
Hate speech targeted at disabled persons

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Abstract

British and American research has examined the phenomenon of hate speech and disability (e.g. Beadle-Brown et al 2014, Corker 2000, Shelly 2003). This body of knowledge shows that disabled persons are the target of hate speech and hate crime to a larger extent than other citizens. Being the victim of hate speech may cause serious personal problems as well as limitations in people's lives. Furthermore, hate speech may create a political situation of "oppressive silencing" (Corker 2000) in which particular groups of citizens withdraw from societal participation in fear of stigmatizing and discriminatory utterance and practices. The prevalence of and experience with hate speech towards disabled persons have so far not been examined and addressed in the Nordic countries. Our study examines the following three questions: To what extent are disabled persons exposed to hate speech? What types of hate speech do they experience and in what contexts, and what are the consequences of experiencing such utterances? Which preventive measures could be implemented? To shed light on these questions, the study includes a survey and qualitative interviews that will be implemented in the spring of 2016. The survey is based on a British questionnaire developed by Beadle-Brown and her colleagues (2014). The survey will measure the prevalence and scope of hate speech towards persons with different forms of disabilities. Interviews with disabled persons who have experienced hate speech will explore understandings of this phenomenon as well as personal experiences. Interviews with representatives of disabled persons' organizations and other relevant milieu will be carried out in order to address preventive measures.

The presentation will provide preliminary results, comparing the Norwegian results with those obtained in England.

Keywords: hate speech, prevalence, experiences, disability

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