patterns of hate speech incidents and their impact in the Greek context. These analyses will derive data-driven insights to understand the target groups and affected communities.

In-depth case studies will be conducted for selected incidents to trace the progression from hate speech to hate crimes. This will involve qualitative analysis of media coverage, legal proceedings, and community responses to understand the interplay between hate speech and hate crimes comprehensively.

Qualitative analyses will be synthesised to draw comprehensive conclusions about the landscape of hate speech in Greece and the correlation between hate speech and hate crimes. Based on the research outcomes, practical recommendations for combating hate speech will be formulated. A summary of the key findings will be presented, highlighting the implications for policy, law, and society. Responding to this question will ultimately assist in identifying potential recommendations.

Outline

In order to do so, the paper is structured in the following way:

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction, providing an overview of the research topic, the study's objectives, and the thesis's structure. The subsequent chapters delve into the various dimensions of hate speech, analysing its definition, conceptualisation, theoretical frameworks, and impact on society.

Chapter 2 will delve into the different approaches to defining and conceptualising hate speech. Analysing the various perspectives and theoretical frameworks allows the development of a nuanced grasp of hate speech as a social, linguistic, and legal phenomenon. In addition, the broader societal impact of hate speech will be discussed, including its contribution to the marginalisation of targeted groups and the corrosion of social cohesion. By examining the existing literature, this chapter aims to establish a foundation for the subsequent analysis. Furthermore, it explores the theoretical frameworks that underpin discussions on hate speech, including the Liberal approach, Critical Race Theory, and Speech Act Theory.

Chapter 3 focuses specifically on hate speech in Greece, providing an overview and analysis of its historical and societal factors. By examining historical factors and societal dynamics, this chapter seeks to shed light on the roots of hate speech within the Greek context. Additionally, it explores the landscape of public discourse in Greece, particularly emphasising hate rhetoric in mainstream media,

online platforms, and social media. Through the examination of incidents of hate speech and their mark on Greek society, this part will endeavour to shed light on the distinctive challenges encountered by the country in dealing with this phenomenon. In this regard, the role of online platforms, social media, and mainstream media in disseminating and amplifying hate speech in Greece will be discussed.

Subsequently, Chapter 4 delves into the impact, incidents, and targets of hate speech in Greece. This chapter investigates the broader societal consequences of hate speech, analysing its effects on Greek society. It also examines and explores the groups and communities often targeted by hateful rhetoric.

Moving forward, Chapter 5 is the core focus of this thesis, where we delve into the intriguing correlation between hate speech and hate crimes in the context of Greece. In this segment, we will embark on a journey through various facets of this intricate relationship. We begin by establishing a clear foundation through the definition and classification of hate crimes, exploring the nuanced ways in which these offences manifest. As we progress, we uncover the intricate link binding hate speech and hate crime, shedding light on how one can influence the other. Our exploration then takes us to the hate crimes landscape, specifically within Greece, offering insights into the local dynamics that contribute to the occurrence and escalation of these incidents. To illustrate the real-world impact of our discussion, we present compelling case studies that highlight instances of hate speech and the subsequent emergence of hate crimes. By delving into these cases, we aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship between hate speech and hate crimes in the Greek context.

Chapter 6 explores Greece's legal and policy framework for combating hate speech. It examines the role of human rights theory, particularly the principle of human dignity, in addressing hate speech. Furthermore, it analyses the existing hate speech laws and regulations in Greece while also considering the role of civil society organisations and activism. This chapter also discusses European Union measures and initiatives aimed at preventing hate speech.

Finally, as the concluding section, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions drawn from the research findings. It summarises the study's key findings, providing insights into the correlation between hate speech and hate crimes in Greece. Moreover, it offers practical implications and recommendations for combating hate speech and its potential consequences.

Through an in-depth analysis of hate speech and its correlation with hate crimes in Greece, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature on hate speech, provide a comprehensive understanding of the Greek context, and offer insights into the development of effective strategies for countering hate speech in public discourse.

2. Hate Speech

2.1 Definition and Conceptualisation of Hate Speech

Hate speech is a hotly debated topic that has sparked considerable debate and controversy over the years. It is essential to consider that there are many definitions of hate speech, which indicates the impossibility of a universally accepted definition, as it differs based on legal, political, cultural, and social contexts. In a broader sense, hate speech refers to using speech attacks on people based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or preference. (Smolla, 1990) Mari Matsuda claimed that "in addition to physical violence, there is the violence of the word"¹, and she defines hate speech in its subcategories as "racist hate speech". (Matsuda, 1989, p.2322 et p.2332)

The term "hate speech" refers to statements that emphatically deny the primary status of other members of society as free and equal citizens. More specifically, hate speech denies the prior level of persons belonging to vulnerable social groups by their membership in those groups. The expression of contempt encompasses, besides the speech, various media, such as images and symbols, which transmit the substance of hate speech. (Lepoutre, 2017, p. 853) . It entails employing insulting and disparaging language, whether spoken, written in public debate, or shown in any media, to instigate violence, propagate hatred, and cause harm.

Although the term hate speech is highly contested, it must be concluded from the definition that it is the language that insults and attacks to incite violence and hatred against groups based on specific characteristics, such as physical appearance, religion, origin, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or others. It can also take on many forms, including subtle comments or "humour". (Fortuna et Nunes, 2018, p.85:5)

Significant challenges arise in the attempt to delimit "hate speech" as it relates inextricably to freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is protected in various legal frameworks by international instruments and conventions that promote freedom of expression in a global context. One of the most important is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights², which in Article 19 states that *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless*

¹ Matsuda, M. J. (1989). Public Response to Racist Speech: Considering the Victim's Story. *Michigan Law Review*, 87(8), 2320–2381. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1289306>

² United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948 to set a base for human rights recognised globally. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

of *frontiers*". Another notable international treaty is the European Convention on Human Rights, established by the Council of Europe; Article 10 guarantees the right to Freedom of Expression.³ Other instruments protect freedom of speech, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 19⁴, the American Convention on Human Rights Article 13 about Freedom of Thought and Expression,⁵ and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights under Article 9 about Freedom of Expression and Access to Information⁶. Although these documents set a global norm for the protection of free speech, their provisions are not automatically applicable in every country. Despite this, free speech is protected in a variety of legal systems and established laws by different states.

The link between hate speech and free speech is complicated and frequently contested. Both notions are concerned with communicating ideas and opinions, but significant differences exist. Freedom of expression is an essential principle of a democratic society. It is about individuals expressing themselves freely without fear of being silenced or penalised by the government. In contrast, hate speech uses words or acts to disparage and incite hatred and violence against specific individuals or groups. It has the potential to drastically destroy the fabric of society by causing divides within it. (Howard, 2019, p.96-99) Exploring this relationship is crucial, although criminalising hate speech is an essential balance for individual rights. It is imperative to note that it is a serious criminal offence to intentionally intimidate or threaten someone to the extent that they feel unsafe and scared for their well-being. (Howard, 2019, p.101) Hate speech calls into question two strong values: freedom of expression on the one hand and others' right to dignity and respect on the other. (Gorenc, 2022, p.418)

Breaking down some of the common generalisations about hateful rhetoric. Firstly, it tends to have a negative tone. Secondly, it is often directed towards groups of people who fall under legally protected characteristics. It can also be associated with emotions or attitudes that could lead to violence. Lastly, it is not covered by an individual's right to freedom of expression. (Guillén-Nieto, 2023 p.2) Individuals hold predetermined beliefs about the types of communication that qualify as hate speech. Generally, people acknowledge that the following forms of speech directed towards historically

³ European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1950 and entered into force in 1953. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-convention>

⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that protect civil and political rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

⁵ American Convention on Human Rights, also known as the Pact of San Jose, was adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS), and it was signed in 1969 and entered into force in 1978. https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_b-32_american_convention_on_human_rights.pdf

⁶ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, also known as Banjul Charter, was adopted by African Union (AU) in 1981 and entered into force in 1986. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011_-_african_charter_on_human_and_peoples_rights_e.pdf

oppressed or wronged groups constitute hate speech: (a) insults, racial slurs, and ethnic jokes; (b) any speech that suggests moral inferiority or dehumanisation; (c) false statements that harm one's social standing; and (d) language or attitudes that promote, incite, or threaten violence or hatred, or even words that simply suggest it. (Guillén-Nieto, 2023 p.3)

Legal scholars often use three distinct categories to define hate speech. The first category is content-based hate speech, which includes words, expressions, symbols, and iconography that are offensive to a particular group of people and considered objectively offensive to society. The second category is hating speech with intent, in which the speaker's communicative intent is to incite hatred or violence against a particular minority, minority member, or person associated with a minority without communicating any legitimate message. Finally, harm-based hate speech is hating speech that causes harm to the victim, such as loss of self-esteem, physical and mental distress, social and economic subjugation, and effective exclusion from society. (Guillén-Nieto, 2023, p.4) It is crucial to understand these categories to identify and address instances of hate speech in the community.

On a more theoretical basis, the dilemma between banning hate speech and protecting freedom of expression without restrictions is common. In an egalitarian society, a preference for anti-speech over coercion would prevent state abuse. However, unrestricted speech production and distribution may increase vulnerability for certain groups in a community with limited symbolic power. Mill's 'harm principle'⁷ introduced a limit to absolute freedom, limiting freedom to cases where it directly violates fundamental rights. This principle sometimes nullifies the central liberal value of the state's commitment to not interfering in citizens' lives. (Cortés, 2021) Hate speech remains one of the most severe categories, as it can lead to incitement to violence.

⁷ John Stuart Mill introduced the harm principle. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/673436>

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks of Hate Speech

2.2.1 Liberal Approach

Within liberal discourse, there is a strong presumption in favour of unrestricted speech, as evidenced by the concept of a 'right' to free speech. The advantages of speech cannot be evaluated against the costs: the 'right' to free expression should 'trump' any utilitarian evaluation, and it must be accepted this privilege even when it offends sensibility and morals. (Soutphommasane, 2006, p.34) There is an ongoing debate about whether hate speech should be restricted or protected under the freedom of expression. Tension has arisen between freedom of speech and the need to protect individuals from harm.

Liberals can be found on both sides of the discussion. Many consider hate speech prohibition as a form of illegitimate state control over individual freedom of expression. They contend that hate speech laws contradict the crucial liberal premise that any speech control must be viewpoint neutral. Other liberals, on the other hand, consider hate speech legislation necessary to rid society of discrimination and subordination based on qualities such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. (Altman, 1993, p.302)

Ronald Dworkin⁸ contends that moral agency is inextricably linked to freedom of expression and that moral agency is the bedrock of democratic society. (Dworkin as Levin, 2009, p.357) He claimed that the right to free expression must guarantee the ability to express attitudes, feelings, biases, and other emotions. (Maclure, 2017, 63:1) Many theoreticians believe that limiting hate speech would violate people's fundamental right to autonomy because the right to free speech is a component of a broader intrinsically important right, such as the right to autonomy or moral independence. (Brisson, 2013, p.7) The fundamental principle of political ethics is the requirement that governments must show equal concern and respect for all citizens, and this obligation of equal respect means that laws must not be justified based on privileges that favour one conception of the good life over another. Equal respect, therefore, implies the right to moral independence and, finally, the right to freedom of speech. (Yong, 2011, p.393) Dworkin supported the significance of protecting all forms of speech, even those that may seem offensive or hateful, as long as they did not directly encourage violence. Also, he emphasised the vital role of free speech in promoting democratic dialogue and the exchange of ideas in

⁸ Ronald Dworkin, Philosopher of Law <https://www.jstor.org/stable/764457>

society. The ability to express freely is not just a means to achieve moral independence but is an essential part of it. (Lenvin, 2009, p.359)

In the book⁹ *"The Harm In Hate Speech"*, Jeremy Waldron outlines the definition of hate speech in a way that distinguishes it from offensive speech. As we comprehend it, hate speech is generally understood as a form of communication that expresses prejudice, hostility, or contempt towards a particular individual or group based on attributes such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics. Hate speech often involves derogatory language, slurs, or calls for violence or discrimination against the targeted group. Its primary purpose is to demean, marginalize, and spread animosity, contributing to a hostile environment for the targeted individuals. However, offensive speech involves expressing ideas, opinions, or statements that might provoke discomfort, annoyance, or emotional distress in others, without necessarily targeting a specific group based on their protected attributes. While offensive speech can still be hurtful and objectionable, it lacks the explicit intent to promote hatred or incite discrimination. Offensiveness is often subjective and varies depending on cultural, social, and individual factors. He emphasises the tangible harm hate speech causes at the individual and societal levels. He points out that hate speech undermines dignity and a sense of belonging. While acknowledging the importance of free speech, Waldron argues that certain restrictions are necessary to prevent the harm caused by hate speech. He argues that restrictions on hate speech can be justified to protect individuals from harm and to promote an inclusive and tolerant society.

Waldron suggests possible legal frameworks and policies that effectively address hate speech while ensuring freedom of expression. There is a need to strike a balance between protection and freedom. He supports that hate speech should be restricted when it causes harm to people's dignity and, therefore, to their equal worth and their fundamental rights and freedoms. However, he states that *"I do not believe that it should be the aim of these laws to prevent people from being offended. Protecting people's feelings against offence is not an appropriate objective for the law"* (Waldron, 2012, p.106) as it is clear, he separates the concepts between "dignity" and "offence"¹⁰. In spite, he argues that this debate is essential for almost every aspect of particularly vulnerable groups' well-being, dignity, and security. (Waldron, 2012, p. 336)

⁹ Jeremy Waldron, (2012) *The Harm in Hate Speech*, HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England

¹⁰ Waldron argues that dignity is a fundamental value that should be protected while it is impossible to avoid instances of offence, and offence alone should not be the basis for limiting free speech.

2.2.2 Critical Race Theory

According to scholars and activists, critical race theory is a movement to study and transform the relationship between race, racism, and power. (Christ, 2019, p.60) The Critical Race Theory, rooted in Derrick Bell's¹¹ philosophical writings, emerged as legal scholars realised the racial progress of the civil rights era had slowed down. They developed alternative legal theories and frameworks, combining critical legal studies, critical theory, feminist theory, postmodernism, and cultural studies. CRT posits that racism is a fundamental part of American society and that minorities' interests are subservient to the system's self-interest. (Demaske, 2009)

Crits argue that racism is structural and systemic. One of the fundamental principles in the CRT is that racism, as well as the intersections between race and other identity markers like gender, sexuality, and class, are deeply ingrained in society and are institutionalised through the law and public policy. (Ricucci, 2022, p.2)

According to critical race theorists, racism is often disguised by normality, and only the blatant and crude forms of it are recognised as problematic by most people. (Gillborn, 2015, p.278) The state law has been heavily criticised by this approach, which incorporates storytelling - either fictional or anecdotal - to challenge legal reasoning and doctrine. Crits support that state law has the moral duty not only to prevent committing racist acts against citizens but also, as a matter of public policy, to offer restitution for specific victims of nonstate racism. (Harris, 2015, p.266)

Scholars of race critique oppose liberalism as a solution to racial issues by advocating equality and post-racial social development, despite "colourblindness" and neutral constitutional principles. Critical race theorists argue that colour blindness can only address egregious racial harms. They firmly believe that rights are often limited when they go against the interests of those in power. It is particularly concerning to see hate speech, which can negatively impact marginalised communities, receive legal protection. Nevertheless, it seems like speech that challenges those in power is often the first to be censored or silenced, despite the protections in the First Amendment.¹² (Delgado et

¹¹ Derick Bell, civil rights activist, lawyer and the first African American tenured law professor at the Harvard Law School <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/09/20/the-man-behind-critical-race-theory>

¹² The First Amendment to the United States Constitution *provides that Congress makes no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise. It protects freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the*

Stefancic, 2017, p.27-p.30) Their analysis of hate speech as a manifestation of structural racism is an important reminder that discrimination is not simply a matter of individual bias or prejudice. Instead, it is deeply embedded in social and institutional structures and requires a concerted effort to address and dismantle it.

Richard Delgado criticises the position that "*the cure for bad speech is more speech*" in a manner that urging victims of hate speech to speak back to the offender may be physically dangerous, and in other situations, as hate speech is often delivered anonymously or cowardly, making more speech is impossible. (Delgado et Stefancic, 2017, p.33)

Regarding critical race theory, it is essential to note that there are different approaches and perspectives. One such tendency is rooted in civil rights activism and aims to use moral outrage to bring about legal change. Another perspective, influenced by poststructuralism, questions the ability of legal structures to eradicate racism truly. Critical race theory, therefore, is a blend of reformist passion and critical scepticism. (Harris, 2015, p.266) The aim of critical race theory is to eradicate racial oppression, which is intertwined with other forms of oppression based on gender, class, and sexual orientation. The ultimate objective is to bring about a significant societal change, evaluated by measuring progress against a standard of fundamental social transformation. (Matsuda et al. 2018, p.6)

2.2.3 Speech Act Theory

The Speech Act Theory is a theoretical concept that considers language use as a type of action. Speech is not just about conveying information or expressing thoughts. (Dwivedi, 2022) According to this theory, every word we speak or write impacts the world around us. It is about influencing others and shaping the way we interact with the world. This idea has profound implications for understanding speech and its role in society.

John Langshaw Austin first introduced speech act theory¹³ in his well-known book "*How to do things with Words*". The basic idea of the speech act theory is that during communication, people do not simply make sentences that are answered with acceptance or denial; instead, every changing sentence in a communication situation involves the speaker's intention to carry out some things, such as

Government for a redress of grievances <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-constitution>

¹³ <https://www.thoughtco.com/speech-act-theory-1691986>

requesting, informing, and so on. (Hanna et Richards, 2019, p.3) The way we speak and the words we use are all part of our intention to convey a specific message or perform a particular action, such as asking for help or giving advice. The speech-act theory helps us understand the complexities of communication and how different intentions can shape how we interact with others.

According to Austin, statements or acts start with the building blocks of words and end with the impact those words have on an audience. He identified three characteristics of such statements: *locutionary acts*, *illocutionary acts* and *perlocutionary acts*. (Hanna et Richards, 2019, p.3)

More specifically, Speech Act Theory distinguishes between three main components of a speech act:

- a. Locutionary acts refer to creating a meaningful utterance with grammatical structure and lexical content. It is the literal meaning of the words used, spoken, or written in the sentence.
- b. Illocutionary acts represent the intended action or meaning behind the utterance. It refers to the speaker's communicative purpose or the desired effect on the listener. Illocutionary acts can be assertive as facts-stating, directive as providing instructions, commissive as making commitments, expressive as emotion or attitude expression, or declarative.
- c. Perlocutionary acts are the intended response or behaviour that a speaker hopes to evoke from a listener through their utterance. The impact or effect that the utterance has on the listener can vary, depending on how they interpret and respond to it. (Austin, 1962)

We acknowledge that language, when used as a form of communication, as a speech act, has the power to either benefit or harm an individual. The speech act theory can provide insights into how hate speech is used as a form of communication. Hate speech is a type of speech that aims to insult, degrade, or incite harm towards others. This type of speech is often expressed through derogatory slurs, insults, threats, or dehumanising language. Speech act theory provides a valuable framework for analysing hate speech. It accepts that language is not simply a means of conveying information but also a mechanism of action. Hate speech involves illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, reflecting the speaker's intention while delivering harmful outcomes and impacts.

Speech act theory provides a framework for comprehending the nature of language as more than just a tool for sharing information. According to this theory, uttering words goes beyond "saying"

something and locutions but involves performing a particular action through speech. In other words, language is not solely referential or informative but also performative, as highlighted by Austin's speech-act theory. One critical aspect of speech acts is the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. The illocutionary act refers to the intended meaning or purpose behind a speech act, while the perlocutionary act concerns the effects and consequences produced by that act. At the core, illocutionary acts focus on the direct effect of the speech act, while perlocutionary acts highlight communication's broader effects and consequences. (Özarslan, 2014, p.66)

When analysing hate speech within the framework of speech act theory, it becomes clear that it encompasses both illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. Hate speech can be viewed as illocutionary because it applies to saying something with a particular intention. The speaker or writer intentionally utilises language to express hatred or discrimination, intending to communicate a negative message towards a specific group or individual. Regardless, the impacts of hate speech spread above the speaker's intention and fall into the domain of perlocutionary speech acts. The consequences of hate speech can be effective and destructive. Such speech acts can incite violence, perpetuate discrimination, foster social divisions, and undermine the well-being of targeted individuals or communities. Discernment of hate speech through the lens of speech act theory highlights the mutual dimension of communication. It highlights that the power of speech acts lies not only in the words spoken but also in the effects they generate. While illocutionary speech acts capture the direct intent of the speaker, perlocutionary speech acts emphasise the unintentional or indirect consequences of communication. (Özarslan, 2014, p.67)

The importance of speech act theory in hate speech lies in identifying the harm such acts can cause. By understanding hate speech as a performative act, society can better manage and mitigate its impact. This may involve legal measures, educational initiatives, and promoting a culture of tolerance and respect.

It is crucial to understand that speech act theory does not support or validate hate speech but provides a framework to examine its dynamics. It helps to analyse how hate speech influences individuals and society, and its performative and persuasive aspects can be studied through this lens.

2.3 Impact of Hate Speech on Society

Society¹⁴ is defined as a complexly intricate organised group of individuals interacting with each other. This term refers to a group living together in a particular geographical area and social context. This group shares common values, beliefs and norms and is organised through various relationships, institutions, cultures, and structures. These elements shape the way people interact and behave in society.

Human society is formed by relationships between individuals built on trust, respect, communication, and care. This is the result of the evolution of modern humans, and it is what sets us apart from other species in the universe. Society creates an ethical and social environment for mutual development and progress.

However, hate speech is a destructive force that permeates society, perpetuating divisions and fueling social unrest. It is a form of dehumanisation rooted in intolerance towards cultural, racial, and religious differences. This dehumanisation often manifests in labelling certain groups as animals or in other symbolic representations that strip them of their humanity. The effects of hate speech can be hurtful, leading to violent attacks and reprisals that disrupt social stability. One of the most alarming aspects of hate speech is its promotion of violence and hate crimes when left unchecked. It manifests intolerance, stemming from an inability to comprehend and embrace human differences. By breaching the requirements of argumentative integrity, hate speech distorts the arguments put forth by target groups and unjustly blames other groups for political or social issues for which they are not responsible. This distortion obstructs reasoned discussion and prevents society from thriving.

Furthermore, hate speech perpetuates half-truths and misinformation, contributing to social unrest on a global scale. For example, the actions of terrorists who chant Islamic slogans have led to the branding of all Muslims as potential terrorists. This generalisation has led to contribute to discrimination and incited hatred towards Muslim populations in minority communities. The propagation of such false narratives fosters discrimination and inhibits the open exchange of ideas and the pursuit of truth. (Musa et Asuquo, 2021, p. 330)

¹⁴Giddens, A. (2009). *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. In his book, he provides foundational work in sociological theory that seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex relationship between individuals and society.
<https://kuleuven.limo.libis.be/discovery>

At a certain level, hate speech can lead to decreased empathy and social norms. Repeated exposure to harmful and insulting language can desensitise people and make them more accepting of discriminatory beliefs. This can lead to difficulties in building connections with those who are different, ultimately contributing to divisions and animosity between groups. Also, hate speech has the potential to incite violent and insulting behaviour. Dehumanising certain groups through inflammatory language can make aggression acceptable and normalise violent behaviour. The use of hate speech poses a significant risk to the public's safety, as it can result in physical and physiological harm to those targeted.

Additionally, it violates personal freedoms by denying individuals their right to dignity, equality, and freedom of speech. This can create fear and intimidation, silencing voices and limiting diverse perspectives. The result is the suppression of individual liberties, hampers societal progress and restricts the democratic principles upon which modern societies are built. For instance, there are several cases when politicians use hate speech against certain groups, which only worsens things. By singling out ethnic or religious communities, they make society even more divided and hostile towards each other. This kind of talk makes people more defensive of their groups and aggressive towards others, leading to even more tension and conflict. (Vasist et al., 2023)

In the literature, types of harm caused by hate speech in society are distinguished, causing both constitutive and consequential harm. On the one hand, constitutive harms occur during the act of hate speech itself. Studies have demonstrated that hate speech can unjustly place certain groups in subservient positions, silencing their voices and perpetuating power imbalances in social structures. This can cause psychological distress, self-esteem problems, and limitations on their freedom of movement and association. Furthermore, hate speech indirectly harms dignity and disregards the lives of others who depend on our regard. These constitutive harms affect individuals and contribute to maintaining power imbalances based on race within society. Consequential harms, on the other hand, occur as a result of hate speech. It can persuade hearers to believe negative stereotypes, shape their preferences, and normalise expressing and acting upon discriminatory views. Recognising that hate speech can have serious consequences, including harmful behaviour, discrimination, and violence, is essential. Although some may question the evidence, a growing body of research indicates a connection between hate speech and discriminatory actions. (Gelber et McNamara, 2016, p.325)

In addition, another distinction between face-to-face encounters and generally circulated hate speech events is made. Face-to-face encounters can be more easily addressed legally, such as causing a

breach of the peace or incitement to violence. However, hate speech that circulates widely poses a more controversial challenge for regulation, particularly in countries like the United States, where constitutional protections for public discourse limit statutory prohibition. Nonetheless, widely circulating hate speech can still cause harm, as it contributes to a climate of racism and informs others about its presence in society. (Gelber et McNamara, 2016, p.326)

3. Hate Speech in Greece: Overview and Analysis

3.1 Historical Factors and Societal Dynamics of Hate Speech in Greece

3.1.1 Historical Factors

From a historical perspective¹⁵, Greece's history is loaded with conflicts, invasions, and territorial disputes that have created lasting enmity among different groups based on ethnicity, religion, and nationality. Significant events like the Ottoman occupation, the Balkan Wars, and population exchanges after the Greece's and Turkiye's War have become deeply ingrained in collective memory, leading to ongoing tensions in modern times. Within this historical context, hate speech finds fertile ground to propagate.

Greece endured the burdensome yoke of Ottoman rule for centuries, marked by subjugation and cultural suppression. The memories of this occupation have left deep scars, fostering resentment and animosity towards the Ottoman Empire and, by extension, towards those of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The subsequent Balkan Wars further ignited the flames of discord as Greece clashed with its neighbours over territorial claims and national aspirations. (Koliopoulos et Veremis, 2006)

In the aftermath of the War between Greece and Turkiye, a turbulent chapter unfolded with population exchanges between Greece and Turkey. Thousands were uprooted from their homes, forced to abandon their ancestral lands and resettle in unfamiliar territories. This displacement engendered a sense of displacement and bitterness among Greeks and Turks, providing a breeding ground for hate

¹⁵ Based on the book of Koliopoulos I.et Veremis Th., (2006) *Greece: The Modern Sequel From 1821 to the Present*

speech to flourish. (Koliopoulos et Veremis, 2006) These historical factors have played an influential role in shaping the social fabric of Greece, fostering an environment where hate speech can take root.

Greek nationalism, deeply entrenched in the concept of Hellenism and the country's rich historical legacy, has profoundly influenced the formation of Greek identity throughout history. It has often evoked a sense of collective pride and solidarity among Greeks, drawing upon the glory of ancient Greece and its cultural achievements. (Beaton, 2019)¹⁶ However, the shadow side of this nationalism has manifested in the emergence of exclusionary attitudes and intolerance towards individuals perceived as "others."

These attitudes are mainly directed towards immigrants and minority groups, viewed by some as threats to Greek culture's perceived purity and authenticity. Fueled by a desire to preserve a traditional way of life, such views often result in the proliferation of hate speech. By dehumanising and marginalising those considered different, individuals with nationalistic sentiments perpetuate an atmosphere of animosity and discrimination.

It is essential to recognise that hate speech arises from a complex interplay of historical and societal factors. Historical experiences, such as the struggles for independence and territorial disputes, have shaped collective memories and fostered a strong sense of national identity. Meanwhile, societal divisions and economic uncertainties may fuel anxieties, making it easier for hate speech to find fertile ground.

3.1.2 Societal Dynamics

In the midst of economic turmoil and social strain, Greece has witnessed a concerning rise in hate speech.

Over the past years, the country has endured immense economic challenges¹⁷ characterised by soaring unemployment rates and austere measures. (Aspiridis et al., 2014, p.172) During financial hardship, it is common for society to blame marginalised groups and use them as scapegoats. This phenomenon has regrettably fueled the propagation of hate speech, mainly targeting immigrants, refugees, and minority communities. In their search for answers, some individuals have turned to intolerance and prejudice in a misguided attempt to find solace or assign responsibility for societal

¹⁶ Based on the book of Roderick Beaton (2019) *Greece Biography of a Modern Nation*

¹⁷ A timeline of Greece's economic crisis <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/greeces-debt-crisis-timeline>

problems. This troubling trend highlights the vulnerability of those already marginalised and often facing hardships.

The rise of far right and extremist political parties, notably the Golden Dawn¹⁸, has significantly fueled this unfortunate trend. These groups have cunningly utilised hate speech as a potent tool to further their agendas, frequently directing their vitriol towards vulnerable populations such as immigrants, refugees, and minority communities. Although Golden Dawn has been officially outlawed, its lingering influence and the ideologies it once propagated continue to cast a shadow over certain circles within Greek society¹⁹.

The impact of political extremism on hate speech cannot be understated. It has served as a catalyst, spreading divisive rhetoric, and fostering an atmosphere of intolerance. The words of these extremist groups have resonated with some individuals, deepening pre-existing prejudices and exacerbating social divisions. Moreover, hate speech can dehumanise marginalised communities, making them susceptible to discrimination, violence, and exclusion from the wider Greek society. (Halikiopoulou, 2020) Normalising hate speech within certain circles has created an environment where individuals feel emboldened to express discriminatory views without fear of retribution. This normalisation poses a significant challenge to fostering inclusivity and social cohesion.

3.2 Public Discourse Landscape in Greece

3.2.1 Hate Speech on Mainstream Media

In the ever-changing landscape of media, hate speech has found its way into the Greek mass media, reflecting a shift in societal dynamics and the influence of powerful elites. The prevailing theoretical

¹⁸ Golden Dawn was a Greek far-right political organisation founded in the 1980s. It gained prominence in the early 2010s and became notorious for its ultranationalist and xenophobic beliefs, promoting an anti-immigrant and anti-refugee agenda. Their symbol was the swastika, and even though they denied that their party was a neo - nazist, their beliefs were rooted in nazism. In 2012 this party got elected in the Greek parliament. In 2013 a member of Golden Dawn killed Pavlos Fyssas, and several members were arrested and charged with various crimes, as the legal proceedings revealed evidence of the party's involvement in acts of violence, including the assault of immigrants and left-wing activists. In 2020, a Greek court ruled that Golden Dawn was a criminal organization, leading to its official outlawing.

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/134518/golden-dawn-verdict-guilty-fascism-greece-party>

¹⁹ On June 25, 2023, three parties with far-rights beliefs were elected in the Greek elections and gained 13% of the vote. Their names are Spartiates (Spartans), Niki (Victory) and Elliniki Lisi (The Greek Solution). It is worth noting that the Spartans party is inextricably linked to the Golden Dawn party, as the President of the Spartiates, Vassilis Stigas, made official statements and thanked the convicted for criminal organisation Elias Kasidiaris for his pre-electoral support.

<https://www.dw.com/en/greece-far-right-makes-resurgence/a-66085348>

framework attributes this phenomenon to the control exerted by social elites and influential media entities, who employ propaganda methods and public relations to disseminate their values and prejudices, thereby strengthening their ideological hegemony. (Vamvakas, 2020)

According to Vamvakas (2020) the rise of globalisation and new media technologies has challenged the dominance of the socio-political elites and their associated ideologies. Instead, a growing sense of dissatisfaction with these elites has permeated the international public sphere. The Greek public sphere has swiftly embraced this new development, witnessing constant changes in communication methods, factors, and dimensions.

Within this context, the Greek mass media has experienced a proliferation of sensationalism, polarised representations, hostile confrontations, doomsday scenarios, conspiracy theories, and the revival of national stereotypes. It is important to note that the prevalence of a bipolar or sensational public sphere is not entirely novel in Greek society. Populism, nationalism, and the violent vulgarisation of public discourse have persisted since the post-junta period²⁰. (ibid p.50)

However, what has occurred since 2009 is an unprecedented intensification and dissemination of these characteristics, largely facilitated by the political and journalistic discourse found in the new media landscape. The result has been the emergence of a massive yet individualised mode of expression the manifestation of hate speech. (Nikolopoulou et al., 2022)

A notable case²¹ involving women living with HIV in Greece is the 2012 incident when Andreas Loverdos, as PASOK Health Minister, made public the names and photographs of 11 HIV-positive women on charges of deliberately infecting people while allegedly working as prostitutes, which revealed the challenges and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS in the country but also contributed to the demonisation of sex work.

The incident involved arresting women, mostly sex workers, accused of deliberately transmitting HIV to clients. The media coverage surrounding this case was sensational and fuelled public panic, spreading fear and hostility towards people with HIV/AIDS. The portrayal of these women was characterised by sensationalism, creating an atmosphere of moral crisis, and fostering negative stereotypes. News agencies often used stigmatising language and portrayed the accused women as

²⁰ Junta, or The Regime of the Colonels, was a right-wing military dictatorship that governed Greece from 1967 to 1974. <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/07/24/archives/article-2-no-title-greek-junta-bids-civilians-resume-power.html>

²¹ The Greek court finally acquitted these women of charges in 2016. Dima (2016)

https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiosyni/93555_athootherikan-oi-orothetikes-poy-diapompeytikan-2012

deliberate transmitters of the virus, further contributing to the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS. (Moraiti, 2022)

The reports about HIV transmission lacked a deeper understanding of its complexities and, as a result, reinforced misconceptions about the virus. This led to discrimination and social exclusion for those with HIV/AIDS who struggled to access healthcare, employment, and social support. Unfortunately, the media's coverage of this issue has contributed to stigma and hate speech against affected women.

It has been observed how hate speech is perpetuated through media channels. One troubling aspect is the biased portrayal of individuals based on their nationality, which only serves to deepen discrimination and racism.

In examining the news presented by the media, a disturbing pattern emerges. When a crime involves a Greek perpetrator, the media avoids mentioning their nationality²². Instead, the emphasis is placed on their profession or social status. This intentional omission suggests an attempt to shield individuals from negative stereotypes associated with their nationality. However, a different approach is taken when the perpetrator is a foreigner, or immigrant. In such cases, their nationality is prominently highlighted, creating an association between their actions and their background.

Sadly, this biased reporting fosters a divisive environment, fueling discrimination and racism. When citizens witness crimes committed by individuals from different nationalities, they tend to generalise and associate the entire group with those actions. This generalisation perpetuates stereotypes, causing individuals from the same nationality to be unfairly judged and marginalised.

Moreover, the media's biased portrayal of individuals based on nationality exacerbates discrimination and racism, as aptly demonstrated by the disparities in reporting when the perpetrator's background is Greek versus foreign. This skewed emphasis not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes but also fuels divisiveness and unjust marginalisation within society.

One of the characteristic examples is the moment when the journalist Nikos Evaggelatos (2022), on air, chose to report on the arrest of a man of Albanian origin who was carrying a gun: *"Well, what more common thing could happen?"* (Mega TV, YouTube, 2022) This contributes to racist, discriminatory

²² One of the most typical cases is when in 2021, Babis Anagnostopoulos killed his wife, Caroline, in their home in Attica. The media presented the perpetrator throughout the case as "the pilot", as that was his profession.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/11/caroline-crouch-murder-trial-greek-pilot-babis-anagnostopoulos-court>

rhetoric and "albanophobia". However, it is known in the country how, since the 1990s, the word "Albanian" has been used to describe someone as inferior or to diminish them, and the media have played a decisive role on that. The journalist's unfortunate choice of words in reporting an arrest based on nationality further underscores the media's role in perpetuating discriminatory rhetoric. It is evident that the media's historical influence has contributed to the unjust connotations associated with certain nationalities, as well as the perpetuation of prejudiced attitudes.

The convergence of media, societal dynamics, and powerful influences has propelled hate speech into the forefront of Greek mass media. Addressing this pressing issue requires a collective effort from both media entities and society at large, aimed at fostering a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed discourse that celebrates diversity and dismantles prejudice. Only through such concerted action can Greek mass media truly serve as a vehicle for constructive dialogue, understanding, and positive social change.

3.2.2 Online Platforms and Social Media

In the modern age of technology, people primarily use the internet and social media to connect and communicate worldwide. However, this rapid progress has also resulted in a concerning issue called hate speech.

Hate speech has found a troubling presence on online platforms, where individuals take advantage of the perceived anonymity and distance provided by the internet to unleash venomous attacks. Social media platforms have witnessed the rapid spread of hate speech due to their large user base and ease of sharing and distributing content. (Alkiviadou, 2019)

The outcomes of this harmful behaviour are widespread and profound, causing psychological harm, deepening divisions within communities, and even inciting real-world violence. In addition, these attacks often affect marginalized groups the most, which worsens existing social inequalities and discrimination. (Guiora et Park, 2017)

The existence of hate speech on social media and online platforms is a significant issue for society. It contradicts the essential values of equality, inclusion, and respect crucial for a harmonious digital atmosphere.

The case of Former Metropolitan Bishop of Kalavryta Ambrosios²³, is a significant case for hate rhetoric in Greece. Amvrosios has been accused of public incitement to racist violence or hatred and abuse, following an apparently homophobic text that he posted in December 2015 on his personal website entitled “ *SCUM OF SOCIETY RAISED THEIR HEADS!*”. In his text he stated that “ *Homosexuality is an aberration from the Laws of Nature! It is a social crime! It is a sin! So those who either experience it or support it are not normal people! They are scum of society!*” and he continued by urging his readers to “ *So do not hesitate! When and where you meet them, spit on them! Don't let them raise their heads! They are dangerous!*”

In January 2019, the Court of Appeal of Greece found him guilty and sentenced him to a total of 7 months imprisonment with a three-year suspension. The counsel for the prosecution, Papapantoleon²⁴ stressed that “ *It is a historic decision for Greece and fully in line with European standards. It is the first time that a limit has been set at the highest judicial level on inflammatory, racist speech, on speech that incites hatred and violence...*” (Spiggou, 2020)

In recent years, Greece has witnessed disturbing incidents that highlight the deep-rooted issue of hate speech against the Roma community. Two tragic events, occurring in October 2021²⁵ and December 2022²⁶, brought to the forefront the stark reality of discrimination and prejudice faced by the Roma population. In both cases, young Roma individuals lost their lives due to the actions of law enforcement officers, shedding light on a broader pattern of injustice.

The aftermath of these incidents revealed a distressing trend of hate speech and anti-Gypsyism on prominent social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter. The vitriolic comments that emerged, such as "one less gipsy" and the unwarranted blame placed on the victims solely because of their Roma identity, expose a concerning undercurrent of prejudice within Greek society. This hate-fueled rhetoric perpetuates harmful stereotypes and further marginalizes an already vulnerable community.

²³ <https://www.syntagmawatch.gr/trending-issues/pote-apotelei-egklima-o-ratsistikos-omofovikos-logos/>

²⁴ <https://www.ethnos.gr/greece/article/113061/katadikhambrosioystonareiopagogiatoratsistikokaiomofobikokhrygma>

²⁵ Police officer killed Nikos Sampanis, an 18-year-old Roma, in 2021, <https://govwatch.gr/en/finds/police-killing-of-nikos-sampanis-racial-profiling-and-violation-of-the-rules-of-police-engagement/>

²⁶ Kostas Fragoulis, 16-year-old Roma, were shouted by a police officer in 2022,

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1200135/roma-teenager-shot-during-police-chase-dies/>

In a poignant statement, the Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma²⁷ denounced the recurring hate speech and anti-Gypsyism perpetuated by specific media segments. This reprehensible racist discourse from both political and journalistic circles underscores the urgent need for societal introspection and change.

Alexandra Karagianni, a lawyer and the Special Secretary for Human Rights of the Confederation, brought to light a critical misconception that plagues public perception of the Roma community. She refutes the misguided notion that Roma willingly chose a life of destitution and isolation. The prevailing stereotype linking Roma with marginalization and criminality fails to acknowledge the systemic barriers and lack of opportunities contributing to their disadvantaged circumstances.

Karagianni's observation about the evolution of hate crimes is particularly significant. The progression from everyday discrimination and marginalization to outright racist violence highlights the dangerous trajectory fueled by prejudice. Hate crimes do not emerge overnight; they evolve gradually, growing in intensity until they threaten entire communities.

Moreover, Karagianni challenges the entrenched stereotype of Roma's identity. She emphasizes that Roma individuals are not defined by marginalization and low educational attainment but rather by their potential when afforded equal opportunities. The cultural identity of the Roma should not be conflated with their living conditions, as the latter is symptomatic of systemic inequalities rather than intrinsic aspects of their identity.

The prevalence of hate speech in the digital era is a grave concern, undermining the principles of inclusivity and respect. The legal actions taken against hate speech and the awakening to its impact on marginalized communities stand as vital steps toward fostering a more just and understanding society.

²⁷ The Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma was established on 27 September 2016 and is the first tertiary association in the history of the Greek Roma in order to represent, support and integrate the Greek Roma in the Greek and European community while respecting the cultural tradition of the Roma. <https://ellanpasse.com/>

4. Impact and Targets of Hate Speech in Greece

4.1 The Impact of Hate Speech in Greek Society

It is clear how hate speech is institutionalised in public discourse in Greece when established organisations, institutions, or systems within society promote or endorse hateful or discriminatory messages. When hate speech is allowed as part of the policies or practices of political parties, journalists in media, or religious representatives, it can lead to negative consequences. (Vamvakas, 2020)

Hate speech becomes institutionalised, meaning it is deeply ingrained within the structures and processes of society. Discriminatory beliefs or attitudes can be perpetuated or legitimised through official statements, policies, laws, or actions.

Greece experienced an extended economic crisis and political instability, which heightened social tensions and grievances. (Aspridis, 2014) The financial crisis and the arrival of refugees and migrants provided an environment that allowed for the emergence of populist and far-right movements. (Galanopoulos, 2013)

The use of hate speech causes social divisions and reduces social cohesion. It can worsen tensions between different ethnic, religious, and social groups. In Greece, where there are already economic challenges, there has been an increase in xenophobic attitudes and hostility toward minorities. Hate speech promotes a "us vs. them mentality," undermining trust and solidarity among diverse communities. (Lazaridis et Veikou, 2016)

When hate speech becomes normal and accepted, it creates an environment that promotes discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. This can lead to the marginalisation of vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals, and religious minorities. The normalisation of hate speech can foster a hostile environment that excludes and discriminates against these groups, potentially leading to violence.

The erosion of democratic values is a severe concern caused by hate speech. It can harm the principles of equality, free speech, and respect for human rights. When hate speech is not addressed, it can create a climate of intolerance and cause damage to democratic values. In Greece, this has led to attacks on journalists, activists, and human rights defenders who speak out against hate speech and far-right ideologies. (ECRI, 2022)

The emergence of the far right in Greece can be partly attributed to political opportunism. The combination of economic difficulties and dissatisfaction with mainstream political groups created an opening for extremist groups to manipulate public grievances. These groups cleverly utilised hate speech and anti-immigrant language to tap into the frustration of a section of the populace searching for simple solutions to complex issues. (Lazaridis et Skeparis, 2015)

Golden Dawn, a former far-right party, experienced significant political gains in Greece as it entered the Greek Parliament in 2012 with close to 7% of the vote²⁸. In the 2015 elections, it became the third party, maintaining roughly the same percentage²⁹.

Golden Dawn's anti-immigrant rhetoric centred around the slogan "every foreign worker is a Greek unemployed" and "Greece belongs to the Greeks"³⁰ Their rhetoric and actions have contributed to hostility towards immigrants in Greece. They have been involved in violent attacks against immigrants, homosexuals, and political opponents, often carrying out pogrom-like actions against these groups.

Despite the fact that many members of this party have been convicted of being involved in crimes and attacks, and the party has been classified as a criminal organization in 2020, in recent elections in June 2023 in Greece, it is observed the reappearance of far-right representation in Parliament. As three parties, Spartans (Spartiates), a party expressed by neo-Nazi far-right beliefs, inextricably linked to Golden Dawn with close to 5%, the Hellenic Solution (Elliniki Lysi), a nationalist party represented by far-right rhetoric with close to 4.5% and Victory (Niki), a party with fundamentalistic and far-right elements close to 4%³¹.

The rise of those parties can be attributed to various factors, as it is mentioned above. These parties use hate and anti-systemic rhetoric to exploit the country's social, political, and economic situation. The reappearance of far-right representation in recent elections indicates the need for continued vigilance against hate speech and its detrimental effects on Greek society.

²⁸ Official web site of Ministry of Internal Affairs in Greece
<https://www.ypes.gr/ekloges/ethnikes-ekloges>

²⁹ ibid

³⁰ Based on the slogan "Deutschland den Deutschen", as Nazis used it.

³¹ Official website of Ministry of Internal Affairs in Greece
<https://www.ypes.gr/ekloges/ethnikes-ekloges>

4.2 Target Groups and Communities

Hate speech can target various groups and communities in Greece, as in any other country. It is important to note that hate speech is harmful and unacceptable behaviour that goes against the principles of tolerance, respect, and human rights. The focus is on migrants and refugees, the LGBTQ+ community, religious minorities, the disability community, and women. This examination aims to shed light on the extent of hate speech in Greece, its impact on these groups, and the underlying factors contributing to its propagation. Historically, groups and communities that have been targeted by hate speech in Greece include:

Migrants and Refugees:

In the 1990s, Greece became a destination for a wave of immigrants from Eastern Bloc countries and Albania, which had a dictatorial communist regime. Greece's geographical location has made it a prominent entry point for migrants and refugees seeking to enter Europe. This has fueled debates and often hostile rhetoric surrounding migration and refugee issues. Various ethnic groups, including Albanians, Roma, Pakistanis, Syrians, and others, reside in Greece and have endured discrimination and hate speech. Hate speech against migrants and refugees is evident in both mainstream media and social media platforms. Online groups promoting nationalist sentiment and xenophobia further exacerbate the issue. This rhetoric not only fosters an unwelcoming environment but also perpetuates negative stereotypes, contributing to the marginalization of these communities and leading to physical attacks and hate crimes.

LGBTQ+ Community:

Discrimination and hate speech against LGBTQ+ individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity persist in Greece. The case of Amvrosios illustrates the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people, while inaccurate and stigmatising media reporting regarding intersex individuals perpetuates societal prejudice. Although not all distorted media reporting constitutes hate speech, it contributes to the stigmatisation of LGBTQ+ individuals, hindering societal acceptance and understanding. The use of inappropriate terminology and expressions further fuels hate speech and misconceptions.

Religious Minorities:

Greece's predominant Greek Orthodox Christian identity coexists with religious minorities, such as Muslims and Jews, who encounter discrimination and hate speech. Anti-Semitic incidents, exemplified by derogatory language against Jews and attacks on Jewish sites, highlight the deep-rooted bias present in Greek society. Public figures' denial of the Holocaust further perpetuates hate speech and undermines the historical suffering of these communities. Religious minorities face barriers to full integration due to hate speech and discriminatory actions.

Disability Community:

Individuals with disabilities are also vulnerable to hate speech due to misconceptions and stereotypes. Prejudices and stereotypes against people with disabilities persist, hindering their social inclusion and reinforcing negative attitudes. Hate speech exacerbates these challenges by perpetuating harmful narratives that undermine the dignity and agency of individuals with disabilities.

Women:

As in many others, gender-based hate speech, sexism, and misogyny are prevalent in Greek society. The emergence of the "Me Too" movement in Greece unveiled the extent of sexist hate speech directed at women who spoke out about abuse. Comments trivialising women's experiences, victim-blaming, and questioning their motives demonstrate deeply ingrained gender biases. This form of hate speech silences survivors and perpetuates a culture of impunity for perpetrators.

The pervasive presence of hate speech targeting various marginalised groups and communities in Greece reflects a concerning and distressing reality. Hate speech not only undermines the principles of tolerance, respect, and human rights but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes, fosters discrimination, and contributes to the marginalisation of these groups.

The examination of hate speech against migrants and refugees reveals the harmful impact of hostile rhetoric on these communities, both in traditional media and online platforms. The LGBTQ+ community continues to battle discrimination fueled by inaccurate media reporting and societal prejudice, hindering their acceptance and understanding. Religious minorities face the weight of historical biases and denial of their experiences, impeding their integration and inclusivity. Individuals with disabilities encounter misconceptions and stereotypes exacerbated by hate speech, inhibiting their social integration and agency. Moreover, the prevalence of gender-based hate speech and misogyny underscore the urgent need to address profoundly ingrained gender biases.

It is imperative for Greek society and societies worldwide to acknowledge and combat the propagation of hate speech. We can dismantle the harmful narratives that perpetuate discrimination and marginalisation by fostering a culture of acceptance, understanding, and empathy. Embracing diversity and promoting open dialogue will be pivotal in fostering an environment where all individuals can thrive, free from the detrimental effects of hate speech. As we move forward, it is crucial to champion human rights, challenge stereotypes, and collectively work towards a more inclusive and compassionate society for everyone.

5. Correlation between Hate Speech and Hate Crimes in Greece

5.1 Definition and Classification of Hate Crimes

Crime, a concept deeply ingrained in human societies, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that eludes a universal definition. Crime is defined as the violation of criminal law, an action or activity that constitutes an offence that may lead to prosecution and punishment. While the legal definition of crime is widely accepted within the field of criminology, David O. Friedrichs (2015) challenges this notion, asserting that the meaning of crime is contingent upon the context in which it is employed.

Nevertheless, scholars have proposed alternative ways to define crime, transcending the boundaries of criminal law and encompassing a broader understanding of its implications. Lynch et al. (2015) present three distinct perspectives to elucidate the nature of crime.

Firstly, crimes can be viewed as behaviors that inflict harm upon others, thereby impeding their ability to maintain their health and livelihood. (Lynch et al., 2015, p.124) Such actions deprive individuals of the fundamental conditions necessary for their well-being and hinder the pursuit of a fulfilling life. This perspective highlights the profound social and economic consequences that criminal acts can impose upon communities.

Secondly, crimes occur through a variety of means, including expropriation, trickery, deception, and the use of force. Offenders employ these tactics to unlawfully acquire the possessions, monetary resources, or property rights of others. (ibid) By engaging in such activities, criminals undermine the principles of justice, fairness, and respect for individual autonomy. This perspective emphasizes the violation of personal and property rights inherent in criminal behavior.

Lastly, crimes extend beyond the actions of individuals and can also be perpetrated by states and their recognized entities. In this context, crimes manifest as intentional acts undertaken by

governments to harm other nations or their agencies, or to infringe upon the rights of global citizens, as recognized by the United Nations. (ibid)

Moving on to exploring the definition of crime, we focus on examining a specific type of crime, the hate crime. Hate crimes, as defined by scholars Jack McDevitt and Jack Levin (2002), are a specific category of crimes that demonstrate clear indications of prejudice or bias based on factors such as race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical or mental disabilities, and gender. This definition encompasses various offences committed against individuals or groups targeted because of their inherent characteristics or affiliations.

The underlying motive of bias or prejudice sets hate crimes apart from other criminal acts. Rather than focusing solely on the act, hate crimes consider the perpetrator's intention to harm or intimidate the victim based on their perceived differences. These crimes target the immediate victim and the broader community they belong to, aiming to instill fear, create division, and perpetuate discrimination. Notably, the concept of hate crimes has yet to establish a new, separate category of offences. Instead, it augments traditional criminal acts by incorporating the determination of bias motivation. This means that hate crimes are prosecuted alongside existing offences but with an added consideration of the perpetrator's prejudiced intent. (ibid)

The inclusion of various protected characteristics in the definition of hate crimes reflects society's recognition that discrimination and prejudice can take different forms and affect diverse communities. By incorporating race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disabilities, and gender, the definition acknowledges the multiple dimensions along which bias, and hate can be directed.

Establishing clear-cut and universally agreed-upon definitions for different forms of crime has always been challenging, and hate crime is no exception. Defining hate crime is particularly difficult due to the subjective nature of hate itself.

The immediate response to defining hate crime might be to suggest that it refers to crimes motivated by hatred. However, this is only partially accurate. Hate crimes are not solely about offenders hating the victim; instead, the crucial characteristic is the victim's group affiliation, not the perpetrator's hatred. For instance, a hate crime does not necessarily require the offender to hate the victim; it is enough that the victim belongs to a certain group.

One interpretation of hate crime points out that most victims are members of distinct racial or ethnic minority groups that are economically and politically less powerful than the majority. This

definition emphasizes hate crime as the victimization of minorities based on their racial or ethnic identity by majority members.

While this interpretation provides insight into power dynamics, it has limitations. It may neglect other minority groups vulnerable to power imbalances and not fully explore how hate crime contributes to subordination. Sheffield's definition as mentioned in Neil Chakraborti and Jon Garland (2015)³² is more comprehensive, suggesting that hate crime is motivated by social and political factors perpetuated by belief systems that legitimize violence. This view recognizes the impact of broader ideologies and patterns of inequality.

Perry's framework as mentioned in Neil Chakraborti and Jon Garland (2015) delves further into the social process of hate crime, emphasizing its role in reinforcing societal hierarchies. In this sense, a hate crime is an act of power and oppression to maintain the perpetrator's group's dominance and the victim's subordinate identity. This framework highlights the complexity of hate crime and its dynamic nature involving context, structure, and agency. Perry also stresses the group identity of the victim, viewing hate crimes as acts of violence and intimidation not only towards the victim but also towards the community they belong to. Hate crimes are seen as conveying a message that the victim's group is different and does not belong. The symbolic nature of hate crimes often leads to them being perpetrated against strangers without personal contact.

Researchers, have adopted a broader definition, considering hate crimes as acts of violence and intimidation towards individuals based on their identity or perceived "difference." This definition acknowledges that victims may be targeted not solely due to their group membership but also their vulnerability or perceived difference. (Chakraborti et Garland, 2015)

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR, OSCE 2022)³³ guides the framing hate crime laws, defining hate crimes as "criminal acts committed with a bias motive." This definition emphasizes that hate does not need to be the primary motive, but rather the victim is targeted due to a particular "protected characteristic." This underlying motive distinguishes hate crimes from other types of offences. A hate crime is not limited to a single category of offence; it can manifest as an act of intimidation, threats, property damage, assault, murder, or any other criminal act. The terms "hate crime," "bias-motivated crime," or "bias crime" serve to define a category of crime rather than

³² The book is by N.Chakraborti et J.Garland (2015), "*Hate Crime: Impact, Causes & Responses.*" published in 2016 online at <https://sk.sagepub.com/Books/hate-crime-2e>

³³ The "*Hate crime laws: A practical guide*", 2nd edition by the official website of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) 2022 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/guides-related-to-hate-crime>

being a precise legal designation within a penal code. It is important to note that a person might commit a hate crime in a country without specific criminal penalties concerning bias or prejudice. Therefore, these terms serve as conceptual concepts rather than strict legal definitions.

Hate crimes consist of two essential elements: a criminal offence carried out with a biased motive. The first element is the criminal offence itself, which must fall under the purview of ordinary criminal law. In this context, it is referred to as the "base offence." Due to minor differences in legal provisions across countries, there might be variations in the nature of the conduct that constitutes a crime. Nonetheless, in most jurisdictions, violent acts are generally criminalized. For a hate crime to be recognized, there must be an underlying base offence. The second element of a hate crime is the motivation behind the criminal act, referred to as "bias" in this context. For an act to qualify as a hate crime, it must target one or more individuals associated with a group that shares a common characteristic, known as "protected characteristics." These protected characteristics are the fundamental identity traits shared by a group, such as race, language, religion or belief, ethnicity, nationality, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other defining feature.

Hate crime legislation typically revolves around two fundamental models that address bias motivation:

- a. The hostility model: This model centres on expressions of hostility directed at the protected characteristic immediately before, during, or after an attack.
- b. The discriminatory selection model: This model is based on the legal premise that the perpetrator deliberately chose the victim of the crime because of their possession of a protected characteristic.

In conclusion, hate crimes entail criminal acts committed with a biased motive, targeting individuals based on possessing certain protected characteristics. While there are variations in the legal provisions across different countries, hate crimes universally require both a base offence and a discriminatory motive. Policymakers must carefully consider the historical and socio-cultural context when deciding which characteristics to include in hate crime legislation.

5.2 Link between Hate Speech and Hate Crime

Before delving into the connection between hate speech and hate crimes, it is essential to mention what constitutes hate speech. In general terms, hate speech encompasses verbal, written, or symbolic expressions promoting hatred, hostility, or violence against individuals or groups based on race,

ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other identifying characteristics. Such language dehumanises and marginalises targeted communities, fostering an atmosphere of animosity and division.

By normalising prejudices and stereotypes, hate speech can contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination and social exclusion. It cultivates an environment where individuals feel justified in acting out their biases, potentially escalating into hate-driven violence. (Gerstenfeld, 2018)

While it is essential to acknowledge that not all hate speech directly leads to hate crimes, there is a significant correlation between the two phenomena. Hate speech can create a fertile breeding ground for hate crimes by inspiring and motivating individuals who already harbour extremist views.

This “spiral of hate” illustrates how hate speech can fuel a vicious cycle of escalating violence. As hate speech proliferates, it emboldens hate-motivated individuals, leading to an increase in hate crimes. Subsequently, these hate crimes can further amplify the cycle of hostility, fostering an environment where more extreme forms of hate speech are encouraged. Hate speech, with its power to incite hostility and animosity, can be a precursor to hate-motivated violence. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat intolerance and discrimination.

Hate speech and hate crimes are intertwined phenomena that have become more visible in modern societies. The "Pyramid of Hate"³⁴ is a conceptual model for understanding the escalation of discriminatory behaviour from attitudes and stereotypes to genocide. In this paper, we utilize the Pyramid of Hate to analyze the correlation between hate speech and hate crimes and shed light on the factors that contribute to this troubling relationship.

The Pyramid of Hate, initially developed by the Anti-Defamation League³⁵, is a visual representation of how biased attitudes can escalate to acts of violence and even genocide. The base of the pyramid comprises cultural and societal factors, such as stereotypes and prejudices, which can fuel the progression towards more severe forms of hate expression. The subsequent levels of the pyramid include verbal expressions of hate, biased attitudes, discrimination, violence, and genocide. By analyzing hate speech and hate crimes through this framework, we can gain insights into the interconnectedness of these phenomena and the potential dangers they pose to society.

³⁴ <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/pyramid-of-hate.pdf>

³⁵ Anti-League Defamation is a worldwide organisation fighting against hate, antisemitism and all forms of bias. According to its official website, it is founded in 1913. <https://www.adl.org/>

Hate speech occupies a significant position in the Pyramid of Hate. It is situated at the level of verbal expressions of hate, and its influence can be far-reaching. Language has the power to shape attitudes and behaviours, making hate speech a crucial factor in the progression towards hate crimes. Hate speech can normalize prejudiced beliefs and perpetuate harmful stereotypes, leading individuals to view violence against targeted groups as acceptable or even necessary.

Several mechanisms contribute to the correlation between hate speech and hate crimes: a. Online echo chambers and social media algorithms can foster the spread of hate speech, reinforcing existing beliefs and radicalizing individuals. This can lead some individuals to translate their hate speech into violent actions.

b. Hate speech often dehumanises the targeted group, reducing empathy and making violence against them more palatable for perpetrators.

c. In-group/out-group dynamics can create an "us versus them" mentality, where hate speech reinforces group cohesion and justifies hostility towards perceived outsiders. d. Repeated exposure to hate speech can desensitise individuals to its harmful effects, making it more likely for them to engage in or support hate crimes.

5.3 Hate Crime Landscape in Greece

Hate crime, a pervasive issue affecting societies globally has unique dynamics and complexities in Greece. This text delves into the intricate web of hate crime reporting and data collection in the country, revealing the multifaceted relationships and connections within its criminal justice system. The analysis is informed by an extensive victim-centred framework based on international norms and standards, aiming to assess the national situation comprehensively.

The linear criminal justice process presented in the Journey graphic is just the tip of the iceberg in Greece's efforts to address hate crime. The intricate web of relationships and connections shapes the broader hate crime recording and data collection system. Collaborative endeavours and ongoing consultations have given rise to a methodological approach rooted in international norms and standards, aiming to foster an inclusive assessment of hate crime. This approach transcends conventional methods and aligns itself with initiatives such as OSCE-ODIHR's Key Observations Framework and its INFAHCT Programme.

A groundbreaking interactive "Systems Map" offers an insightful visualisation of these connections. It provides stakeholders with a platform to collaboratively describe, diagnose, and prioritize actions for improving hate crime recording and data collection. This map's innovative approach facilitates a holistic understanding of the existing system and its strengths and weaknesses.

The Racist Violence Recording Network³⁶ stands as the central driving force behind hate crime visibility efforts in Greece. With strong connections to hate crime-affected communities and relevant government bodies, it has been instrumental in pushing the agenda forward. However, the absence of a fully implemented strategic framework has resulted in relatively weak connections between crucial actors, including law enforcement, victims, prosecution services, and government ministries. Recent developments, such as the establishment of a strategic inter-agency working group and planned training initiatives, hold promise for bolstering the system.

The data-sharing landscape in Greece reveals an interesting pattern. While public authorities actively share hate crime data with international entities like the European Commission, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, and The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, independent dissemination of this information within Greece remains limited. This trend underscores the need for enhanced domestic transparency.

Like many countries, Greece grapples with disparities in supporting anti-Roma and anti-disability hate crime victims. Efforts from various stakeholders involved in hate crime monitoring and data collection often fall short of addressing the unique challenges faced by these communities.

Understanding the historical context is essential to comprehending Greece's challenges in tackling hate crimes. Once assimilated into society, hate crimes gained heightened attention due to an escalation in violence. Civil society and public authorities responded differently, leading to varying approaches to addressing the issue. Despite challenges, progress has been made through initiatives like the establishment of the Racist Violence Recording Network and improved police-CSO cooperation.

Cooperation between the police and civil society organizations is critical to recording and monitoring hate crimes. Despite initial stereotypes, the Network has successfully fostered positive relationships with the police, aiding in better communication and collaboration. The establishment of a

³⁶ The Racist Violence Recording Network was established based on the initiative of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR), with the participation of non-governmental organisations. <https://www.nchr.gr/en/racist-violence-recording-network.html>

specialized police unit focused on racist hate crimes has been a notable step forward, providing a concrete point of contact for addressing hate crime issues. However, challenges persist in training police officers and navigating the complexities of recording hate crimes committed by law enforcement.

Greece's hate crime recording, and data collection system is a labyrinth of connections, relationships, and challenges. While progress has been achieved, disparities remain in supporting marginalized communities, necessitating continued efforts to address hate crime effectively and inclusively. The commitment to understanding, addressing, and combating hate crime remains steadfast as the country navigates this complex landscape.

5.4 Case Studies: Hate Speech Incidents and Subsequent Hate Crimes

The case of Pavlos Fyssas

Pavlos Fyssas³⁷ tragic demise in 2013 marked a pivotal moment that reverberated across Greece, sending shockwaves through the nation's heart. Fyssas, a luminary Greek rapper and impassioned advocate, met his untimely end, igniting a firestorm of discussion and introspection rippled through the country's socio-political tapestry. Known by his artistic moniker Killah P, Fyssas was more than just a performer; he was a potent critic of the far-right tenets that had begun to infest Greece's societal fabric, and his activism underscored his commitment to a progressive, inclusive vision.

In scrutinising the circumstances surrounding Pavlos Fyssas' murder, a sinister truth emerges that unveils the disturbing connection between his killing and the rise of hate-driven ideologies in Greece. The man who struck down Fyssas, Giorgos Roupakias, was not merely an individual but a harbinger of a more significant, ominous undercurrent. The modus operandi of the crime speaks volumes; the medical accounts of the fatal wound, which not only struck the heart but was also turned, reveal a deliberate and brutal intention transcending personal enmity. The act was symbolic of a

³⁷ Data by the Golden Dawn Watch that it is an initiative to monitor the Golden Dawn trial, formed by the Hellenic League for Human Rights, the Observatory for Fascist and Racist Speech in the Media, which operates under the Cultural Foundation of ESIEA, the Anti-Fascist Coordination Athens-Piraeus, and the Council for the Integration of Immigrants of the Municipality of Athens. Through its accredited partners, Golden Dawn Watch follows the proceedings every day, from the courtroom to the end of the trial. <https://goldendawnwatch.org/>

broader attempt to silence a vocal advocate of change and progress, to send a chilling message that those who dare to dissent will face violent consequences.

Crucially, the affiliation of Roupakias with the far-right party Golden Dawn provides a chilling context. This association points to a profoundly ingrained web of hatred and prejudice that had ensnared not only an individual but an entire faction. Here, the threads of Pavlos Fyssas' murder entwined with the fabric of a larger, more disturbing reality—the rising tide of extremist groups that were gaining an unsettling foothold within Greece's sociopolitical landscape.

A crescendo of public outrage marked the aftermath of Fyssas' murder, the crescendo of a society with enough of the poisonous ideologies that had claimed a life. Streets were flooded with protesters, their collective voice demanding an end to hate-fueled violence. The tragedy sparked an awakening, a sombre reminder that the ideals Greece cherished—freedom, equality, and unity—were under siege. Calls for accountability resonated far beyond the confines of Fyssas' immediate circle, reverberating through every corner of Greek society as a nation grappled with the demons that had been unleashed.

Amidst the turmoil, the wheels of justice began to turn. The Greek Police's swift apprehension of Roupakias on the night of the murder offered a glimmer of hope—an assurance that the forces of law and order were prepared to confront the spectre of hate head-on. However, the subsequent revelation that Roupakias was a member of the very party heinous in its ideology sent shockwaves through a nation still reeling from the shock of Fyssas' death.

As the narrative unfolded, it became apparent that Fyssas' murder was not an isolated incident but a symptom of a larger malaise—the festering presence of far-right extremism. Nikos Michaloliakos, the general secretary of Golden Dawn, eventually assumed political responsibility for the crime, a tacit admission that the web of hatred ran deep within the party's veins. (Moustaka, Ta Nea, 2015) However, this admission was a bittersweet revelation; it shed light on the sinister forces at play and underscored the extent to which these ideologies had insidiously infiltrated the corridors of power.

The subsequent trial, which commenced in April 2015, was a watershed moment, aiming to determine whether Golden Dawn was more than a political entity—that it was a criminal organization that had fomented violence and terror. As the trial progressed, it cast a harsh spotlight on the party's inner workings, revealing a disturbing tapestry of paramilitary training camps and savage assaults on immigrants and activists whose ideologies ran contrary to the party's divisive doctrine.

The trial's culmination in October 2020 delivered a verdict that resounded across Greece. The leadership of Golden Dawn, including its founder Nikos Michaloliakos, was adjudged guilty of operating as a criminal organization. The gavel of justice reverberated through the halls of power, sending a clear message that the machinery of democracy would not be held hostage to the designs of hate. The trial's outcome marked a historic milestone and underscored Greece's unwavering commitment to confront and quell the flames of far-right extremism, reaffirming its allegiance to the principles underpinning an accessible and inclusive society. (Mpotopoulos, Syntagma Watch, 2020)

In the final analysis, the murder of Pavlos Fyssas is a chilling testament to the potency of hate-fueled ideologies, to the terrifying way they can hold over individuals and organizations. Fyssas' tragic end was not merely the culmination of a personal vendetta; it was a manifestation of a broader struggle that Greece—and indeed, the world at large—faces in combating the toxic forces that seek to divide, destroy, and subvert the very essence of humanity's shared values. It serves as a stark reminder that in the face of such malevolent ideologies, the path forward lies in resolute unity, unwavering justice, and an unyielding commitment to upholding the ideals that bind us as a society.

The case of Shehzad Luqman

In the early hours of January 17, 2013, a disturbing and tragic incident unfolded on the streets of Petralona, Greece. The lives of those involved would be forever altered, and a stark reminder of the darker aspects of human nature would be etched into the annals of history.

At the heart of this grim episode was Shehzad Luqman³⁸, a 27-year-old individual making his way to work at the open market. Little did he know that this routine journey would be his last, as fate had something far more sinister in store for him. As he pedalled along on his bicycle, he was abruptly confronted by two assailants, Christos Stergiopoulos and Dionysis Liakopoulos, who were riding a scooter armed with folding knives.

What followed can only be described as an act of unparalleled brutality. Luqman was subjected to a barrage of frenzied stabbings, with the attackers delivering seven vicious blows to his body. The ferocity of the assault is chilling, revealing a level of hatred and violence that is difficult to comprehend. The details of the attack are nothing short of harrowing, with each stab piercing not just the victim's physical body but also society's collective conscience.

³⁸ Data by the case file and see <https://lihtenvalner.medium.com/in-memory-of-shehzad-luqman-d9d5dfcc96ba>

Luqman's life was tragically snuffed out on the cold asphalt that morning. Bleeding and broken, he drew his last breath, his dreams and aspirations extinguished in an instant of unspeakable horror. The scene of his untimely death became a haunting tableau, a stark reminder of the fragility of life and the darkness that can reside within the human soul.

The motives behind this heinous crime were rooted in a toxic brew of prejudice and racism. It emerged that Stergiopoulos and Liakopoulos were members of the notorious Golden Dawn assault battalions, a far-right party known for its virulent and hateful ideologies. Their affiliation with this group points to a deeply entrenched belief system that devalues and dehumanises individuals based on their ethnicity, a belief system that can only be described as a cancer on the fabric of society.

The murder of Luqman Shehzad was not a random act of violence. It was a targeted assault driven by the perpetrators' warped perception of racial superiority. In their eyes, Luqman's mere existence as a member of a particular ethnic group marked him as a target, a victim of their venomous bigotry. His tragic end serves as a grim testament to the real-world consequences of such toxic ideologies, a reminder that hate-fueled actions can lead to irrevocable loss and devastation.

The wheels of justice, though often slow, did eventually turn. On May 6, 2019, Stergiopoulos and Liakopoulos were handed down sentences of 21 years and five months imprisonment each. This judicial response, while significant, cannot erase the pain and grief inflicted upon Luqman's loved ones. However, it sends a resounding message that society will not tolerate such acts of hatred and violence and that those who perpetrate them will be held accountable for their actions.

The trial of Stergiopoulos and Liakopoulos also shed light on the broader issue of the Golden Dawn organisation, with the two men facing accusations of belonging to a criminal syndicate. This trial exposed the extent of the group's insidious reach and the danger it posed to the foundations of a just and inclusive society. The fact that the perpetrators were not acting in isolation but rather within the framework of an organised extremist movement underscores the urgent need for vigilant efforts to counteract and dismantle such hate-fueled organisations.

The murder of Shehzad Luqman stands as a tragic example of the catastrophic consequences that can arise when prejudice and hatred are allowed to fester unchecked. It serves as a stark reminder that the struggle against hate crimes is ongoing, requiring swift and decisive legal action and a concerted effort to address the underlying societal factors that give rise to such abhorrent ideologies.

As we reflect on this heart-wrenching event, we must confront the uncomfortable truth that hate knows no boundaries and can take root anywhere. Luqman's memory beckons us to stand united against bigotry and intolerance, to ensure that his untimely death was not in vain, and to strive for a world where such acts of violence and hatred are but distant echoes of a darker past.

These cases shed light on how hate speech can escalate into hate crimes, highlighting the importance of addressing hate speech as a precursor to preventing violent acts. Hate speech can escalate to hate crimes through a process of normalisation, validation, and incitement. When hate speech goes unchecked and unchallenged, it can contribute to a hostile environment that may eventually motivate individuals or groups to commit acts of violence or discrimination against the targeted community.

More specifically, when hate speech becomes pervasive and widely accepted in a society, it can normalise discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. Over time, individuals may become desensitised to offensive rhetoric and may start viewing it as socially acceptable. Hate speech can validate existing biases and prejudices held by individuals. People who share these biases may feel affirmed and emboldened by the hate speech, leading them to believe that their discriminatory beliefs are justified and shared by others. As hate speech gains momentum, it can evolve into explicit calls for action against the targeted group. This incitement can create an atmosphere where violence or other harmful actions are seen as necessary or justifiable responses to the perceived threat posed by the targeted community. Hate speech can be seen as a precursor to hate crimes. It involves the use of derogatory language, stereotypes, and degrading remarks directed towards specific individuals or groups.

Fyssas had been an antifascist vocal critic activist of the far-right party's ideologies and had been targeted with hate speech from its members for years. This case exemplifies the link between hate speech and hate crimes, as the constant vilification and dehumanisation of Fyssas through hate speech created an environment conducive to violence. Hate speech against Fyssas escalated to the point where a party member physically attacked and murdered him. The investigation revealed that hate had played a significant role in inciting the perpetrator's violent actions.

The Shehzad Luqman case highlights another instance of hate speech leading to a hate crime. Luqman, a Pakistani immigrant, was violently attacked by far-right group members. Prior to the attack, Luqman had been subjected to hate speech and racial slurs from the assailants. The verbal abuse and

dehumanisation escalated into a brutal physical assault, underscoring the connection between hate speech and hate crimes. This case demonstrates that hate speech not only perpetuates prejudice but can also catalyse violent acts.

The rise of social media has facilitated the spread of hate speech, making it easier for individuals to disseminate harmful rhetoric to a broad audience. In both the Fyssas and Luqman cases, hate speech was disseminated through online platforms, amplifying its impact. Online hate speech can contribute to the radicalisation of individuals and create an environment where hate crimes are more likely to occur. Addressing hate speech in the digital realm is crucial to preventing its escalation into physical violence.

The cases of Pavlos Fyssas and Shehzad Luqman in Greece provide compelling evidence of the interlinkage between hate speech and hate crimes. These incidents emphasise the critical need to recognise and address hate speech as a precursor to violent acts. Preventing hate crimes requires a multi-pronged approach that includes legal measures, policy responses, educational initiatives, and efforts to counter online hate speech. By tackling hate speech at its root, societies can work towards creating an environment of tolerance, respect, and inclusivity for all individuals and communities.

6. Framework for Combating Hate Speech in Greece

6.1 Human Rights Theory: *The principle of human dignity*

In the realm of human existence, a profound and timeless principle emerges, one that encapsulates the essence of our shared experience. This principle, woven into the fabric of international human rights treaties, illuminates the path towards a just and equitable world: *the concept of human dignity*.

The echoes of this principle reverberate through the corridors of history, resonating with the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter of 1945. Within its preamble lies an invocation of "*faith in fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women.*" A foundation is laid here, a testament to the recognition that every individual, regardless of their origin or station, possesses an inherent dignity that demands respect.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a beacon of hope and aspiration, reinforces this sentiment in its own prelude. Dated December 10, 1948, it magnifies the theme, acknowledging the "*recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the*

human family." This proclamation weaves the threads of dignity into the very essence of our existence, affirming the idea that each person, by virtue of being human, is entitled to respect, equality, and rights that transcend societal constructs. The first article of the Universal Declaration crystallizes the essence of human dignity into a foundational truth: *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."* A profound assertion, it acknowledges the unassailable connection between freedom, equality, and the dignified essence inherent in every human being. Moreover, the article extends its embrace by recognizing the endowment of reason and conscience, attributes that elevate human dignity to a realm beyond the physical, encapsulating the very core of our essence.

In the annals of history, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, born of a shared commitment to justice, amplify the chorus of human dignity. Both covenants, established on December 16, 1966, resound with the declaration that "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family...derive from the inherent dignity of the human person." This harmonic alignment reinforces the notion that rights and dignity are intertwined, indivisible facets of the human experience, a testament to our shared heritage.

Thus, the tapestry of human dignity unfolds through these texts, a golden thread weaving through the fabric of our collective aspirations. It is a principle that transcends borders and eras, a resounding call to honour and uphold the sanctity of every human life. In a world marked by diversity, this principle offers a common ground—a reminder that beneath our differences, we are united by the tapestry of our shared dignity. It is a clarion call, an everlasting echo that beckons us to forge a path forward guided by respect, compassion, and the unwavering recognition of the intrinsic worth that defines us all. (Tiedemann, 2020)

In the process of crafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights , a consensus emerged that human rights ought to rest upon the bedrock of human dignity. This principle is evident from the very outset, as captured by the opening sentence of the preamble, which proclaims, *"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..."* This theme is reiterated in the fifth paragraph, which underscores that the people of the United Nations have reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of each human individual. Article 1 solidifies this notion: *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."*

Throughout the extensive deliberations, the linkage between human dignity and human rights was a central topic of discussion. However, a harmonious formulation that seamlessly integrated both aspects proved elusive for the delegates. Consequently, the term "human dignity" finds explicit mention only within the preamble, with subsequent articles offering supplementary perspectives. This term is twice reiterated in the preamble, echoing the sentiment expressed in the UN Charter's formulation. In the same vein, the initial paragraph deviates from referring to the "dignity of the human person," opting instead for "all members of the human family." This wording was consciously selected to underscore that dignity is an inherent quality universally applicable to everyone. This inclusion is a deliberate effort to stress that dignity isn't an attribute exclusive to select segments of humanity; rather, it is a quality that applies to all.

Thankfully, the evolution of international human rights codification eventually sheds further light on the interplay between human dignity and human rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both adopted on December 16, 1966, declare in their preambles that the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family not only constitute the bedrock of global freedom, justice, and peace but also derive from the intrinsic dignity of the human person. This language clarifies the relationship between dignity and rights, affirming that human dignity serves as the foundational premise from which human rights emanate. Importantly, human dignity itself is not a right; rather, it is a distinct concept that forms the basis upon which rights are constructed.

The bedrock of human rights is grounded in the principle of human dignity, a principle from which human rights derive. Human dignity is a fundamental quality attributed to every member of the human family. While international law does not offer a concrete definition of human dignity, the fact that it serves as the bedrock of human rights, in contrast to human duties, suggests an autonomous understanding of this concept. (Tiedemann, p.77, 2020)

In the grand tapestry of human history, the principle of human dignity stands as an unwavering thread, weaving its way through international treaties and declarations. It is a principle that underscores our shared humanity, transcending borders, and divisions. From the United Nations Charter to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and beyond, the resonance of human dignity is unmistakable—a reminder that each individual is inherently deserving of respect, equality, and rights. As we reflect on these foundational documents and their profound impact, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to honour and uphold the sanctity of every human life. This principle of human dignity

serves as a compass guiding us toward a more just, compassionate, and equitable world where the worth of every person is celebrated and protected.

6.2 Legal Framework for Hate Speech in Greece

Hate speech, the act of promoting discrimination, hostility, or violence against specific individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, has been a concerning issue. In Greece, the legal framework addressing hate speech has evolved over time to strike a balance between safeguarding human dignity, promoting justice, and upholding the principles of freedom of expression. The cornerstone of Greece's approach to combating hate speech lies in its legislative measures, including Law 927/1979³⁹ and its subsequent amendment through Law 4285/2014⁴⁰. These laws not only reflect Greece's commitment to combating racism and xenophobia but also align with European Union directives aimed at harmonizing legal standards across member states.

Law 927, FEK A' 139/28.6.1979, stands as an initial legislative response to the issue of hate speech in Greece. Enacted for the protection of human dignity and justice, this law explicitly condemns acts or actions intended to promote racial discrimination. The legislative intent behind this law is to establish a legal basis for prosecuting individuals who engage in acts or expressions that create racial hatred or discrimination. This early enactment demonstrates Greece's recognition of the importance of safeguarding citizens from the harmful effects of hate speech and its commitment to ensuring justice in cases of racial discrimination.

Law 927/1979 underwent a significant amendment and adaptation through Law 4285/2014. This amendment aimed to align Greek law with the EU's Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA⁴¹, issued on November 28, 2008, which sought to combat various forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. By incorporating the EU directive into its domestic legal system, Greece displayed its commitment to harmonizing national and EU law, thereby fostering a consistent approach to combating hate speech across member states.

The scope of prohibition under Law 4285/2014 is pivotal in understanding the extent of the prohibition against hate speech in Greece.

Article 1(1) of Law 4285/2014 reads as follows:

³⁹ Data see <https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/307515/nomos-927-1979>

⁴⁰ Data see <https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/98386>

⁴¹ Data see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008F0913>

"Whoever with intent, in public, orally or through the press, via the Internet or by any other means or manner, incites, provokes, stimulates or encourages acts or actions that may cause discrimination, hatred, or violence against a person or group of persons, identified on the basis of race, colour, religion, or descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, in a manner that endangers public order or poses a threat to the life, liberty, or physical integrity of the aforementioned persons, shall be punishable by a term of imprisonment of three (3) months to three (3) years and a fine of five to twenty thousand (5.000–20.000)."

This provision explicitly outlines the circumstances under which an individual may be held criminally liable for incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence. The law encompasses a wide range of communication channels, including public speech, press, the internet, and other means or manners of expression. This expansive coverage reflects Greece's recognition of the evolving nature of communication and its determination to address hate speech across various platforms.

Certain elements must be present to be held criminally liable under Law 4285/2014. These include intent, public communication, target characteristics, and endangerment of public order or threat to persons. Intent refers to the need to demonstrate a deliberate and purposeful act of incitement to hatred or violence. Public communication emphasizes the potential societal impact of hate speech and the state's interest in maintaining public order. The law enumerates specific characteristics that, if targeted, give rise to criminal liability, including race, colour, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. This inclusive list emphasizes the importance of protecting marginalized and vulnerable groups from discriminatory acts. The law also requires that incitement to hatred or violence poses a risk to public order or threatens the targeted individuals or groups' life, liberty, or physical integrity. This element reinforces the connection between hate speech and potential harm, thus justifying the imposition of criminal sanctions.

It is crucial to note that the purpose of Greece's legal framework is twofold: to harmonize national and EU law and to address and combat manifestations of racism and xenophobia while safeguarding the rights of expression and freedom of speech. The law does not seek to curtail legitimate expressions of opinion or infringe upon constitutionally protected freedoms. Instead, it targets expressions that go beyond the boundaries of acceptable discourse and pose a real threat to public order and individual safety.

In conclusion, Greece's legal framework for hate speech, as embodied in Law 927/1979 and its subsequent amendment through Law 4285/2014, demonstrates the country's commitment to combating

racism, xenophobia, and discrimination while upholding essential democratic values. The framework strikes a balance between protecting human dignity, promoting justice, and preserving freedom of expression, emphasizing the importance of preventing expressions that incite discrimination, hatred, or violence against individuals or groups based on certain characteristics. By aligning with EU directives, Greece contributes to a consistent and unified approach to addressing hate speech within the European context.

6.3 Civil Society Organisations and Activism

In recent years, the pervasive issue of hate speech has prompted a series of commendable efforts from a diverse array of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, and dedicated activists. These initiatives reflect a collective determination to address the alarming rise of hate speech and its profound impact on societies. Through actions, workshops, and seminars, these groups have been at the forefront of raising awareness about hate speech, disseminating crucial information, and fostering constructive dialogues to combat its insidious effects.

This trend has prompted a growing consensus among conscientious actors that concerted efforts are essential to curb its proliferation and mitigate its corrosive consequences on social cohesion and individual well-being. The initiatives undertaken by NGOs, civil society, and activists have yielded multifaceted approaches to tackling hate speech. These encompass educational workshops designed to sensitize individuals to the pernicious impacts of hate speech and its potential to fuel violence and division. Seminars serve as vital platforms for fostering nuanced discussions around hate speech, shedding light on its underlying dynamics, and exploring strategies for countering it effectively.

Moreover, these stakeholders have contributed to the development of comprehensive frameworks that facilitate a more profound understanding of hate speech and its socio-cultural implications. By engaging diverse perspectives, these frameworks empower communities to collectively challenge hate speech, encourage respectful discourse, and cultivate an inclusive environment that upholds the values of tolerance and respect.

In particular, two of the well-known initiatives are to be mentioned.

“#Psofos | Hate Speech on Social Media”

The rapid rise of social media platforms has brought unprecedented connectivity and the democratization of communication to our global society. However, these digital spaces, touted for their myriad virtues, have also revealed a dark underbelly - the propagation of hate speech. Addressing this pressing issue, Onassis Stegi⁴², a cultural institution known for its thought-provoking events, delved into the topic of "Psofos⁴³ | Hate Speech on Social Media." This enlightening discourse, a part of the "Society Uncensored" online discussion series, was held on March 2021, drawing attention to the urgent need for an open conversation about the menace of hate speech in the digital age.

Hate speech, characterized by its intention to harm, demean, humiliate, or marginalize individuals or groups based on inherent, unalterable characteristics, goes beyond the bounds of mere expression. The discussion, organized in partnership with the Hellenic League for Human Rights⁴⁴, took place against a backdrop of significant events, including the nascent Greek #metoo movement and the aftermath of the shocking Capitol events that led to Donald Trump's second impeachment. It aimed to dissect the complex nature of hate speech, differentiating it from merely "heavy-handed" speech and shed light on its potential to incite violence.

The core question raised during this insightful conversation was: Which words possess the power to ignite hate speech without an immediate consideration of the text's overall context? The debate ventured into uncharted territories, exploring the nuances that distinguish hate speech from protected speech and the thin line between them. The multifaceted nature of the issue became evident as participants discussed the boundaries of free expression and the responsibility of social media platforms in monitoring and moderating content.

One of the key dilemmas explored was the role of social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram in combatting hate speech. While these platforms have begun taking actions such as deactivating pages, profiles, and channels that propagate hate speech, questions have emerged regarding the timeliness of these interventions. Critics have questioned whether these measures infringe upon the free exchange of ideas, inadvertently giving rise to a new set of challenges. Decisions on

⁴² The Onassis Cultural Centre, formerly known as the Onassis Cultural Centre, is a cultural venue in Athens owned by the Onassis Foundation; watch on the official website the discussion of hate speech in Greek with English subtitles <https://www.onassis.org/video/psofos-hate-speech-on-social-media>

⁴³ The word psofos (ψόφος) means something is dead, lifeless. This word is used mainly for animals to indicate that an animal is no longer alive. However, as an offensive form, it is widely used on social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter, as #psofos to express hate speech and wish for the death of others, like immigrants, refugees, lgbtqi+, Roma, etc.

⁴⁴ The Hellenic League for Human Rights is Greece's oldest human rights organisation, founded in 1953. Official website <https://www.hlhr.gr/en/>

content regulation have also raised concerns about transparency, accountability, and the democratic nature of digital governance.

The timing of this discussion was poignant, reflecting the urgency of addressing hate speech as it gains momentum in online spaces. As the Greek #metoo movement gained traction and the Capitol events shocked the world, it became evident that hate speech is not confined to a particular region or issue; it is a pervasive problem that requires collective action.

In conclusion, Onassis Stegi's "Psofos | Hate Speech on Social Media" discussion highlighted the crucial need for dialogue and awareness surrounding hate speech in the digital age. By collaborating with organizations like the Hellenic League for Human Rights, Onassis Stegi emphasized the importance of uniting against hate speech and its potential to incite violence. The discussion served as a reminder that while social media platforms play a pivotal role in modern communication, they also bear a significant responsibility in curbing hate speech and fostering a safe and inclusive online environment. As the world grapples with the complexities of digital communication, initiatives like "Society Uncensored" continue to pave the way for informed, open, and constructive conversations on the pressing issues of our time.

“No Hate Speech Movement

The "No Hate Speech Movement" is a significant youth-driven initiative orchestrated by the Council of Europe Youth Department to mobilise young individuals to actively combat hate speech and champion human rights within the digital realm. Commencing its journey in 2013, this movement transcended geographical boundaries by proliferating across national and local platforms through the establishment of campaigns in 45 countries. (Official website of CoE) Importantly, this mission extended beyond its initial timeline, with the commitment to persist through the continued efforts of national campaigns, digital activists, and collaborative partners.

Rooted in the Council of Europe's vision, the "No Hate Speech Movement" was meticulously crafted as a direct response to the proliferation of hate speech within the online landscape. At its core, the movement endeavours to cultivate awareness and instigate attitudinal transformations among young people, propelling them to take a proactive stance against hate speech. The driving force behind the campaign's conception was the recognition of hate speech as a palpable threat to the fundamental tenets of democracy and human rights. By centring its focus on these foundational principles, the movement

embarked on a multifaceted strategy that encompassed both legal frameworks and holistic approaches to counteract hate speech within the digital realm.

With an emphasis on striking a harmonious balance between safeguarding the right to freedom of expression and devising constructive responses to hate speech, the "No Hate Speech Movement" demonstrated an astute awareness of the complexities inherent in addressing this challenge. While nurturing an environment of respect for diverse viewpoints, the campaign concurrently sought innovative avenues for combating hate speech. This multi-pronged approach encompassed elements of prevention, awareness-building, education, and the cultivation of self-regulation among internet users. Ultimately, the movement aspired to metamorphose the digital landscape into a secure haven wherein individuals could engage without fear of encountering hate-driven vitriol.

In the context of Greece, the "No Hate Speech Movement" found resonance and momentum through a collaborative partnership between the Bodossaki Foundation⁴⁵, designated as the Fund Operator of the EEA Grants Greece⁴⁶, and Youthnet Hellas, a local ally committed to the Council of Europe's campaign. Together, these entities orchestrated a series of enlightening discussions that delved into the intricacies of stereotypes and actions that perpetuate hate speech within everyday life. The symposiums convened a diverse consortium of stakeholders, including non-governmental organization, legal experts, scientific luminaries, and proactive citizens. This eclectic amalgamation of perspectives aimed to brainstorm effective strategies for tackling hate speech both within the digital realm and offline domains. (Official website of European Commission)

An essential facet of the "No Hate Speech Movement" is its distinct focus on engaging and empowering young individuals who harbour a fervent desire to champion human rights within the digital sphere. This movement is an integral component of the broader "Young People Combating Hate Speech Online" project, which steadfastly upholds principles of equality, dignity, human rights, and diversity. The project ardently opposes hate speech, racism, and discrimination, positioning itself as a staunch advocate for an inclusive and harmonious online expression. The movement relies on a multifaceted toolkit to achieve its aims, encompassing initiatives to enhance awareness, advocate for change, and foster inventive solutions.

⁴⁵ The Bodossaki Foundation was established in 1973 and is one of Greece's largest privately owned public-benefit organisations. Official website <https://www.bodossaki.gr/en/>

⁴⁶ Programmes in Greece under the EEA Grants (2014-2021); The EEA and Norway Grants are financial mechanisms financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Official website about Greece <https://eeagrants.org/countries/greece>

In essence, the "No Hate Speech Movement," in its global manifestation and contextualisation within Greece, exemplifies a concerted endeavour to reshape the digital landscape by eradicating hate speech and upholding the sanctity of human rights. This movement endeavours to forge a safer and more compassionate internet sphere through strategic awareness campaigns, meaningful collaborations, and a dedication to empowering the youth. Its multifaceted strategies underscore the importance of addressing hate speech from legal, educational, and cultural angles, serving as a testament to the enduring power of collective action in the pursuit of a more equitable and respectful online environment.

6.4 European Union Measures to Prevent Hate Speech

In the pursuit of promoting a more inclusive and tolerant society, the European Union has also embarked on a series of efforts with the aim of fighting hate speech and discrimination. Those initiatives, which can be regarded as instrumental in defending human rights and fostering respect between Member States, have been further strengthened as a result of the EU's pledge to safeguard the values of unity and diversity.

One of the most prominent milestones embraced by the EU in this regard has been the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia implemented in 2008⁴⁷. Its aim has been to deal with the growing concern around hate speech and hate crimes directed at individuals on the basis of their race, ethnic origin, nationality, or religion. Through the establishment of a common legal framework, the EU has attempted to guarantee that hate speech is not put up with within its borders and that Member States have a uniform strategy to deal with it. In doing so, Member States are mandated to outlaw hate speech, incitement to violence, and any form of intolerance based on protected characteristics, by enacting suitable legislation and taking measures to fight racism and xenophobia virtually. For this reason, the decision reconciles the legal approach to hate speech throughout the EU, boosting uniformity and ensuring that individuals committing hate speech acts will encounter legal consequences regardless of the Member State where they reside.

In this regard, the Framework Decision provides the definition of hate speech as the public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, color, religion, descent, or national or ethnic origin. At the same time, it

⁴⁷ Data by the official website of the Council of European Union, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008F0913>

highlights that incitement needs to be capable of disturbing public order and peace. As a result, it sets a standard for Member States to observe, allowing a uniform interpretation and enforcement of hate speech laws. More specifically, its implementation puts a duty on the Member States to enact measures guaranteeing its effective investigation, prosecution, and punishment of hate speech offenses, including the provision of sufficient resources and training to law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and the judiciary. In addition, the decision stresses the significance of accommodating reporting means for those incidents and urges Member States to set up such accessible and user-friendly channels to ensure that victims or witnesses will be able to come forward and report them. Even more importantly, to ensure its proper implementation, the Framework Decision establishes that the European Commission will be responsible for monitoring its enforcement through the assessment of the Member States' compliance. In cases of non-compliance, necessary penalties may be adopted. (The Council of the European Union, Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA)

What is more, another critical development has been the European Commission's introduction in 2016 of its Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online⁴⁸ which was developed as a response to rising concerns over the spread of hate speech on social media platforms and other online channels. This tool is essentially a voluntary agreement between the EU and prominent tech enterprises such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Microsoft seeking to fight online hate speech and facilitate a safer online environment for users. Under the Code of Conduct, tech companies are dedicated to adopting decisive steps in dealing with unlawful speech on their platforms. In doing so, the pledge to examine and remove illegal hate speech content violating their terms of service, EU guidelines, or national laws.

The Code also highlights the need to enhance reporting mechanisms for users to flag such content and encourages participating companies to provide users with accessible channels to do so. The importance of striking a balance between the freedom of expression on the one hand and fighting hate speech is also something identified in the Code by determining that content removal decision need to be driven by the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality to guarantee that legitimate forms of expression will not be unfairly limited. Lastly, the Code fosters transparency and collaboration between tech firms, civil society groups, and public authorities. Participating companies need to deliver

⁴⁸ Data from the official website of the European Commission https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en

frequent updates on their steps to fight hate speech, including the establishment of policies, processes, and tools.

Furthermore, the European Commission unveiled in 2020 its Anti-Racism Action Plan⁴⁹, which is an all-around endeavor developed to fight racism, xenophobia, and discrimination within the EU. The action plan sketches a strategic framework striving to reinforce legal mechanisms, support victims, encourage reporting, elevate education, and promote dialogue and collaboration amongst all the relevant stakeholders. One of its primary objectives is to boost the legal framework against racism and xenophobia by providing that the present tools, such as the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, are virtually enforced across all the Member States. Next to that, it seeks to evaluate the necessity for additional legislative initiatives to deal with emerging forms of racism and hate speech. Through this action plan, the European Commission also acknowledges the importance of the collection of accurate and comprehensive data to be able to assess the prevalence and impact of hate speech. For this reason, the plan facilitates the installation of vigorous reporting instruments that will inform policymaking based on evidence and enable the adoption of targeted measures to fight hate speech effectively.

In the same vein, the plan emphasizes strongly raising awareness and encouraging educational materials that question stereotypes, promote diversity, and facilitate intercultural discussions. Similarly, it seeks to uplift endeavors that deal with structural racism, implicit bias, and inequalities in different fields, including education, employment, and the justice system. The plan also recognizes the significance of effective remedies and assistance for the victims as well as the need for access to justice and protection for whistleblowers and individuals who report such incidents. To facilitate the plan's implementation, the European Commission has committed itself to deliver financial support to programs such as the EU Rights, Equality, and Citizenship Programme⁵⁰ and allocating resources to actions that address hate speech and promote equality.

Moreover, the European Commission on December 2021, published the communication for a more inclusive and protective Europe, extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime,

⁴⁹ Data from the official website of the European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/union-equality-eu-anti-racism-action-plan-2020-2025_en

⁵⁰ Data from https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programme-performance-statements/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-performance_en

inviting the Council to adopt a decision identifying hate speech and hate crime as another area of crime meeting the criteria set out in Article 83(1) TFEU⁵¹. If approved, the directive would define criminal offenses and penalties related to hate speech and hate crimes. The Council's examination of the proposal in March 2022, garnered significant support. Additionally, both the European Economic and Social Committee on May 2022 and the European Committee of the Regions on November, 2022 provided their opinions on this matter.

Lastly, two key initiatives playing an influential role in addressing hate speech in Europe are the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights⁵² (hereafter FRA) and the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance⁵³ (hereafter ECRI). Founded in 2007, the FRA is an independent EU agency supplying expertise and assistance to the EU institutions and Member States in dealing with issues linked to fundamental rights. In doing so, the agency vigorously endeavors to fight hate speech and foster an environment of tolerance and respect. Its main duty in this regard is the collection and analysis of data on fundamental rights throughout the EU by conducting studies, surveys, and investigations on different forms of discrimination, including but not limited to hate speech. As a consequence, it has the ability to identify materializing trends associated with hate speech and deliver timely and evidence-based guidance to legislators and civil society organizations, urging the adoption of policy action and strategies against hate speech both at the Member State and EU level, taking into account the developing character of communication technologies and online venues.

What is more, the FRA actively facilitates collaboration amongst all relevant stakeholders in its attempt to deal with hate speech comprehensively through the exchange of best practices, organization of conferences, and sponsorship of capacity-building initiatives to enable a coordinated approach towards the phenomenon across the EU. This safeguards that the Member States and EU's efforts in combating hate speech are based on human rights norms, the freedom of expression, and non-discrimination. In this regard, the agency also aids Member States in translating EU Directives and recommendations into national law by providing them with the know-how they need to guarantee that hate-speech incidents will be addressed effectively. In addition, the agency is directed at raising

⁵¹ Data from the official website of the European Parliament <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-push-for-european-democracy/file-hate-crimes-and-hate-speech>

⁵² Official website of FRA <http://fra.europa.eu/en>

⁵³ Official website of ECRI <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance>

awareness about, amongst others, hate speech and its effect on the targeted individuals and communities through campaigns addressed to the public, as well as educational initiatives.

In contrast to the FRA, the ECRI is a monitoring body established by the Council of Europe⁵⁴, which is an intergovernmental organization distinct from the EU. Founded in 1993, the ECRI has as its main objective to deliver expertise, guidance, and advice to its member states on fighting racism, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance. Even though its work entails a wider lens of issues, it still addresses hate speech as an essential component in its attempt to foster tolerance and respect for human rights. In doing so, it operates in partnership with the EU. One crucial element in this partnership is the exchange of expertise and best practices. The ECRI communicates its conclusions, commentaries, and advice to the EU institutions, including the FRA, the European Commission, and the European Parliament, with the aim of assisting them in the adoption of EU policies and actions connected with the fight against hate speech. In this regard, it also partakes in consultations in the EU's policy design procedures, with its input aimed at guaranteeing the promotion and respect of human rights norms and principles. As with the FRA, the ECRI initiates or participates in collective initiatives, public campaigns, and educational events to raise awareness and foster discussion, many of which are funded by the EU.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Practical Recommendations

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance recently issued a Report⁵⁵ in 2022 with significant recommendations to address the pressing issue of hate speech in Greece. Hate speech, a pervasive problem affecting societies requires comprehensive strategies to combat its harmful effects on social cohesion, human rights, and democratic values. In this context, ECRI's report presents two key recommendations: the establishment of a monitoring system and public awareness campaigns against hate speech.

⁵⁴ The Council of Europe is an international organisation based in Strasbourg, which comprises 47 countries in Europe. It was set up to promote democracy and protect human rights and the rule of law in Europe. Official website <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal>

⁵⁵ ECRI's Report for Greece adopted on 28 June 2022 and published on 22 September 2022 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/greece>

In its §36 recommendation, ECRI underscores the importance of setting up a robust monitoring and recording system to track incidents of hate speech, including those occurring on the Internet. This multifaceted approach involves collaboration among various stakeholders, such as law enforcement agencies, prosecution authorities, equality and national human rights bodies, self-regulatory entities, and civil society organizations. By leveraging their collective experience and expertise, these bodies can collaboratively collect, analyze, and report on hate speech incidents. This recommendation reflects a comprehensive strategy that acknowledges the complexity of hate speech propagation across different platforms and contexts.

The involvement of law enforcement and prosecution authorities is crucial for effective implementation. Their expertise can aid in distinguishing between protected speech and hate speech that constitutes incitement or poses a threat to marginalized communities. Collaboration with equality and human rights bodies further ensures that the monitoring system aligns with international standards and safeguards fundamental rights. The participation of self-regulatory bodies and civil society organizations adds an extra layer of accountability, fostering a more inclusive and representative approach to combating hate speech.

In §46, ECRI focuses on the necessity of public awareness campaigns as a powerful tool against hate speech. These campaigns serve a dual purpose: educating the public about the dangers of hate speech and debunking the falsehoods underpinning discriminatory rhetoric. ECRI's recommendation highlights the value of involving responsible political and religious leaders in these campaigns, leveraging their influence to promote counter-speech that reinforces social harmony and inclusivity.

By engaging respected figures in the fight against hate speech, the campaigns can effectively challenge and discredit divisive narratives. Political and religious leaders possess the platform and credibility to amplify messages of tolerance, respect, and unity, which can be instrumental in countering hate speech. Additionally, the participation of such leaders sends a strong signal that hate speech is incompatible with the principles upheld by both democratic governance and religious teachings.

ECRI's recommendations to Greece provide a comprehensive and strategic approach to tackling hate speech. With its diverse array of collaborating entities, the proposed monitoring and recording system demonstrates a commitment to a thorough and nuanced understanding of hate speech dynamics. Simultaneously, the call for public awareness campaigns involving influential figures showcases a

proactive effort to challenge and debunk hate speech narratives. By implementing these recommendations, Greece can make significant strides towards creating a more inclusive, respectful, and harmonious society, safeguarding both human rights and democratic values.

In the same vein, the European Commission's interventions⁵⁶ regarding hate speech in Greece underscore the critical importance of combatting hate speech and terrorist content on the internet while upholding the principles of freedom of expression and information. These interventions ensure that Greece aligns with European Union regulations and standards to address the spread of extremist ideologies, incitement to violence, and online hatred.

One of the critical actions taken by the European Commission involves urging Greece to adopt a suitable level of criminalization for hate speech. This call emphasizes the need to establish legal measures that effectively deter and penalize hate speech, particularly when it incites violence or promotes discriminatory attitudes. By doing so, the Commission aims to strengthen societal cohesion and safeguard the rights of individuals to live free from discrimination and hatred.

The European Commission has also highlighted concerns regarding the implementation of Regulation EU/2021/784⁵⁷, which addresses the dissemination of terrorist content on the internet. The Commission's decision to initiate an infringement procedure against Greece underlines the significance of proper enforcement of this Regulation. Swift removal of terrorist content from online platforms, coupled with measures to prevent abuse of the internet by extremist groups, is pivotal for curtailing the spread of radical ideologies and recruitment efforts. The Regulation strikes a balance between countering terrorist activities and preserving the principles of free expression and information, thereby fostering a safer online environment for all citizens.

Moreover, the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia through criminal law (Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA) plays a vital role in promoting uniformity across the EU in addressing severe manifestations of racism and xenophobia. By requiring member states to impose effective, proportionate, and dissuasive criminal sanctions for acts such as incitement to violence or hatred, the Framework Decision aims to create a strong deterrent against hate-driven behaviours. The Commission's decision to send a reasoned opinion to Greece for failing to transpose this Framework

⁵⁶ Commission's reasoned opinion to Greece to correctly transpose EU law criminalising hate speech and hate crimes (INFR(2021)2063)

Commission's letters of formal notice to Greece (INFR(2022)2121)

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_23_142

⁵⁷ <https://www.lawspot.gr/nomika-nea/paremvaseis-tis-eyropaikis-epitropis-gia-paravaseis-tis-elladas-epi-zitimaton-ritorikis>

Decision into national law reflects its commitment to ensuring consistent and robust responses to hate-related offences throughout the EU.

The Commission's communication with Greece through formal notices and opinions signifies the EU's proactive stance in addressing hate speech. The engagement seeks to hold member states accountable for aligning with EU standards and regulations to maintain a harmonized approach to countering hate speech and extremist content. The Commission's efforts also contribute to building a framework that respects fundamental rights while curbing the misuse of online platforms for propagating hatred and violence.

The European Commission's interventions in response to hate speech and terrorist content in Greece exemplify the EU's dedication to fostering a secure and inclusive digital space. These actions reflect a multifaceted approach that encourages proper legislation, effective implementation of regulations, and consistent enforcement across member states. By striking a balance between safeguarding freedom of expression and countering hate-driven behaviours, the EU aims to create an environment where citizens can participate in the digital realm without fear of discrimination or violence.

7.2 Summary of Findings

This thesis investigates the intricate relationship between hate speech and hate crimes within the context of Greece's public discourse landscape. The research aims to understand whether a correlation exists between hate speech and hate crimes in Greece, analyzing historical, societal, and contextual factors that contribute to this phenomenon. The study draws from a comprehensive range of theoretical frameworks, including the liberal approach, Critical Race Theory, and Speech Act Theory, to provide a multifaceted understanding of hate speech.

The examination of hate speech in Greece begins with a thorough overview of its historical and societal underpinnings, highlighting how these factors have shaped the expression of hate speech within the nation's discourse. The analysis extends to the contemporary public discourse landscape in Greece, encompassing both mainstream media and online platforms. This investigation reveals the prevalence of hate speech in various forms, shedding light on its impact on Greek society and the diverse target groups affected.

Central to this research is the exploration of the potential correlation between hate speech and hate crimes. The study establishes a foundation for examining the link between these two phenomena by delving into the definition and classification of hate crimes. Through meticulous examination of hate crimes in Greece, the research identifies patterns and provides case studies that suggest a noteworthy relationship between hate speech and hate crimes.

In the pursuit of adequate countermeasures, the thesis proposes a framework for combating hate speech in Greece. Rooted in Human Rights Theory and the principle of human dignity, this framework emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive legal framework and the roles of civil society organizations, activism, and European Union measures. These recommendations provide a holistic approach to addressing hate speech and mitigating its potential to fuel hate crimes.

In conclusion, this thesis sheds light on the complex interplay between hate speech and hate crimes in Greece. The research establishes a credible connection between the two phenomena by examining historical, societal, and contemporary dynamics. The provided framework for combating hate speech offers practical pathways to address the issue effectively. Overall, this study underscores the need for comprehensive measures to counter hate speech and its potential impact on hate crimes in Greece's public discourse.

7.3 Limitations

At this point of the paper, it would be highly beneficial to provide several limitations brought to our attention and demonstrate our awareness of the complexities surrounding hate speech and hate crimes not only in the Greek context but also in a general correlation with our topic.

Considering the subjectivity of hate speech definition and the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition of hate speech presents a significant challenge. Different theoretical frameworks and cultural norms can lead to diverse interpretations of what constitutes hate speech. This subjectivity introduces the potential for discrepancies in identifying instances of hate speech, which might affect the analysis's consistency and reliability. Researchers might apply differing criteria for identifying hate speech, which could lead to variations in results and conclusions.

Following the reliability of online data while analyzing hate speech on online platforms and social media offers valuable insights, there are inherent limitations in relying solely on online data. Fake accounts, automated content, and the ever-evolving nature of these platforms can introduce biases

and inaccuracies into the findings. This is particularly concerning in the context of hate speech, where malicious actors might intentionally spread harmful content. The dynamic and rapidly changing nature of online communication can also make it challenging to capture a comprehensive and accurate snapshot of hate speech occurrences.

In the same vein, the underreporting of hate crimes must be mentioned. The underreporting of hate crimes is a well-documented issue that can affect the accuracy of the analysis. Victims may hesitate to report hate crimes due to fear, distrust of authorities, or concerns about social stigma. These underreporting skew the data and could lead to an incomplete understanding of the correlation between hate speech and actual hate crimes. The true impact of hate speech on hate crime incidence might be underestimated, potentially affecting the depth of insights the thesis can provide.

Regarding the complexity of hate crime causality, establishing a direct causal link between hate speech and hate crimes is intricate and multifaceted. Hate crimes can result from a combination of factors, including economic disparities, political climate, historical grievances, and more. While hate speech might play a role, other drivers of hate crimes can operate independently. This complexity challenges the ability to isolate the influence of hate speech and draw definitive conclusions about its impact on hate crime occurrences.

Last but not least, the effectiveness of countermeasures, proposing a framework for combating hate speech, is valuable, but the real-world effectiveness of these measures is still being determined. Various external factors, such as the political climate, public sentiment, and legal enforcement, can influence the success of countermeasures. Additionally, challenges like lack of implementation, resistance to change, or unintended consequences could limit the impact of the recommended strategies. Assessing the actual effectiveness of these countermeasures might require ongoing monitoring and evaluation beyond the scope of this thesis.

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