

**Conference: 'Interpreting the Past,
Present and Future of Cyprus'**

Hate speech and behaviour in Cyprus

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HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

- ❑ Hate speech is easily detected but not sufficiently studied and addressed
- ❑ Dominance of nationalist narrative and lack of violence after 1974 sidelined these discussions
- ❑ Ethnic composition, immigration and prospect of solution set the context for the phenomenon to take roots

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

Research purposes

- ❑ Identifying the problem, its extent, its forms
- ❑ Basis for developing proposals and tools for confronting the problem
- ❑ Bicommunal project
- ❑ Both historical and contemporary perspective

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

Methodology

- ❑ Secondary literature and primary sources (expert surveys, newspapers, etc.)
- ❑ Focus groups of stakeholders (bloggers, academics, journalists, youth organizations, children, etc.)
- ❑ Target groups: Greek and Turkish Cypriots, immigrants and LGBT persons

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR

Theoretical and analytical framework

- ❑ The 'other'
- ❑ The organization and the control of our social world is structured based on a positive image of our self as opposed to *the other*
- ❑ Binary contrasts/antitheses simplify the world around us by developing images (e.g., *Greek Vs Turk, good Vs bad*, etc.)

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR

- ❑ People and groups are stigmatized as something 'other' and 'different', out of socially constructed models and stereotypes
- ❑ The 'other' is usually someone to whom we ascribe an inferior social, economic, and/or cultural status
- ❑ The 'other' is not treated as a separate individual but as a part of a group with specific characteristics

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR

Racism

- ❑ Articulated around the stigma of heterogeneity (e.g., skin colour, nationality, etc.)
- ❑ Detected in practices of contempt, humiliation and exploitation
- ❑ Manifested in: verbal attacks, avoidance and ghettoisation of the 'other', discriminating acts of various forms, physical attacks

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR

Basic concepts (OSCE)

- ❑ Hate crimes: criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people
- ❑ Hate speech: forms of expression that are motivated by, demonstrate or encourage hostility towards a group or a person because of their membership of that group
- ❑ Since hate speech may encourage or accompany hate crimes, the two concepts are interlinked

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

Nationalism and otherism (GC community)

- ❑ Hegemonic since 1910s
- ❑ Other voices sidelined even by force (1950s)
- ❑ 1950-1974: EOKA, TMT, paramilitary organizations, assassinations, intercommunal clashes, EOKA II, coup, invasion
- ❑ Nationalism integral part of both communities identity
- ❑ Many works addressed nationalism, much fewer the issue of hate speech and crime

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

Greek Cypriots: exiting the comfort zone

- ❑ Turning point the opening of the checkpoints in 2003: increase of inter-communal contacts and many TCs entered the labour market in the RoC
- ❑ Some violent incidents occurred: e.g., in the English School, near a right-wing football club, etc.
- ❑ TCs are perceived as a threat to the GCs sole running of the state and social affairs

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

- ❑ The TCs are seen by GCs as persons who always ask for privileges that are not justified by their sheer numbers
- ❑ Even though the majority of TCs are atheists, the Islam factor constitutes part of the GC's fear puzzle
- ❑ Negative stereotypes are build on past experiences carried to younger generations through storytelling, the educational system, political and social actors, etc.

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- ❑ Major outlets of nationalism: various centre-right and right organizations, part of the media, the Church, part of the intelligentsia and other associations
- ❑ Cyprus a Greek island, TCs presence a misfortune
- ❑ Feelings of cultural and economic superiority, racist stereotypes ('crazy Turks', 'dirty Turks', etc.)
- ❑ Mostly unconscious attitude

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Institutional exclusion

- ❑ Diffused in state structures and takes several forms
- ❑ Hostile reception in public hospitals
- ❑ Public signs only rarely feature Turkish
- ❑ Ethnocentric educational system (emphasis on the GC)
- ❑ Turkish are not taught in public schools
- ❑ GC pupils hold very negative attitudes (more than the rest of GC population) about TC

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Politically sponsored hate speech

- ❑ Target's TCs political rights and the form of the proposed solution
- ❑ Archbishop: 'in the event of such solution the 82% will become captive of the 18%'
- ❑ Politicians: TCs exploit the golden benefits of Cypriot citizenship
- ❑ ELAM: Turkish "Cypriots", attack against Talat
- ❑ Right-wing football fans: 'Turks you will die on Greek soil'

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CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ Cyprus is a conservative society. The structure and the relations upon which power is build and embedded do not change easily and they create specific stereotypes
- ❑ Upsetting factors: EU accession, increase in immigration and the prospect of solving the Cyprus problem

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

- ❑ There exists a huge depository of hostility, lack of tolerance and not acceptance towards 'the other'
- ❑ The number of hate crimes is small, while hate speech occurs more often. Unavoidably one will lead to the other if is not dealt with
- ❑ Many incidents are not reported and no complaints are filed which indicates that the problem is simmering

HATE SPEECH AND BEHAVIOUR IN CYPRUS

- ❑ Hate crimes or hate motivated incidents are usually the result of organized action
- ❑ State services fall short in addressing the phenomenon
- ❑ The legal framework is in place despite any voids but is actually missing is its proper and effective implementation