Perceiving and Responding to Attempts at Othering
Dr. Jyotsna Vaid, Professor of Psychology, Texas A&M University

To represent someone as “Other” is to render them distant, deviant, or unworthy, to cast them as a perpetual outsider. Whether directed at refugees, immigrants, gender nonconforming individuals, or any vulnerable group, Othering as a social discursive process uses language to homogenize, simplify, or dehumanize a person or group, to position them as inferior.

Othering discourse has reached a dangerous level online, taking various forms ranging from outright bullying and trolling to more subtle put downs and silencing attempts. The emotional and psychological damage of cyberhate is well documented. Yet little is known about how intended targets and/or bystanders of various kinds are cognitively impacted by hate speech, both as it is initially encountered, and as it reverberates in repostings. How is hate speech recognized by online users, and how is it responded to?

Whereas automated detection systems are important in monitoring online media for hate speech, they may not be as effective in flagging speech that offends through innuendo or indirect communication. Debunking, argumentation-theoretic ways of imposing social costs on hate speech, require actual language users perceive and react to Othering discourse. Participants from different social identity groups will be presented vignettes of simulated online interactions varying systematically in textual properties. They will be asked to judge the discourse on various dimensions and generate potential responses or select between different forms of response. In this way we will establish an empirical baseline for the perceived impact of specific forms of Othering discourse and the various – often creative – forms in which resistance to Othering can be fostered.

A psycholinguistic approach offers a way to study how actual language users perceive and react to Othering discourse. Participants from different social identity groups will be presented vignettes of simulated online interactions varying systematically in textual properties. They will be asked to judge the discourse on various dimensions and generate potential responses or select between different forms of response. In this way we will establish an empirical baseline for the perceived impact of specific forms of Othering discourse and the various – often creative – forms in which resistance to Othering can be fostered.

Using argumentation theory to impose social costs on hate speech
Brian N. Larson, Associate Professor of Law, Texas A&M University

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Political groups constituting powerful portions of the U.S. party elite claim government and corporate regulation of speech defences legitimate political viewpoints. E.g., “You are silencing conservative voices!”
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- Adopt the formulation of the hate-speech implication (distanting from the social network and broader community).

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- “Duke must choose.”

The post shown contested.

Duke is excluded from Twitter.

Adopt the hate-speech implication.

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Interventions to Counter Hate-Speech and Extremism
Dr. Zohreh Eslami, Professor of Education Psychology, Texas A&M University Qatar

Cyberhate: Raising awaress and Prevention using a multifaceted approach
- What is meant by radicalism and cyberhate? Whose definition is used? Neoliberal agressive discourse. What is the role of language?
- What are the causes of radicalism and cyberhate?
- How can education contribute to preventing radicalism and cyberhate?

Multifaceted Approach
- There is an urgent need to understand extremism across multiple locations, multiple triggers, and multiple channels of radicalization so as to create spaces in which broad-based and socially informed solutions to radicalization and extremism could be found.
- Intervention Programs Against Cyber-hate speech
  - Law
  - Technology
  - Education (e.g., counter-speech)
- Law: Preventing and detecting cyberhate: a legal perspective
  - Challenges:
    - Balancing prevention or protection and respect for fundamental freedoms and rights such as the freedom of expression and international law as well as different national regulations (Perry & Olsson, 2009).
    - Multiple justice systems and the necessary multifacilal efforts to counter it that does not get the admission of some countries
    - Hate online is a multifacilal issues that cannot be prevented or tackled unilaterally and locally.
    - Attempts to prevent and counter cyberhate need to set the legal frame to draw the line between freedom of expression and hateful online contents
  - Technology: Combating Cyberhate: Technological Approach
    - Control and regulates the contents published online platforms through blocking, filtering, addressing any aggressive and hateful contents.
    - Challenges:
      - Wrong sequences or syntactic or semantic content which might lead to confusion and misclassification because it does not take different contexts into account.
      - Contents spread quicker than reports, filters can be tricked, and Internet users might not be aware of what cyberhate is.
      - Importance of context - need for qualitative interpretation
  - Education as a Prevention Tool
    - Media Literacy Education: Promoting skills for critical reading of online contents and ability to identify distorting, hateful contents and misinformation.
    - Developing skills to construct counter-speech
      - Teacher Education Programs. Teachers may not have skills to deal with hate online and thus teacher education programs need to include it in their curriculum.
  - Effectiveness of Intervention Studies
    - The evaluation of effectiveness of intervention strategies needs to be included in future research.
    - There is a need to plan rigorous evaluation processes of intervention studies in order to inform intervention and public policies.

Transformative Pedagogy for Intervention
- Transformative and Inclusive Pedagogical interventions and conversations are needed
- Need to have authentic counter-hegemonic, counter extremism critical public pedagogy
- Counter-extremism pedagogy needs to center transdisciplinarity, where multiple foci guide the learners to connect different variables (global finance, political, ecological, social discourses)

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