



Research Report

The Third General-Assembly (GA3)

Issue 1: Combating online hate speech
and the spread of extremist ideologies
across digital platforms

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Table of Contents:

Introduction	2
Definition of Key Terms	3
Background	4
Major Countries and Organizations Involved	5
Possible Solutions	6
Bibliography	7

Introduction

Nowadays, everyone is online. We have connected to the entire world in just milliseconds. However, this connection doesn't come without its consequences. The exact messages that nations have been trying to suppress are now becoming much easier to spread. Hate speech and extremist ideologies. The mass spread of these messages can have a drastic effect on people. Hate speech, for example, can lead to massive divisions in society. If we look back at Nazi Germany, this is a clear example: where most Germans in this time period, when they read their newspapers or magazines. They would read about Jewish people being "rats", "diseases" or "traitors to the nation". This caused many German people to think differently about their Jewish neighbours. Eventually causing a division in society, and eventually the holocaust. It wasn't genocide that started the concentration camps; it was the words. (*Nazi Propaganda | Holocaust Encyclopedia*, n.d.)



Definition of Key Terms

Extremist ideologies:

Beliefs or movements that reject fundamental democratic values or human rights, often promoting intolerance, hatred, or violence toward a certain group

Jim Crow Era

A period in U.S. history (1877-1966) when racial segregation laws systematically oppressed Black Americans.

NGO:

Non-Governmental Officer

“Us VS them” theory

A social-psychological concept where people categorize others as belonging to either their group (“us”) or an outsider group (“them”), often leading to prejudice or hostility.

Background

Now, this topic is quite complex. However, in this part, it will be divided into the 2 main parts, so we can explore the background of it. The topic will be divided into Hate speech and Extremist ideologies.

Hate Speech:

Looking back in time, the earliest form of hate speech can be found as early as the Roman Empire. At this time, there was a lot of information spread around the empire about the so-called “barbarians” who lived just outside the Roman Empire in Europe. This is a clear example of the “us vs them” theory. This is when a group/nation looks down on a different group in a derogatory way, boosting their own self-esteem. (Emamzadeh, 2019) Although the Roman Empire is a great start to hate speech, it isn’t hate speech in its “fullest form”. In the introduction, Nazi Germany was mentioned, which is a great example of how hate speech can be a slippery slope to drastic other disasters and can easily change people's views on certain people, without them thinking twice. However, it does not stop there. Hate speech not only has massive impacts on global situations, but it also impacts many people personally globally. An example of this is during the “Jim Crow Era” in the United States of America. During this time period, from 1877 to 1965, many new laws and policies were put into place against the African American people living in the USA. These laws made it so that racial segregation felt “natural” and justified many acts of violence against people in the USA at that time. However, this is far from all the consequences. Many people in the USA felt suppressed and dehumanized, classified into a box. This all led to, of course, people fighting back, the Civil Rights movement. (The Aegis Institute, 2022)

Spread of extremist ideologies:

The effects of extremist ideologies are quite clearly visible in history: erosion of democracy, fear of government, violence, human rights violations, and international tensions. This does not even talk about economic consequences. It is quite clear why many nations try to avoid the spread of extremist ideologies. (Van Prooijen & Krouwel, 2019).

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Germany:

Plays a big part in this topic, as it was in the past affected by not only hate speech, but also the spread of extremist ideologies. The rise of Hitler and the Nazi's. However, Germany has now implemented one of the world's strictest policies against hate speech. With a complete ban on any Nazi symbols or messages (Wehunt, 2022).

The Netherlands:

The Netherlands has implemented strict rules against spreading hate speech, while still recognizing freedom of speech (*Hate Crime Legislation in the Netherlands* | HCRW, n.d.).

France:

With the French press law of 1888 on incitement of hate speech, France aims to eliminate hate speech (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2018).

Switzerland:

Within the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection, there is a special department that focuses on eliminating any hate crime and criminally pursuing the person who shared it. It is illegal to spread any hate crime in Switzerland (Federal Office for Civil Protection, n.d.).

New Zealand:

In 2019, a mosque in Christchurch was hit by a terrible terrorist attack. After this attack, the country of New Zealand rapidly adapted its policies and made new laws, banning all guns, creating new departments, and creating community-based programs. These are all to prevent New Zealand from being hit by another terrorist attack. (New Zealand Government & Government of France, 2019).

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions could include:

- Creating an international law on the spreading of hate speech and extremist ideologies.
- Encourage Member States to implement newer/stricter policies on hate speech and extremist ideologies.
- Create a clear(er) definition of hate speech in order to be able to introduce more laws.
- Create a safe and private way to censor certain hate messages or extremist ideologies.
- Create subsidies/extra funding programs in order to help social media platforms censor any forms of hate speech and extremist ideologies.
- Start campaigns informing people about the dangers of spreading hate speech and extremist ideologies, as an attempt to stop people from doing it.

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Additional reading:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ymg5FsruGEk>