

Hatprat mot funksjonshemmede

Hatprat – erfaringer og konsekvenser

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14 Hate speech as an expression of disablism

An examination of reported hate speech experiences and consequences

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In this chapter, we discuss the results from the first national survey in Norway on disability hate speech, based on a questionnaire to members of disabled people's organisations (N = 947). We concentrate the discussion on the reported reactions and responses, e.g., follow-up and non-follow-up to hate speech incidents from the persons themselves and their family, friends, workplace, school, and police. Special attention is paid to the combinations of reported activity restrictions and subjective undermining of personal well-being, as together these two dimensions can be understood as the outcome of being exposed to disablism. Our findings are discussed with reference to Carol Thomas's (Thomas, 1999, 2012) theory of disablism.

Introduction

In 2013, a ban on hate speech against disabled people was introduced in the Norwegian Penal Code. However, little was known from empirical studies about the phenomenon of hate speech in Norway, and thus in 2016 the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs commissioned us to conduct a study on hate speech and disability. We decided to take a broad perspective, examining the extent and scope of hate speech against disabled people as reported by disabled people themselves in our nation-wide survey (Olsen, Vedeler, Eriksen, & Elvegård, 2016). What we found was that a substantial portion of those who responded had been exposed to hate speech (Vedeler, Olsen, & Eriksen, 2019). More than one-third reported that they had been exposed to hate speech in the previous 12 months.

In this chapter, we examine what the consequences of hate speech are and discuss whether these consequences can be interpreted within the framework of *disablism*. This concept "refers to the social imposition of *avoidable restrictions* on the life activities, aspirations and psycho-emotional well-being of people categorised as 'impaired' by those deemed 'normal'" (Thomas, 2012, p. 211, italics in the original); just like sexism and racism, disablism is an expression of social oppression. In our analysis, we apply the two dimensions of disablism as outlined

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by Carol Thomas: barriers to doing and barriers to being. We investigate the reactions of those targeted of hate speech (Thomas, 1999).

Our study was not restricted to utterances that might fall within the legal understanding of hate speech. As elaborated on in the introduction to this book, hate speech is embedded in cultural contexts. As such, we are aware that definitions and operationalisations may vary between countries. In the Norwegian language, the word "hate" represents a strong expression to most people, with connotations of hostility and animosity. This implies that the threshold for using the concept "hate speech" is high. We use a social science approach to the phenomenon of hate speech as outlined by the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Commission. Like others (Parekh, 2012), the Commission emphasises that hate speech includes the use of "degrading, threatening, harassing or stigmatizing speech which affects an individual's or a group's dignity, reputation and status in society" (LDO, 2015).

The consequences of hate speech are manifold and harm people and society in several ways. Firstly, disability hate speech directly affects people's self-esteem and identity. This sometimes has very serious consequences for those persons who are targeted, their families and relatives. Secondly, disability hate speech sends a message of fear and anger that has consequences for disabled people in general. This message affects the group's dignity, reputation and status in society. Thirdly, disability hate speech has negative effects for wider society as it scares people with disabilities from involving themselves in society, including in public debates.

We start this chapter by contextualising the phenomenon of disability and hate speech in Norwegian society by outlining the development of disability policy before we move on to examine and discuss the reported consequences of hate speech.

Disability and social policy in Norway

Norway represents a Nordic welfare state model (Pedersen & Kuhnle, 2017) that provides, comparatively speaking, generous welfare benefits and services to all its citizens. Since the 1960s, the principles of normalisation and social inclusion have been important ideals for the development of welfare policy, social services, and legal rights. Normalisation implies that people with disabilities should be provided with services within their local communities on par with other citizens in order to secure full societal participation and inclusion (Nirje, 1969; NOU, 2001; Tøssebro, 2013). One concrete translation of this principle was the deinstitutionalisation of institutions for people with intellectual disabilities that started in the late 1980s (Tøssebro, 2016). Until the early 2000s, the focus continued to be on supply of welfare services (money transfers and in kind), but it then shifted towards a stronger emphasis on statutory rights.

Increasing awareness developed among politicians and disabled people's organisations that the welfare services were not raising living conditions for people with disabilities. Despite integrated services, political objectives of equal participation

Hatprat mot funksjonshemmede som et uttrykk for *disablism*

Med *disablism* mener vi:

“... påføring av begrensninger på aktiviteter, aspirasjoner og tilfredshet hos personer som anses som funksjonshemmet av de som anses som ‘normale’”

(Thomas 2012:211)

To former for begrensninger eller barrierer

- a) Mot å gjøre ting
- b) Mot å være den en vil

Data

- En spørreskjemaundersøkelse
 - I 2016 til medlemmer av 13 organisasjoner for personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne
 - 947 svar
- Personlige intervjuer med eksperter

Det elektroniske spørreskjema inneholdt 33 spørsmål om

- Bakgrunn
- Opplevd hatprat
- Respondentens reaksjoner på hatprat

Vi kunne bl.a. bygge på engelsk undersøkelse, Beadle-Brown m.fl. 2016, Living in fear.

Data

- Spørsmålene om hatytringer dekket et spektrum av verbale utsagn, fra milde (som “noen skrev eller sa stygge ting om meg”) til sterkere utsagn (som “du har ingen rett til å leve”, “du burde ikke vært født”).
- NB. Her omtaler vi bare negative **ytringer** eller hatprat, ikke handlinger (som fysisk skading, “stjal noe fra meg” eller berøring). Vi anså heller ikke stirring som en verbal ytring.
- **38 prosent, 361, av alle som svarte oppga minst en erfaring med hatprat de siste 12 månedene.**

Er hatytring en barriere mot å gjøre ting du vil? (N=316)

Restriksjoner i dagliglivet (på å gjøre ting)	Prosent
Unngår visse steder og situasjoner	63
Er mer hjemme	48
Unngår å si min mening eller bli involver i offentlig debatt	38
Sluttet å gjøre ting jeg gjorde før	34
Unngår å gå ut om kvelden	30
Besøker ikke venner	19
Lar være å bruke offentlig transport	16
Måtte flytte	12
Går ikke på skolen	9
Går ikke på arbeid eller dagsentret	9
Tar drosje i stedet for å gå hjem	9

Er hatprat en barriere mot å være den du vil?

(N=316)

Følelsesmessige restriksjoner	Prosent
Hatpraten påvirker min selvtillit	66
Jeg bekymrer meg for visse situasjoner	65
Jeg blir nedtrykt og trist	62
Jeg føler meg mer usikker i dagliglivet	58
Hatprat reduserer min livskvalitet	58
Jeg blir mer introvert	54
Jeg får redusert livsutfoldelse	46
Jeg blir redd for å gå visse steder alene	42

Restriksjoner i dagliglivet og begresninger på selvutfoldelse henger sammen

Hvordan påvirker de to formene for begrensninger (i dagliglivet, i selvutfoldelsen) reaksjonene på hatprat?

Reaksjoner på hatprat	Lite eller mye utsatt	
	Minst en konsekvens	Minst 5 konsekvenser
Holder det for meg selv	23	31
Forteller andre, gjør ikke noe	37	33
Forteller andre og gjør noe	40	36
Sum, prosent	100	100
N	322	64

Oppsummering

- Mange personer med funksjonsnedsettelse oppga erfaringer med hatprat.
- De som hadde erfart flere former for hatytringer, holdt det til en viss grad mer for seg selv og fortalte ikke andre om det, litt mer enn de som oppga bare en erfaring.
- Vår analyse viser at hatprat kan ses i lys av to former for barrierer – hinder for sosial deltakelse og hinder for selvrealisering.
- I kombinasjon forsterker de to formene virkningene av hatprat.

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