

# HATE AS A POLITICAL OUTCAST

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Increasingly, certain types of crime, speech and prejudice are being targeted by European policy makers under the label of “hate.” Building on participant observations at anti-hate crime conferences in Copenhagen and Vilnius, and policy documents and campaign material from a range of national and international actors, this article probes the ways in which hate is problematized within current anti-hate crime activities in Europe. Hate seems here to work in two different ways: one dominant, emphasizing hate as prejudice, the other more implicit and ambiguous, emphasizing hate as an attitude of radical dislike. In both cases, hate is seen to jeopardize personal freedom, equality, tolerance, and democracy. This way of mobilizing potentially marginalizes the perpetrators and makes it difficult to discuss the possible ways in which liberal democracy itself is entangled in labeling, producing and sustaining hatred.

*Keywords:* hate, hate crime, politics, emotions, liberal democracy

Why does this hatred keep coming up?

What is it in the psyche of some of our citizens that makes them do this?

(Quote from panel discussion, FRA conference, Vilnius 2013)

This article is about hate as an outcast of current European politics. More precisely, it is about the uses of the term “hate” amongst European politicians, policy makers, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations as a mobilizing signifier in the ongoing work against a particular area of crime, namely crimes motivated by various forms of prejudice. The article builds on participant observation in anti-hate crime meetings and conferences in Denmark and at the European level as well as published speeches and policy documents. The current anti-hate crime mobilization is, as I will elaborate below, part of a much broader field

of anti-discrimination, anti-racist and pro-human rights work in which a range of attitudes and practices is increasingly subsumed under the term “hate” and portrayed as a fundamental problem for a pluralist democracy (Jenness & Grattet 2001; Brown 2006; also Yanay 2013). In reading reports, campaigns and political statements about hate crimes, one may thus encounter statements such as the following:

Hate crime is a human rights issue, a threat to community cohesion and a rejection of our shared values. Our society is strong when our communities are strong. And communities thrive when they are united by positive values they share. Values like fairness, respect and tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. (*Hate Crimes – the Cross Governmental Action Plan*, 2010, foreword by Home Secretary Alan Johnson, UK government)

Living without the fear of being abused or attacked because of who you are is a basic human right and one we all share. (*Challenge it, report it, stop it. Delivering the government's hate crime action plan*, 2014, foreword by MP Norman Baker, UK government)

Hate crimes call into question the basic concept and self-understanding of modern pluralist societies, which is based on the notion of individual human dignity. (*Making hate crimes visible in the European Union: Acknowledging victims' rights*, report from European Agency for Fundamental Rights 2013, p. 7)

Such assertions of the additional vice of crimes committed with prejudice as a motivational factor immediately strikes a chord, I suspect, in many of us brought up with the rhetoric of anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia and so on. Yet this immediate appeal also deserves closer scholarly attention. For one thing because the call to fight hate crimes is interwoven into a broader field of political agenda formation around the term hate. As Niza Yanay aptly puts it:

The concept of hatred, once irrelevant to the study of politics, began circulating in speeches, writings, and public discussions as the new object of fear. The word "hate" began operating as a social force of manipulation and mobilization... Terms such as "racial hatred" (rather than racism), "religious hate," "hate conflicts," "national hatred," "hating strangers," and "hate crimes" circulate in the media and public announcements and are understood to constitute a fundamental reality (Yanay 2013: 8)

Hate has apparently surfaced, in a hitherto unseen way, as a "fundamental reality" in many different arenas, yet it seems to share a particular feature, namely that it mostly, if not exclusively, appears as the mark of the other: the enemy, the fundamentalist, the prejudiced bigot, the criminal. In this way, hate, together with its neighboring concept intol-

erance, is largely an accusation and thereby at one and the same time a mobilizer against processes of aggression and exclusion and a legitimizing force for political aggression and exclusion (also Brown 2006; Schiffauer 2013). For this reason alone, the current fights against hate are worth closer scrutiny. However, I also suggest that the current mobilization around the term "hate" (and not for example "prejudice" or "crime") testifies to particular ideas about the (im)proper place of hostility and enmity, which again tie in with a broader tendency to problematize emotions related to aggression or dominance (Wouters 1992; Greenhouse 1992). Based on ongoing research<sup>1</sup> into the current European anti-hate crime mobilization, this article seeks to contribute to our understanding of this vilification of hate by probing the following questions: how is hate perceived within the anti-hate crime field, and what is so bad about it? How is hate explained and what measures are suggested to contain, tame or dissolve it?

The article is structured into three parts. The first part provides a brief outline of my overall approach to the topic and of the historical and geographical context for current anti-hate crime work. The second part is the actual analysis, which firstly investigates how hate is configured within the anti-hate crime mobilization. Then the analysis traces the kinds of explanation of the roots and causes of hate as well as possible remedies that one may encounter within the anti-hate crime field and how they are shaped by the logics of the mobilization. The third and final part concludes the article by discussing some of the premises of and problems with locating hatred consistently outside liberal democracy as a normative vision for society, not least with regard to the ways hate may be explained and perpetrators dealt with. Throughout these different parts, I also suggest that the current anti-hate crime mobilization simultaneously over-politicizes and de-politicizes certain parts of what is at stake regarding hate and hate crimes, and this leaves unattended important questions regarding the complex connections between hate and liberal democracy.

## Hate Crimes as an Object of Politics

Firstly, a few words about my approach to the field. In what follows, my interest mainly lies in hate crimes as an object of politics. By this I mean that my aim is not primarily to describe and understand the crimes in question (on this there is a large and growing body of literature, for example Perry 2001, 2003; Igansky 2008). Rather, my interest is in the attempts to delimit and govern hate crimes, the activities that make it possible to approach a range of dispersed and complex phenomena as if they constituted a single phenomenon. And not just any kind of phenomenon but one that it is urgent to act upon. How does such an object come about? For one thing, a single word is needed to designate the object. It needs to be suggestive, it needs to catch on and it needs to be repeated. As Valerie Jenness and Rytgen Grattet have argued in their work on the emergence of hate crimes as a particular social problem, this is exactly what the term “hate crimes” has provided:

To those who have promoted and embraced it, the concept of hate crime evokes drama, passion, and righteousness, and it signifies human tendencies toward tribalism and historic challenges to freedom and equality faced by minority groups... A seemingly simple pairing of the words – “hate” and “crime” – creates a signifier that conveys an enormous sense of threat and an attendant demand for a response. (Jenness & Grattet 2001: 2)

I will return to the question of why hate is such an appealing term in more detail below; for now, suffice it to say that when combined with the word “crime,” it works to subsume a range of very different acts (from painting swastikas on a synagogue or shouting homophobic slurs during a fight, to correctional rapes of lesbians or racially-motivated homicide) and very different motivations (racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, homophobia etc.) as instances of the same thing. Further, to become an object of politics, the term needs to be loaded with meaning and movement: it needs to move people in a certain direction. I here take inspiration from political psychologist David Sears who argues that political

mobilization mainly works by aligning the issues at hand (in this case a particular area of crime) with already hegemonic assumptions and historical narratives about what is good, desirable, bad, threatening, contemptible etc. (Sears 2001). In other words, the aim is to convince people that the given issue is an instance of something that we have already agreed upon. In processes of mobilization – i.e. the activities through which such alignment is made and disseminated – political objects tend to become bi-polar. Mobilization simplifies matters so that a clear split appears between the threatening/damaging problem (that we wish to move away from) and the values/order/desired condition that the problem threatens (and that we wish to either protect or move towards) (Sears 2001: 15ff.; also Laclau 1996). When approaching hate crimes as a particular political object, this framework encourages us to notice the attempts at alignment and the attempts to establish a particular constitutive split, the underlying norms and assumptions that this split is founded upon, and the specific images, narratives and practice that carry it.<sup>2</sup>

## Contextualizing Hate Crimes

Fifteen years or so ago, there was not much talk about hate crimes in Europe; rather the issues seemed to be racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Today, most European states have followed the USA in implementing various forms of legislation regulating something which, if not in the legal texts then in the discourse of policy makers and NGOs, is known as “hate crimes” (Green, McFalls & Smith 2001). The adoption of the epithet “hate” with regard to crime corresponds to the increasing use of the expression “hate speech” to indicate derogatory or denigrating speech based on people’s origin, race, religion, etc. In many instances, racism and racial hatred are also used synonymously (as in the UK law on the prohibition of incitement to racial hatred, which prohibits the distribution of racist material and the establishment of racist websites). Evidently, this fight against hate and the public debate surrounding it have played out differently with regard to hate *speech* than with regard to hate *crime*, on which I focus in

the present article. For example, in the condemnation and criminalization of certain forms of speech, the activity to which “hate” attaches is not in and of itself illegal but, on the contrary, a constitutive part of the democratic processes (Post 2009). In other words, it is the hate that transforms the speech from something crucially important, protected by constitutional rights, into something problematic, and hence the stakes in drawing the boundary and the need to clearly delineate the harm and cost appear to be rather high. This is substantially different with regard to hate crimes, where the actions in question are already illegal, and the hate mainly enters as a question of motivation, additional harm and – in some situations – additional penalties. It is probably not surprising, therefore, that while hate speech regulations inevitably elicit discussions about freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, artistic freedom etc., the introduction of anti-hate crime measures, both legal and otherwise, have been much less controversial in a European context.

Nevertheless, in some crucial respects, these different domains seem to belong to the same area of concerns and arguments regarding the reality that the term hate is intended to grasp. Hate functions in both cases as shorthand for a particular cluster of negative or defaming group-based prejudices which, especially since World War II and the UN Declaration on Human Rights, have become untenable political and social positions. The idea that crimes committed with a racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, or anti-homosexual motive somehow do particular harm originated in the USA as the outcome of effective NGO lobbying in the late 1970s (Jeness 2001). Originally advanced by the Anti-Defamation League and the Victims’ Rights Movement, the attempts to put crimes motivated by hostility towards a particular group on the political agenda resulted in the first hate crime law at the state level in California in 1978. In the early 1980s, the Anti-Defamation League drafted a model not only for hate crime legislation but also for its implementation, and in the 1990s, the first federal laws – the “Hate Crimes Statistics Act” (1990) and the “Hate Crimes Penalty Enhancement Act” (1994) – were passed. This process marked a

unification of hitherto separate NGO agendas, joining the fight against anti-Semitic violence propagated by the Anti-Defamation League with that against other kinds of group-based violence such as violence on the basis of race, sexual orientation or gender identity.

In Europe, the focus on racist and especially anti-immigrant crimes gained momentum during the 1990s due, among other things, to several racist attacks in Britain and Germany that drew scholarly and political attention to the possible connection between racist crime and right-wing extremism (Green, McFalls & Smith 2001; Glet 2009). In the UK, the murder of a young black man, Stephen Lawrence, and the subsequent flawed investigation of the murder led to the introduction not only of new laws but of a whole range of initiatives aimed at documenting racist crimes and securing proper investigation by the police. In 1998, the UK implemented the “Crime and Disorder Act,” which singles out “racially aggravated offences,” and this was followed by an extension of the law to include offenses motivated by the victim’s religion. In 2001, Germany adopted a category of politically motivated crime resembling the American category of hate crimes, and several European states have since made similar changes to their criminal law (for example Sweden in 2002, Denmark in 2004, and the Netherlands in 2007). Unlike in the USA the term “hate crime” does not appear in the legal texts, but since the early 2000s, the term has entered the language of politicians as well as of various actors engaged in anti-hate crime work. Today, hate crimes appear on the agenda of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), numbers on hate crimes are produced by national statistics and intelligence services, police are being trained to be aware of hate crimes, and police forces, NGOs and human rights institutions campaign to raise public awareness of hate crimes. In the following, I will mainly focus on public campaigning and NGO and policy activities, and less on policing and the legal aspects. Let us now turn to the matter of how, more precisely, the term hate is configured

within this setting and how this configuration contributes to establishing hate crimes as a particular political object.

### **Affirming the Threat**

Traversing anti-hate crime activities in Europe, a first observation is that the main energy goes into emphasizing the hate rather than the crime. Slogans on posters and stickers often urge the observer to “Stop hate” or “Say no to hate” and, while listening to debates at conferences and events, I had the impression on several occasions that failing to provide additional punishment for hate crimes or being against penalty enhancement was, by some, almost taken to be the equivalent of not recognizing the crime at all. This focus on the hate rather than the crime probably reflects the strong representation, not of police actors and criminologists (although they are present too) but of human rights activists and minority NGOs in the anti-hate crime work – actors whose agenda has not been crime but rights and discrimination. On many occasions, hate crimes are thus spoken of as merely one way of acting out or expressing a much broader problem rather than a phenomenon that lies in the prolongation of, or bears resemblance to, other forms of criminal conduct. A second, and related, observation is that sometimes the additional harm of hate crimes is argued on the basis of studies that suggest that hate crime victims report greater pain and distress than victims of comparable crimes without the hate motivation. On many other occasions, however, hate (crime) is configured much more confrontationally as a threat to a range of fundamental values, which we could subsume under the heading of “liberal democracy.” In 2012, the Danish Minister of Integration and Social Affairs, Karen Hækkerup, thus opened a 12-hour workshop for anti-hate crime work with the following words:

A hate crime is more than just – in quotation mark – “ordinary,” stupid and shortsighted violence. A hate crime targets the heart of democracy because hate crimes are a frontal attack on that which we treasure the most in a democratic state: that we can be who we are and say what we believe in.

And, in 2013, Swedish EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström stated the following in one of the opening speeches for a large 2-day international conference organized by FRA in Vilnius:

Hate crimes attack the core of what we believe in as Europeans. They undermine values that we hold dear, values we have enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. Respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, and human rights. Each and every time a hate crime is committed, these values are put in danger.

The shift in emphasis from crime (with different kinds of motivations) to the particular attitude expressed through the crime thus sets hate crime outside the parameters of ordinary crime because it “targets the heart of democracy” and “attacks the core of what we believe in as Europeans,” exemplified in freedom, equality, human dignity and the right to “be who we are and say what we believe in.” Such politicization of an area of crime is not unique for hate crimes but makes it akin to, for example, terror, extremist crimes and honor-related crimes. But how is this hate configured more precisely? Underneath the condemnation, the term “hate” seems rather consistently to work in two ways or with two different meanings. One meaning, which is the most dominant one, as already mentioned is that hate is shorthand for a range of -isms and -phobias (anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, racism etc.). The other meaning configures hate as a particularly intense, negative emotion or attitude, and the status and use of this meaning is more ambiguous. Mostly, hate as a strong emotion occurs as a disapprobation: it is problematized or even rejected as a misnomer by actors working with hate crimes. But, at the same time, the word is used consistently and I would argue that its semantic potential sets the tone for the first register by adding intensity and severity.

If we start with the first meaning – hate as shorthand for various -isms and -phobias – this is by far the most univocal answer provided, and hatred is often used in combinations such as “hate and prejudice,” “hate and intolerance” or “hate and bigotry,”

making them somewhat synonymous. While there are disagreements as to which -isms and -phobias the term covers, there are some usual suspects and a rather consistent hierarchy between them. Racism is thus always mentioned, and very often as the first example when kinds of hatred are listed, while anti-Semitism and Islamophobia (as representatives of hatred against particular religious identities) mainly occur as the second. For some actors, such as the EU Council, this is where the list stops, and the formal EU guiding framework is still the “Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia” from 2008. However, most other actors continue the list with homophobia as the third kind, and then sometimes transphobia and intolerance towards disability and gender as the subsequent ones. To illustrate, the yearly Swedish reports providing numbers on hate crimes is introduced with the following examples of what a hate crime is:

A man is calling “you dirty nigger” in the street, a veiled woman is harassed by her neighbor, and a boy is mocked on the internet for his sexual orientation. These are examples of the kind of incidents that can appear in the hate crime statistics. (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2013: 5)

And, in 2010, the following pictures were displayed on the streets of Copenhagen as part of an anti-hate crime campaign organized by the Institute for Human Rights, the municipality and the local police force, referring to crimes committed with racist, Islamophobic and homophobic motivations.

The hierarchy between identities probably testifies to the shorter human and civil rights history of the concept of hate crime. It is also one of the current points of contestation among activists and politicians. Some are working for an expansion of problematized hatreds (or perhaps rather an expansion of protected corresponding identity characteristics). Others question the wisdom of expansion, for example because the expansion aligns identities that are the outcome of very different historical processes and which have very different scope in terms of social significance, putting racist hate crimes against immigrants from former colonies, for example, and disability hate crimes somewhat on the “same level.” These kinds of negotiation are nothing new and, since its introduction, the “hate” in hate crimes has been a vehicle for identity politics in different ways (Jacobs & Potter 1996). What interests me here are the features that these different forms of hate/prejudice assumedly share and which lay the founda-



Ill. 1: Poster campaign Stop Hadforbrydelser (Stop Hate Crimes). Institute for Human Rights, Municipality of Copenhagen and Copenhagen Police Force, 2010. (Source: press release from Copenhagen Police Force, August 2010, [https://www.politi.dk/Koebenhavn/da/lokalnyt/Presse/Pressemeddelelser/hadforbrydelser\\_160810.htm](https://www.politi.dk/Koebenhavn/da/lokalnyt/Presse/Pressemeddelelser/hadforbrydelser_160810.htm))

tion for problematizing them, namely how they are defined by the object they take: that the -isms and -phobias compromise individualism and collectivize their object and that they are directed against a person's being rather than his or her doings.

Let me illustrate by returning to the three pictures from the Danish anti-hate crime campaign. The posters bear the texts "Do you think Muslims pray/ask for blue eyes?," "Do you think blacks should have blue eyes" and "Do you prefer/like gays with blue eyes," "blue eye" being the Danish expression for a black eye. The expressions on the faces are very similar, and there are no markers of identity apart from the skin, hair and eye color of the men. However, the small textual variations in the question they pose draw on commonly held assumptions about what constitutes the basis of the three identity categories. Further, the red square at the bottom of the posters carries the text "Stop hate" followed by the word "crimes" in very small letters. The posters were accompanied by a website which, among other things, explained that it is "not a crime to be yourself" and that hate crimes are an attack on "who you are." The message conveyed through the campaign is that the people embodying these different collective traits – Muslim, black, gay (or at a more generic level: religion, race, sexual orientation) – are blameless and hence the perpetrators' reaction to them defies what is rational and meaningful. So the answer to the questions on the posters is obviously "NO!"

If we take a closer look at these objects of hate/prejudice, the self-evident "NO!" that the posters seek to elicit draws its legitimacy from a set of underlying premises that these ways of being are, in fact, nothing to be alarmed about. More precisely, they are ways of being that are delimited by many liberal, democratic states as lying beyond the scope of legitimate political concern. Ingrained in the posters' appeal is thus an affirmation of the right of a person to inhabit particular protected identities, a right that, once again, is based on the assumption that these ways of being are not violating anything of public concern; they are blameless in the sense that they are politically irrelevant (Mouffe 2005: 21; also Brown 2006, particularly chapter 3).<sup>3</sup> This way of conceiv-

ing of proper civic selves is, I would suggest, intrinsic to liberalism: a self that is at one and the same time free in its *being* ("you have the right to be yourself") and yet in its *doing* it naturally bound within the confinement of public order. Further, even though the poster text refers to collective identity categories (black, gay, Muslim) it is also very much an individualized self that is being displayed here. As Carol Greenhouse has convincingly described it, individualistic discourse often transforms conflicts into differences. "Individualism," she argues, "is – in Lévi-Strauss's sense – a social structure. As a social structure, individualism 'translates' conflict relationships into categories of difference, especially the primary category of difference, the individual" (Greenhouse 1992: 239). In this context, conflicts over values, proper practices, attitudes etc. are transformed into or reframed in terms of racial, religious or sexual differences – differences that are neutral or blameless and which the individual has a right to inhibit. This configuration of proper selves is visually underlined by the fact that most, if not all, of the representations of victims that I have come across in campaigns and on police websites avoid portraying the protected identities through images that would resonate with issues of public conflict. Muslims are never portrayed in *niqab* (face-veil leaving visible only the eyes) or performing prayers in public. Homosexuals are never portrayed in pride parades or as parents. Victims are usually displayed as "nude" as possible, that is, detached from stereotyped markings, which again entails an implicit affirmation that they are normal, "like us." This is, of course, not to say that Muslims deserve hatred if they wear a *niqab*, or that gays should be beaten if they appear openly flamboyant or have children. Rather the point is that this way of portraying the identities/differences in question serves to reinforce the affirmation of their underlying, shared identification as human beings or citizens stripped of any particularity or potentially conflicting differences, and this is what makes the hateful attitude so unreasonable and unjustified.

So while the object of the assumed hate of the perpetrator is these collective identity categories, it is the injustice of an undeserving individualized

victim who nevertheless becomes the object of hate which is the object of the observer's expected emotional engagement. And, judged by my own reactions as well as the atmosphere at the two seminars I have attended in relation to this particular campaign, I suggest the expected engagement to be some sort of moral outrage or indignation towards the perpetrator, and some kind of empathic compassion with the victim. If you react in this way, you affirm the mobilization's alignment of the current issue (the crimes) with underlying assumptions about the status of these identities as related to individual, immutable rights and the irrationality of harboring hostility towards them. Yet this alignment is also somewhat precarious or vulnerable. For one thing because the pictures may also elicit other reactions such as disgust or the feeling of being implicitly accused or held accountable for something – reactions which could easily turn against the person in the picture if the

alignment is not already strong. There are also people who simply do not share the underlying assumptions of the mobilization and who therefore resist the alignment. An anonymous group thus reacted to the campaign by creating their own "counter-campaign" under the heading "Stop the real problem of violence."

This campaign was also supposed to be accompanied by a website ([www.stopvolden.nu](http://www.stopvolden.nu)) but this never came about. However, the pictures and texts are accessible on Facebook and on different rightwing webpages. The campaign mirrors the original posters in color and style but the faces are covered and the pictures carry texts such as "Do you think Danish girls want to be raped?" and "Is it okay to beat up a Jew?" followed by statistics showing an over-representation of perpetrators with a Middle Eastern background. The counter-campaign thus seeks to challenge the claim that the differences in question and the hostil-

Ill. 2: Illustration from the campaign Stop det rigtige voldsproblem (Stop the real violence problem). (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Stopvoldennu-173752625976684/>)



ity they sometimes elicit are merely about blameless being. By claiming that the differences are also about particular problematic doings related to the collective traits, the posters seek to remove the differences from the haven of protected categories of difference and insert them into the realm of actions and conflicts that ought to be discussed, accused and problematized on rational grounds.

This meaning of hate, where it is the same as prejudice and bigotry and thus gains its mobilizing power from its ingrained irrationality and injustice, is widely agreed upon across the anti-hate crime field. And on quite a few occasions it is followed by the expressed point that “hate” is really a misnomer. It is rarely argued why this is so, for example on the basis of a detailed analysis of the differences and similarities between hate and prejudice. But in conversations and discussions with people working on hate crimes (as well as in the scholarly literature), one recurring point is that hate is also a word we use for strong, persistent dislike or aversion, and obviously we can hate many other things than these collective identities. So the term “hate” covers something else and more that may not carry the mark of irrationality and moral failure to the same extent as racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia etc. Further, you can commit a racist or homophobic crime without being submerged in intense, negative feelings, so making this a defining criterion for hate crimes would leave out too many crimes (Perry 2005; Iganski 2008; Iganski & Smith 2011; Brudholm 2014 for different discussions of the “misnomer” issue). In both cases, the conclusion is that even though hate, understood as an emotional experience or an attitude of strong dislike, may be present on some occasions, it would too often miss the target. Nevertheless, the term is persistently used, which might suggest that its connotations do not only work to its disadvantage. So why is hatred more evocative than, say, racism or xenophobia or homophobia? One suggestion is, of course, that it is easier to say “hate” than to list all kinds of -isms and -phobias. By referring to hate, one does not need to specify the target, and from the perspective of mobilization this facilitates openness towards multiple agendas and cooperation partners.

Yet, this could also be achieved by using the words prejudice or bias, so this cannot be the entire story. Further, and related, there could be a certain fatigue with the anti-prejudice rhetoric, which can be overcome by invoking hatred instead. But again: why hate? Why does hatred serve so well as an object of, among other things, indignation?

Both prejudice and hatred imply some form of negative engagement with the other, and they are also usually thought to imply at least some of the same belief structures and evaluations of the object (that the object is unwanted, that the object is bad, evil or of lower worth, that its corruption goes to its entire being). But – and this is the point – they may differ in intensity, aim and justification (see Allport [1954]1979; Brudholm 2010; Sternberg & Sternberg 2008 for further conceptual elaboration). I would therefore suggest that while hate-as-prejudice provides irrationality and a sense of injustice to the political object, hate as an emotion provides the connotations of intensity and passion. Hate as emotion is difficult to grade into more or less; you cannot hate a little. Or perhaps more precisely: as an emotion or attitude, hate is already the endpoint on a scale of different forms of dislike – an endpoint at which we are usually beyond the possibility of dialogue and restoration of relationships (Brudholm 2010). If hate is this, it is not surprising that it is considered problematic in a political order that emphasizes deliberation through speech.

Further, this shift in rhetoric towards an emotional term could also tie in with a more general problematization of aggressive, hostile and especially hierarchical emotions and attitudes during the latter half of the twentieth century, as suggested by scholars such as Carol and Peter Stearns (1986) and Cas Wouters (1992). In Wouters’ argumentation displaying aggressive, hierarchical emotions, especially if they relate to biological or sociological inherited traits (which would include both class resentment and racism) have become increasingly intolerable, not least if they are accompanied by physical violence (1992: 231). Relatedly, rejecting such emotions has also become a way of affirming one’s status as “free” expressed through an increased search for

informal, relaxed, and authentic experiences of selfhood. The aforementioned and more ethnographically anchored work by Carol Greenhouse on conflict avoidance in an American context (1989, 1992) points in somewhat the same direction in the sense that, here too, avoiding hostility becomes imbued with moral value in and of itself; it has both “ethical and civic dimensions” in the sense that it marks the good moral standing of a person while also being promoted as intrinsic to a functioning community (Greenhouse 1992: 236). Such an interpretation of why the term hate has appeal is, admittedly, more speculative but it corresponds to an observation regarding the anti-hate crime field, namely that one of the main suggested remedies for hatred is tolerance. Where tolerance and moderation have conventionally been associated with some level of dislike, aversion and thus more or less painful restraint of these feelings, however, tolerance in the anti-hate crime field often appears as something more pleasant and warm: not as a means of *restraining* one’s aversions, dislikes or hostilities and thereby securing social peace, but as a way of *ridding* oneself of one’s aversions, thereby making oneself capable of embracing the true value of diversity (Johansen forthcoming). And not surprisingly so – and this is where the first meaning of hate as prejudice re-enters the picture – since the differences at stake are “innocent” and the foundation of one’s hostility and hate ultimately unfounded and irrational. Tolerance, more than anything, has to do with realizing this and hence dissolving the hate.

Summing up: these two meanings of hate work in different ways, not least with regard to the sense of drama and urgency they evoke. The intensity surrounding the political object thus seems to be strongest when the two meanings merge, and hate is articulated as deep-felt, intense prejudiced hatred. This way of articulating hate becomes especially present when the current crimes are connected with the Holocaust, as the ultimate hate crime. In 2013, FRA hosted a large international conference on hate crimes with the participation of politicians, NGOs, police forces, public prosecutors, scholars and media. The Holocaust was mentioned on several occasions, as in the following example from a presenta-

tion in a panel debate, from which the initial quote in this article is also drawn:

The EU treaty is clearly based on certain values, among these the rejection of any hatred and intolerance, and intolerance in Europe is growing. Looking back, the Holocaust was an enormous damage to humanity, and we have to create a world without the possibility of this ever happening again. But hatred is still with us in different forms: why does this hatred keep coming up again and again? What is it in the minds of our citizens that make them do this? (Presentation at FRA conference, 2013)

After this presentation, which was made by an Irish politician, a scholar raised his hand and asked the speaker whether we ought to consider the fact that much research actually problematizes the role of hate as the sole or prime driver of the Holocaust and genocide more generally. This comment was immediately rejected by the speaker as irrelevant and mistaken since the Holocaust was obviously about hatred of the Jews – exactly the kind of hate that anti-hate crime initiatives are supposed to fight. While the intensity and severity that attaches to hate as emotion tend to make any grading or scaling of the problem difficult, drawing more exclusively on hate as prejudice also holds other potential, and it makes it possible to broaden the scope and talk about “more or less” prejudice, about everyday racism or homophobia, or about crimes that are “not that serious.” In such situations, the Holocaust or the breakdown of democracy is thus completely absent from the conversations and the pictures evoked are rather assaults in nightlife, harassment in the street and in particular neighborhoods or gang fights.

Taken together, the two meanings make hate a rather flexible signifier that can reach across a great variety of situations and make it possible to scale the drama and urgency up or down, depending on context. Nevertheless, in both meanings, the hate *qua* prejudice-irrationality or *qua* aggression-uncontrollability work, on a rhetorical level, to detach the crimes from other areas of crime, for example youth

delinquency, gang violence, street violence, vandalism or sport-related violence to which some of the crimes prosecuted and convicted as hate crimes obviously also belong or share characteristics with (Levin & McDewitt 1993; Koopmans 1996; Igan-ski & Smith 2011). And the possibility of tying the crimes into areas such as human rights violations, social destabilization and genocidal tendencies is never far away. So while sociological and criminological research suggest that: “many perpetrators of hate crime are ‘ordinary people’ [...] who offend in the unfolding contexts of their everyday lives: prompted not by a particular ideological conviction or volition, but expressing instead sentiments that lie beneath the surface of everyday cognition for many people” (Igan-ski & Smith 2011: 18), in the process of mobilization they become distilled into a distinct anti-liberal and anti-democratic threat.

### Roots, Causes and Remedies

So far, I have traced the contours of some of the different meanings and functions of the term “hate” within the anti-hate crime field, and I have addressed how this contributes to shaping hate crimes as a particular object of politics. In this second part of the analysis, I take a closer look at the kinds of explanation that form part of the mobilization regarding the causes of hate, where it comes from and how it should be remedied – questions that also invite some considerations as to how the perpetrator figures in the picture.

First of all, one immediately notices that the issue of causes and remedies receives very little attention. In more formalized articulations, such as speeches, statements and policy reports, these questions are rarely dealt with at all. Here, the focus is most frequently on dealing with underreporting, providing more reliable numbers on hate crimes, and developing the means to help the victims. The rare explanations of roots and causes that nevertheless do occur in formal speeches and presentations mainly draw on two strands. The first is actually not an explanation at all but rather an affirmation of the incomprehensible nature of hate. This is exactly what is expressed in the initial quote at the begin-

ning of this article, where a panelist at the Fundamental Rights conference rhetorically raises the question: why does it keep coming back to us – this hatred? The question is rhetorical, and the “why” is not followed by an answer but expresses frustration in the recurrence of something that we ought to be over and done with.<sup>4</sup> The continuation of the quote is worth noticing: “What is it in the psyche of our citizens that makes them do this?” Here, the hate is located in the minds of the individual citizens, and one of the consequences of this line of argumentation is that it potentially either demonizes or pathologizes the perpetrator (Perry 2005 for similar concerns). Hence it is no coincidence that the previous speaker in the panel debate equated hatred with a sickness, and tentatively suggested (but immediately rejected) the solution that perpetrators should be gathered in camps in order to remove the sickness. Such suggestions obviously do not abound in the European policy work on hate crimes that I have become acquainted with, yet I would argue that it merely expresses a radicalization of the mobilizing split whereby the perpetrator’s actions are not only irrational and unfounded but more radically cut off from the realm of meaning and social order. It is an explanation that sits well with the calls for harsher punishment, but it is not an explanation that makes other kinds of measure obvious.

The other type of explanation that can be found in the formal presentations is that hatred is related to fear, and both hatred and fear emerge from ignorance. An example:

[...] there is a need to invest more energy into prevention – to inform and educate in order to address the ignorance and fear which often is behind xenophobia and intolerance. The Strasbourg Court has also highlighted the responsibility of teachers in the promotion of a society of tolerance. (*Hate crimes – the ugly face of racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, Islamophobia and homophobia*, viewpoint paper from the Council of Europe, July 21, 2008)

The perpetrator hates because he or she is uneducated, ignorant, unknowing. And, logically, the remedy

is more knowledge through education. This trope is perhaps among the most solidly rehearsed within anti-racism, anti-hate and anti-prejudice work, and I expect that it ties in with the modern, liberal aspiration to individualize and liberalize through knowledge. Wendy Brown, reflecting on the practice of promoting tolerance through education, describes it in the following way:

What wraps in a common leaf the native, the fanatic, the fundamentalist, and the bigot – despite the fact that some may be religiously orthodox or members of an organicist society while others may be radical libertarians – is a presumed existence in a narrow, homogeneous, unquestioning, and unenlightened universe, an existence that inherently generates hostility towards outsiders, towards questioning, towards difference. (Brown 2006: 184)

What Brown points towards here are the often implicit ideas about what more knowledge will ideally bring about, namely a realization of the truth and merits of both individuality and universal humanity; more knowledge will make us less hostile to the other, since the hostility is based on faulty perceptions. This line of argumentation does not so much demonize as patronize the perpetrator.

Within less formal interactions and communications, we find slightly more engagement with the issue of causes and remedies and also other types of explanation. Let me briefly recapitulate a conference/seminar in Copenhagen in 2010, which marked the end of the public anti-hate crime campaign, because what happened here is rather illustrative both of the kinds of explanation offered and the way they tend to be articulated in more informal settings (very similar observations were made in 2012 at a national anti-hate crime workshop in Denmark, and in 2013 at the already mentioned international conference hosted by FRA). The event was hosted by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and it was attended, among others, by scholars, policy-makers, police representatives and minority NGO representatives. After the introductory speeches, we were divided into groups each of which had to discuss what

to do and where to go. The group to which I was assigned remained rather uncomfortably silent in the beginning. This was probably partly due to the mere change of scene, the social vacuum that naturally occurs once it is no longer clear who has the authority to speak. But I also got the distinct feeling that the lack of drive and direction had something to do with the change of topic. In talking about what to actually do, we were forced to talk about things other than simply condemning the evil.

We had to start talking about hate crimes in terms of actual events, actual explanations, and seeing the perpetrators as part of social reality. And here, the clear-cut object simply did not provide any direction other than the immediate “something needs to be done.” So we paused. The first break-through in the discussion came as someone mentioned victims as an arena for action, and everybody could immediately agree that doing more for the victims was a good thing. Perhaps because the emotional structure of the mobilization – aversion towards the perpetrator and compassion for the victim – could be upheld? Then someone mentioned social marginalization, suggesting that measures against hate crimes should seek to reach youngsters who, in different ways, feel unrecognized and excluded. The point here was that prejudice, as well as hate crimes, emerges out of frustration, of pressure that reverts into counter-pressure, and hence what is needed is social inclusion – a trope well known in much research on social protest, social injustice and violence (Heitmeyer 1993; also Koopmans 1996 for overview and discussion).

For a moment, the discussion seemed to gain direction again, people displaying confidence in this line of argumentation, but then some started to express uncertainty about the roles of the perpetrator and victim. When the marginalization argument was followed through, extremists became victims, bigots became minorities, and those who deserved punishment and condemnation suddenly also became objects of compassion. For some, this merging of positions (the innocent victim and the hating perpetrator), which in the formal speeches were presented as opposites, did not immediately

seem disturbing but rather a well-known fact about criminality. Others started questioning it, however, pointing towards hate crimes as something instead committed by “ordinary,” that is: more well off, majority youth. And in any case, it was clear that the marginalization explanation made the calls for harsher punishment and the retributive mobilization of the campaigns much less self-evident. Finally, one participant in the group mentioned the general presence of racism and especially anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim racism as the real problem, a racism that was promoted by particular right-wing politicians and that provided the perpetrators with reasons and legitimacy for the violence. This explanation immediately caught on, leading to various suggestions about anti-racist teachings and tolerance-promoting activities in schools and high schools in order to counter this tendency. Yet this line of explanation actually radically shifted the ground from social marginalization to politically sustained racism as the backdrop for understanding the hatred – without any one of us commenting at this shift. Then the workshop time was finished, and we all gathered to share our ideas for future betterment.

During this event, two additional explanations occur: 1) hate and hate crimes emerge from social marginalization; the perpetrator becomes, to some extent, an object of compassion and the solutions are social inclusion and trust-building, and 2) hate and hate crimes feed on majoritarian prejudices, supported by certain right-wing political tendencies; the perpetrator becomes normalized and powerful, which merely enforces the sense of injustice for the victims. Together with the two previously mentioned explanations (hate as pathology and hate as ignorance), these explanations form a kind of repertoire that actors can draw on when given the task to reflect upon the “what to do?” question; however, they configure both the roots and causes of hatred and the perpetrators in somewhat different and even occasionally contradictory ways, and the topics overall appear rather marginal to the mobilization more generally.

### The Limits of Mobilization

What to make of this? First and foremost, I have attempted to trace some contours of how the term hate is framed and used in the anti-hate crime mobilization and discussed how it works in (at least) two different ways. The first is a dominant one, emphasizing hate as prejudice, and foregrounding its irrationality and its threat to democracy, equality and individual liberty. The other is more ambiguous, and sometimes rejected as a misguided meaning of the word hate, yet it is present as a potential way of setting the tone of the first way. This is hate as a particularly intense negative emotion and/or attitude. These different registers, if you will, make it possible to navigate between hate as something radical and something more ordinary, something very intense and clear-cut and something less intense and interwoven with other traits, circumstances and parameters. At the same time, this flexibility still seems coordinated by the same mobilizing split that situates hate as an unquestionable outcast of whatever good one is defending in the particular situation – and this good tends most frequently to be characterized by words like “our shared value,” “tolerance,” “human dignity,” “freedom,” “democracy” and “equality.” In other words, for the most part, the mobilization is driven by an affirmation of the threat of hate, the innocence of the victims and the merits of a particular socio-political order rather than, say, an affirmation of the merits of crime prevention or the merits of different types of conflict resolution. Such other topics *are* of course also present, especially amongst practitioners and researchers working in policing, victim support, conflict mediation and education. However, they do not appear as a central part of the mobilization, but rather as practical solutions to specific situations (see works such as Walters 2014 or Iganski & Smith 2011).

Relatedly, much less energy is put into, and much less clarity displayed with regard to, explaining hate, its roots and causes, its proper remedies – and thereby also how to engage with the perpetrators. When I have asked about the perpetrators and how they figure in the anti-hate crime agenda of OSCE and FRA, I have mainly received slightly hesitant answers such

as “this is just not our prime focus” or “well, that is important too, but we have started somewhere else.” And for the many minority NGOs engaged in the field, their focus has, not surprisingly, been the victims.<sup>5</sup> Whether there is a causal relationship between the politicized way of configuring hate crimes in certain parts of the anti-hate crime field, on the one hand, and the somewhat marginal occupation with the causes of hate as well as the perpetrators, on the other, is difficult to say. However, it has definitely been my experience that the more strongly people are engaged in affirming the constitutive split of the mobilization (in speeches, in policy paper, in discussions), the easier it is to deal with the victims because they have a clear position in the mobilization as objects of compassion and vehicles for indignation. Perpetrators, on the other hand, are more ambiguous, and I think that this is partly due to the fact that the position suggested for them in the mobilization is potentially rather exclusionary. And even though the target is the hate and not the perpetrator (the sin, not the sinner) sometimes the distinction collapses, as in the case of the politician who suggested sending hate crime offenders to camps. Consequently, the emotional engagement with the perpetrators that is implicitly suggested in the mobilizing split, when it is most sharply articulated, potentially comes very close to the evil that we are supposed to distance ourselves from at the outset. So engaging with the perpetrators in a way that does not compromise the values that ought to be defended actually requires that people withdraw somewhat from the sharp condemnations and exclusionary rhetoric. In other words, these topics seem, in a sense, to mark the limits of mobilizing in this way.

Finally, I am struggling with the thought that while the configuration of hate as a fundamental threat to liberal democracy and “our shared values” potentially (over-)politicizes parts of what is covered by the category of hate crimes, it also potentially de-politicizes important aspects of the problem. Others have discussed the way the term “hate” de-politicizes hate crimes by locating the problem in the subjective feelings of an individual perpetrator (Perry 2005). My concern here is slightly different, namely

that the current anti-hate crime mobilization potentially de-politicizes hate by situating it as outside and in opposition to the only available legitimate political framework. If hate (in either of its meanings) is by definition foreign to and the antithesis of liberal democracy, one avoids a whole range of discussions. One avoids discussions about whether and to what extent the actual, contextual translations of conflicting relationships into categories of differences are intelligible and desirable (Greenhouse 1992). I think we could see the counter-campaign from the Danish context as precisely expressing a protest against one such particular translation (however ill-founded its deliberation may be). Further, one avoids discussions about the sometimes deeply territorialized aspects of, for example, anti-immigrant and xenophobic violence and the way such territorialization relates to fundamental disagreements about how the “we,” the *demos*, of a given democracy is configured (Hage 2000; Mouffe 2005). One avoids discussing the potential tensions between the individualizing aspirations and the different collectivizing consequences of the mobilization: that there might be continuities between celebrating individual liberty and sovereignty – making these constitutive as “our shared values” – national community building – boundary drawing – exclusion – enmity – violence. In other words: one avoids all discussions that situate hate not in opposition to but in prolongation of practices and logics inherent to the real life realizations of liberal democracies. These kinds of discussions are, I admit, ill-suited to carry a political mobilization; however, I think they are important in so far as they could contribute to demystifying rather than pathologizing the place and role in the social fabric of this thing called “hate.”

## Notes

- 1 The analysis presented here is based on material gathered through the project Hating Hate Crime, financed by the Danish Research Council for Culture and Communication and based at the University of Copenhagen. The project, which commenced in 2010, explores the ongoing political mobilization against hate crimes in Europe, and is based on a range of different sources, such as national and international policy reports

(mainly from the UK, Denmark, Sweden, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights), public campaign material (mainly from Denmark and the UK), statistical documentation of types and numbers of hate crimes, participation in meetings, conferences and workshops on anti-hate crime work, and conversations with actors in the field. The focus of the project is thus on what can meaningfully be said and done publicly and politically regarding hate crimes.

- 2 There are obviously overlaps between the way I conceptualize objects of politics and the application of the concept of frames within much social movement theory (Jenness & Broad 1997; Bleich 2003). For example, Jenness and Broad define frames as a particular body of knowledge, interpretive schemes and narrative structures that all contribute to organizing the things at hand as “a social problem.” However, I think that the work of, for example Sears and Laclau might bring us a little further towards grasping the affective dynamics of a given social problem.
- 3 Much more could be said about the ideas of identity ingrained in this work. For example, that identity largely appears as something already in place rather than something that has come about through particular historical trajectories and injustices (see Ahmed 2001; Brown 2006; Schiffauer 2013 for elaborate discussions). Again, such naturalized settledness enforces the innocence of the victims and its related emotional responses.
- 4 Robert Meister has a comprehensive analysis of how post-war European human rights work largely developed around this “never again” (Meister 2013).
- 5 The rather marginal position of the perpetrator is also to some extent displayed in the scholarly engagement with hate crimes, where research on victims significantly outstrips that on perpetrators (Robert et al. 2013 for a recent overview of perpetrator research).

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