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Analysis of gender-based hate speech against publicly active women in the online space

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Analysis of gender-based hate speech against publicly active women in the online space

Study

Prague, April 2024

This text was written as a part of the project *Digital Age and Threats to Human Rights*, implemented by the Czech chapter of the global network Transparency International in cooperation with Forum 50 %, Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies CTU Prague, Multicultural Center Prague and the Norwegian partner Åpenhet.

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Content

- 1. Introduction 3
- 2. Results 5
 - 2.1 Analysis of data from Facebook groups 5
 - 2.2 Results of the survey 10
 - 2.3 Analysis of court decisions 13
- 3. Authors of hateful posts and comments 15
- 4. Insight into authentic comments by types and subtypes of hate 20
 - 4.1 Type of hate speech — sexism 20
 - Subtype of hate speech — questioning the competence of women to work in politics 21
 - Subtype of hate speech — attacks on marital status or childlessness..... 22
 - 4.2 Type of hate speech — appearance 24
 - 4.3 Type of hate speech — sexual objectification 25
 - A subtype of hate speech — comparisons to women working in the sex business or porn..... 25
 - A subtype of hate speech — hints at sexual attractiveness and sexual needs 26
 - 4.4 Type of hate speech — sexual violence 27
 - 4.5 Type of hate speech — threats of violence 29
 - Subtype of hate speech — specific type of violence, threat of retribution 30
 - A subtype of hate speech — a specific method of murder 32
 - 4.6 Type of hate speech — other categories 34
- 5. Conclusion 37

1. Introduction

This study is one of the outputs of the project *Digital Age and Threats to Human Rights*, which was co-financed by Transparency International - Czech Republic, Multicultural Centre Prague, Forum 50 %, Masaryk Institute of Higher Studies of the Czech Technical University in Prague and Åpenhet. The project focuses primarily on human rights threats related to social media speech, and more specifically seeks to better understand gendered and ethnically based hate speech on Czech Facebook. Partial unpacking of the process of generation and dissemination of online hate speech, including identification of the causes of these manifestations, their nature, as well as an understanding of their impact, will allow to better determine how to approach and prevent these manifestations.

This two-year project is multidisciplinary, drawing on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, and includes a range of research findings and practice-oriented outputs. It involved analysing approximately 1.8 million comments from Czech Facebook using a variety of methods, including a text analysis programme using artificial intelligence by Geneea company. Other methods included a questionnaire targeting Czech female politicians, supplemented by several in-depth interviews; analysis of legal documents; media analysis; and detailed case studies of selected cases. In addition to the two research studies, project outputs include a handbook for people affected by hate speech, a policy paper for decision-makers, a website for the public, the organisation of several public events, the design and implementation of training for the judiciary and police officers, and the design of a university course.

This study focuses on the part of the project concerning online gender-based attacks on Facebook against women in Czech politics. The objectives of the study included:

- Identifying the main features of the process of emergence and spread of gender-based online hate speech against female politicians on Czech Facebook.
- Proposing a multi-level categorization of gender-based online hate speech against female politicians and to identify typical examples for each category.
- Investigating how gender-based online hate speech can limit the public activity of female politicians.

The main part of the study consists of the presentation of the results, which are divided into several chapters: analysis of data from Facebook groups, questionnaire survey, analysis of court decisions, analysis of authors of hate speech, and categorization of hate speech.

Findings include, but are not limited to:

- Most of the women in politics who were interviewed encounter hate speech online.
- Almost half of the female politicians interviewed reported that online hate speech is a constraint on their public activities and that fear of online attacks influences their choice of topics to address.
- Gender-based attacks against female public figures are widespread in selected Facebook groups. In the 17 groups analysed, we found 37 large-scale attacks in the selected period, with an increase in hate speech lasting from a day to several days, 29 of which were linked to varying degrees to attacks on selected women in politics, including threats of sexual violence or threats of physical violence.
- Most hate speech is generated and disseminated by a relatively small number of profiles. The most active profiles publish several dozen comments per day.
- Approximately half of the hate speech is implicit through various metaphors, song quotes, and the like, whereby the attackers seek to avoid post deletion, blocking, or legal consequences.
- Facebook operators do not adequately regulate the environment. Even explicit hate speech, including threats of violence or physical destruction that are easily identifiable, are not addressed by the company. We found at least several thousand threats of physical destruction and at least tens of thousands of explicit hate speech threatening with violence and degrading human dignity in selected groups.

2. Results

2.1 Analysis of data from Facebook groups

The primary dataset was content downloaded from selected publicly accessible Facebook groups. This included a total of 1,816,723 comments and 154,711 posts published between January 2022 and February 2023. The selection of groups was focused on those where we expected a high incidence of hate speech. In the first stage of selection, we based our selection on our own qualitative analysis by the research team members. Each member of the team drew up their own list of proposed groups and those groups where there was consensus were selected for the next stage. The list included mostly those groups that disseminate disinformation content to a significant extent. Therefore, this list was compared to the groups identified as disinformation groups by the Czech Elves and subsequently expanded. In terms of the relevance of the groups, a criterion of at least 1,000 group members and an average of at least thirty published comments per day was set. The dynamics of the individual groups evolved over the period under review, in terms of the number of members, activity, but also the names of the groups or their accessibility (they generally changed from public to private). Therefore, during the course of data collection, some new groups were included while others were excluded. In the end, only data from those groups where we managed to download at least 10,000 comments during the study period were used for analysis. The final dataset thus included 17 groups (see Table 1).

Group name (at the start of data collection)	Number of comments downloaded
LID PROTI PAVLOVI A FIALOVI... (PEOPLE AGAINST PAVEL AND FIALA...)	364,457
Přátelé, kterým se líbí Andrej Babiš. (Friends who like Andrej Babiš.)	312,172
Podporujeme premiéra Babiše před podlými útoky na rodinu a snahou o puč! (We support Prime Minister Babiš against vile attacks on his family and coup attempts!)	221,611
Chceme obecné referendum bez omezení tématu referenda. (We want a general referendum with no restrictions on the subject of the referendum.)	142,661
Spojujeme český národ (We unite the Czech nation)	141,903
Přátelé Ruska v České republice ... (Friends of Russia in the Czech Republic ...)	115,783

Řekni Ukrajině NE (Say NO to Ukraine)	99,820
Češi, táhněme za jeden provaz (Czechs, let's pull together)	85,602
Fiala není můj premiér, Pavel není můj prezident (Fiala is not my prime minister, Pavel is not my president)	78,638
Svobodné Česko (Free Czechia)	76,002
NEOČKOVANÍ CZ, SK pro MÍR! NE VÁLCE ! (UNVACCINATED CZ, SK for PEACE! NO TO WAR!)	55,883
CZEXIT !!! (CZEXIT !!!)	31,063
2015 Jsem Čech. A jsem s Ruskem !! (I am Czech. And I'm with Russia !!)	21,996
Českoslovenští vojáci v záloze / Československí vojáci v zálohe (Czechoslovak soldiers in reserve)	19,400
♥ PRAVDA HLÁSÍ SVŮJ NÁVRAT ♥ (♥ THE TRUTH REPORTS ITS RETURN ♥)	19,199
VZBUŘTE SE! 🗣️ (REVOLT! 🗣️)	16,148
CZEXIT - CzexitCzexit.cz - pro rychlý konec EU členství, vlasteneckou vládu (CZEXIT - CzexitCzexit.cz - for quick end to EU membership, patriotic government)	14,384

Table 1 - List of monitored groups and number of comments and posts downloaded for the period January 2022 to February 2023

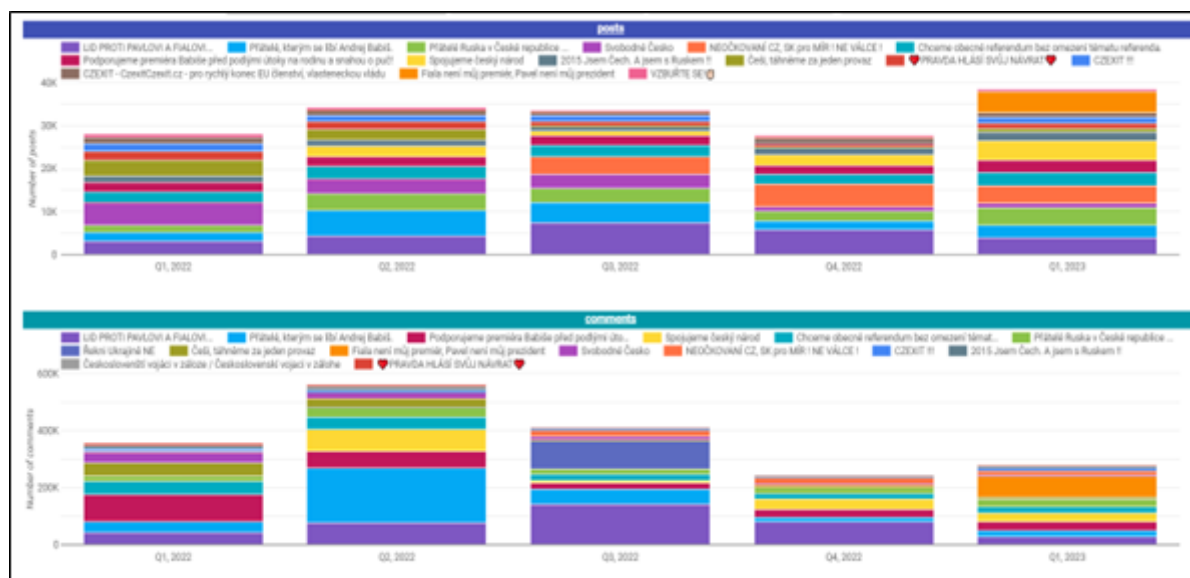


Figure 1 - Numbers of comments and posts analysed across groups in each quarter (LookerStudio)

In addition to the text of the posts and comments themselves, we also recorded data on the time of publication, the number of "likes" and, in the case of posts, the number of comments. The data was anonymized so that the author could not be directly identified.

Authors were assigned identification numbers that corresponded to the number of comments they published. The downloaded data was then analysed using two software programmes. The first was LookerStudio, a free interface from Google that, combined with the use of its own programming language, Looker ML, allows extensive and variable work with large datasets. The second was software from the Czech company Geneea, which uses artificial intelligence technologies for text analysis.

The method of data analysis has gradually evolved and adapted. First, we designed a scale with the working name VEDu GErDA. This assumed that we would identify whether comments included the following types of speech:

- V = threat
- E = ethnically oriented hate speech
- Du = direct address to the recipient of hate speech
- G = gender-based hate speech
- Er = a statement referring to the recipient of hate speech
- D = the statement is directly placed on the profile of the addressee
- A = ad hominem

We tested this method in different variations. In the most detailed variant, we also looked at other characteristics: the type of hate speech (sexism, sexualization, etc.) including subtypes (traditional role of women, appearance, questioning intelligence, etc.), three keywords, selected syntagms, the likely reason for the attack (based primarily on the content of the post), the number of shares, and the number of likes. We also ran a detailed analysis of the selected syntagms on several dozen comments, including word types (noun, verb, adjective) and phrases (words occurring closest to hate speech).

After testing different variations, we created two categorization systems, one for quantitative analysis and one for qualitative analysis. The basic categorization was based on a glossary of hate speech that we gradually built by manually searching through several thousand comments randomly selected across a cross-section of the period and groups under study. This glossary included the following categories: *general profanity*, *sexism + sexualization* (labelled *gender + sex + family + appearance* in the file), *threats of violence*, and *death threats*. We included 208 hate speeches in these categories, where one speech could be included in more than one category at the same time (see Figure 2). In some cases, we added variants of speeches with the same meaning (*Match*) and, conversely, excluded those with different meanings (*Dont_match*).

occurrence of different types of hate speech over time and focused on identifying time periods when there were significant increases. In Figure 4, the red curve shows the so-called vulgar rate, i.e., the percentage of hate speech occurrences from our glossary that show increases. We established these increases in a similar way for the different categories. As noted above, we identified only those comments that contained the hate speech we identified. The actual amount of hate speech was significantly higher.

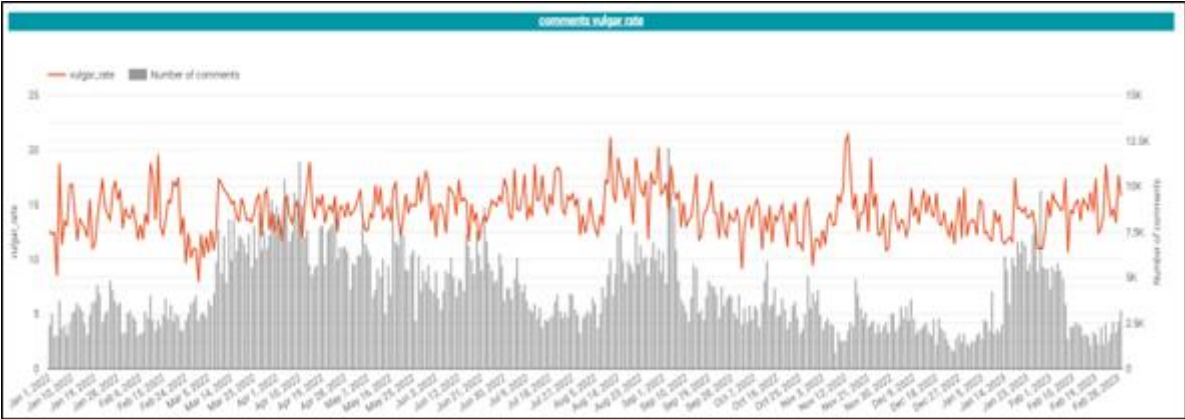


Figure 4 – Incidence rate of hate speech over time (red curve) (LookerStudio)

We have identified a total of 37 spikes in the period under review, which we have further focused on in the qualitative analysis. For each of these "waves" of attacks, in addition to a basic description (period, number of comments, number of posts, etc.), we also looked at whether these attacks were related to politically active women. If so, we looked at which posts were "initiating", i.e. which posts were experiencing the largest waves of attacks. In particular, we were interested in the content of these posts, whether they shared a link, an image, etc. We then manually searched through all the comments published on these posts, usually several thousand for each wave of attacks. In total, gendered hate speech against female politicians figured in 29 cases. The remaining spikes were either hate speech directed at male politicians or ethnic minorities, primarily directed at refugees from Ukraine.

In total, we personally read and evaluated tens of thousands of comments. From these, we selected mainly those comments that were, first, typical (often repeated), second, extremely rude, and third, creative (various metaphors, figurative naming). For each wave of attacks, we selected several dozen comments, which we categorized as relating to appearance, sexism, sexualization, threat of violence, and death threat. The sexism category included gendered attacks, for example, statements that women belong in the kitchen. We separated out the appearance category based on previous findings that attacks on appearance are a very common form of hate speech against politically active women. For each comment, we recorded which specific woman the attack was about.

Along with the above data analysis, we also conducted a media analysis for the periods surveyed to determine what public events might be associated with the increase in hate

attacks. Independently of the Facebook dataset, we also compiled a list of "cases" that occurred throughout the study period that could have been a potential trigger for hate attacks. This list was used to compare with the analysis set to check whether individual findings overlapped. For a selected case of exceptionally high hate speech, we produced a detailed case study that tracked the gradual evolution of the case, the likely "triggers" of hate attacks, the nature of the most active profiles, the timeline, etc. This was the wave of hate comments that erupted in September 2022 after the publication of a fictitious statement by the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Markéta Pekarová Adamová. Several profiles exhibiting the characteristics of a suspicious profile participated in the sharing, the fake statement was shared in disinformation groups, and was reflected in an increased number of comments on the politician's profile. The situation escalated when the politician's address was also shared, prompting explicit threats of violence or murder.

First, we also thought about monitoring the occurrence of hate speech directly on the websites of individual female politicians. To this end, we downloaded more than 20,000 comments from ten profiles as part of our testing. However, we abandoned this option for several reasons, including the fact that individual pages tend to be moderated and the most visible hate speech is continuously deleted, which was confirmed in a quick analysis of the data. Some of the hate speech also takes place through private channels (private messages) to which we naturally do not have access. Similarly, we abandoned the originally planned analysis of political ads, where we wanted to find a link between the type and targeting of the ads and hate speech. For this purpose, we downloaded data from the Facebook AdLibrary, a library of political ads maintained by Facebook, via the official API. Unfortunately, this data does not include the text of the comments published under the advertised posts, which we did not initially consider.

2.2 Results of the survey

Another method applied was a survey focused on politically active women. The questionnaire survey was primarily aimed at identifying how often female politicians encounter hate speech directed at them, how they react to such speech, and to what extent such speech affects their social media presence and political activity as such. The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions, three of which were open-ended. Given the nature of the other data in the project, we focused primarily on Facebook. We created a total of four groups of respondents - female senators, female deputies, female candidates for the Senate of the Czech Republic and female candidates for local elections. We considered female senators and deputies as those who were in office as of September 2023, female candidates for the Czech Senate were registered candidates in the fall 2023 elections, and among the female candidates for the municipal elections we selected only those who were running in the first place in the statutory cities.

Overall, we received 52 responses, with the highest number of responses from female deputies, where the return rate was 50% (25 responses). The results of the surveys were then summarized and compared with other data collected. Our assumption that female politicians are frequent targets of hate speech on social media was confirmed, but we were still surprised by the rate. One female MP directly stated that she also receives threats such as "I'll find where you live". Four-fifths of the female deputies surveyed said that they had experienced hateful or abusive language towards them on Facebook (see Figure 5), while 11 deputies (44%) had experienced regular waves of attacks lasting several hours or days (see Figure 6).

3) Do you experience hateful or vulgar language towards you on Facebook?

3) Setkáváte se na sociální síti Facebook s nenávistnými či vulgárními projevy vůči Vaší osobě?
25 responses

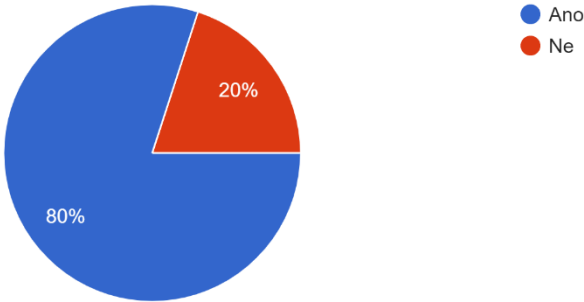


Figure 5 - Female deputies who reported experiencing hate speech against them on Facebook

5) Do you experience regular waves of intense hate speech towards you (several dozens of profiles at the same time, lasting for hours or several days)?

5) Setkáváte se s pravidelnými vlnami intenzivních nenávistných projevů vůči svojí osobě (minimálně od několika desítek profilů najednou; trvajících řádově hodiny až několik dní).
25 responses

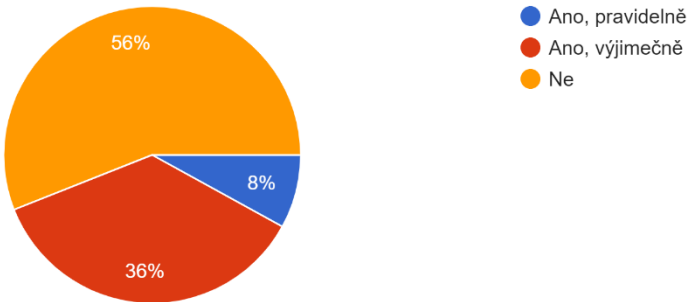


Figure 6 - Female deputies who reported experiencing regular waves of hate speech against them

Several respondents said that posts on inequality and women's rights were the most attacked, and one respondent also mentioned the issue of climate protection. One deputy believed that hate attacks were triggered by "the very existence of women in politics". Her view is echoed by another deputy, who said that many people cannot accept the fact that women are in high positions. Another respondent confirmed the assumption of our study that hate attacks have a "real impact on the low participation of women in politics".

What may be striking is the number of respondents who said that hate speech on Facebook influences their choice of topics to comment on. Hate speech influences political activity for 23 out of 51 respondents (45%), while a similar proportion can be observed for all groups of respondents, for example, 48% for female deputies. This means that approximately half of the female politicians surveyed may avoid certain topics just to avoid hate speech. One respondent directly stated that she prefers not to share posts about women at all because she has "learned her lesson", but also states that this prevents her from presenting the topic. Approximately half of all female respondents and more than half of female deputies (56%) prefer not to read comments on social media, but most said they do not want to limit their activity on social media. Thus, some female politicians avoid online discussions with the public as a precaution, although some of them could be factual and polite. One of the female deputies directly stated that she would "retreat for a while" in case of attacks, which is shocking in the context of her position as a deputy. Almost two-thirds of all female respondents also said that they were "anxious" about their visual presentation on Facebook, with the proportion even higher for female deputies (see Figure 7).

10a) I keep a close eye on my visual presentation on Facebook.

10a) Hlídám si úzkostlivě vizuální prezentaci sebe sama na Facebooku.

25 responses

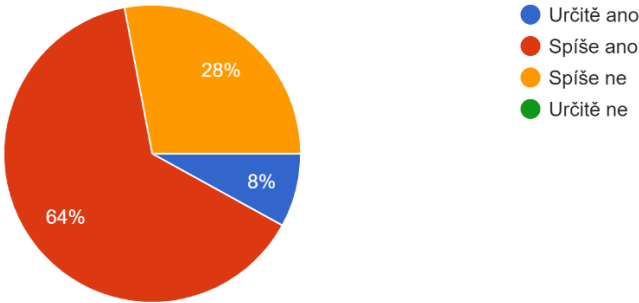


Figure 7 - Female deputies who said they were anxious about their visual presentation on Facebook

At the end of the survey, we asked what recommendations politically active women suggest to improve the situation regarding hate attacks. Among the recommendations made were the following:

- Place more responsibility on social network providers. Some female respondents complained that even reporting attacks often did not lead to any response from the provider. Suggestions also included that the providers should initiate criminal liability, i.e. report attacks to law enforcement authorities.
- Adopt legislation to define exactly what constitutes online hate speech and specify penalties.
- Educate and cultivate society, for example through education programmes or public events.
- Change the practice of the courts, which are based on the assumption that public figures must be able to withstand high pressure, including hate attacks.

2.3 Analysis of court decisions

Part of the outputs of the project is also the preparation of training for judges and police officers and the proposal of recommendations that could lead to an improvement of the situation. To this end, we have prepared an analysis of several court cases involving online hate speech. In doing so, we focused on three case studies, each of which related to a different law that can be applied to online hate speech: violence against a group of people and against an individual under Section 352 paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code; defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons within the meaning of Section paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code; and incitement to commit a crime under Section 364 of the Criminal Code. We used the analysis of legal documents primarily to identify what arguments courts use when they decide that online hate speech is not a crime. Due to the availability of documents, we focused on online hate speech in general, not specifically on hate speech against female political figures, but the logic applied by courts in such cases may be similar.

In all three cases, the court assessed the defendants' conduct in a very benevolent manner and decided that the offence had not been committed. In the first case, the court considered whether online hate speech against the Jewish people could be considered an offence of violence against a group of people and against an individual under Section 352 paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code. According to the court, the defendant's hate speech could not be perceived as actually intending to commit violence, even though it called for the killing of Jews. The Court also noted as a mitigating factor that the accused was under the influence of disinformation with anti-Jewish themes and that she may have been influenced by personal reasons (the nationality of her ex-husband).

In the second case, the police officer was acquitted of the charge of defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons within the meaning of Section 355 paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code although his speeches were clearly hateful towards certain groups (he

published, for example, a post that read "There is NOTHING meaner, more insidious, more repulsive than a Muslim Arab from the Middle East or Africa"). The court stated, among other things, that it was necessary to respect the plurality of opinions and that the reach of the speeches in question was relatively low. According to the court, it was not "promoting the dissemination of hateful sentiments and ideas, but rather expressing a negative attitude towards the refugee crisis (...)." The court also stated that it was not possible to take into account the fact that he was a police officer, as he had published the speeches in his private capacity. The accusation arose as a result of a security screening within the security forces.

In the third case, the court considered the statements of a municipal politician who published a hateful and vulgar post on a social networking site, where he called for certain politicians to be "slashed", "bled" and "burned". In the post, he dehumanised the politicians in question and referred to the Nazi death camps, stating that "such animals are not even fit for soap", it was necessary to "kill such evil" and "cut off (their) heads". He was charged with incitement to commit an offence under Section 364 of the Criminal Code. Despite the explicit hate speech, the trial court stated that the conduct "may be indecent" but "it is not gross indecency". The court also stated that it is not the purpose of the courts to prosecute "only selected cases" as it is not within the capacity of the authorities to "pursue all similar cases". Yet such logic could be applied to all crimes. The Court of Appeal took an even stronger stand for the accused, stating that "the accused's conduct was directed towards the protection of the principles which, in his view, constitute the fundamental principles of the rule of law and democracy". Moreover, according to the court, the accused had published his post on social networks that "create a certain anonymity" and where users "express themselves in a way that they would not in a public space (...)". Thus, the court did not consider social networks to be a public space, even though it explicitly stated that the accused had "made the post public".

We also looked at what other laws may currently apply to online hate speech. In addition to the above, these could potentially be Section 353 Dangerous Threats; Section 354 Stalking; Section 180 Unauthorised Disposal of Personal Information; Section 184 Defamation; Section 175 Extortion; Section 404 Expression of Sympathy for a Movement Directed at the Suppression of Human Rights and Freedoms; Section 405 Denying, Questioning, Approving or Justifying Genocide; Section 364 Incitement to Crime; and Section 365 Approving a Crime.

3. Authors of hateful posts and comments

It is important to remember that most content on social media is created by a fraction of its users. The total number of comments published in the period under review exceeded 1.816 million, published by 69.77 thousand profiles. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact number of unique group members, as some users are members of several groups at the same time. Hence, we will only base our data on the set of active users who have published at least one comment, but it is important to note that the number of passive followers may be several times higher.

The average number of comments published by an active user over the period is 27. However, a closer examination of user activity reveals that the vast majority of users publish only a few comments, while a smaller number of very active users account for the majority of content. More than half of the comments, over 900,000, were published by only about 2,750 profiles. These profiles thus published an average of 327 comments over the period. The number then increases significantly for the most productive profiles. The most active 500 profiles published one fifth of the content, i.e. more than 363,000 comments (see Figure 9).

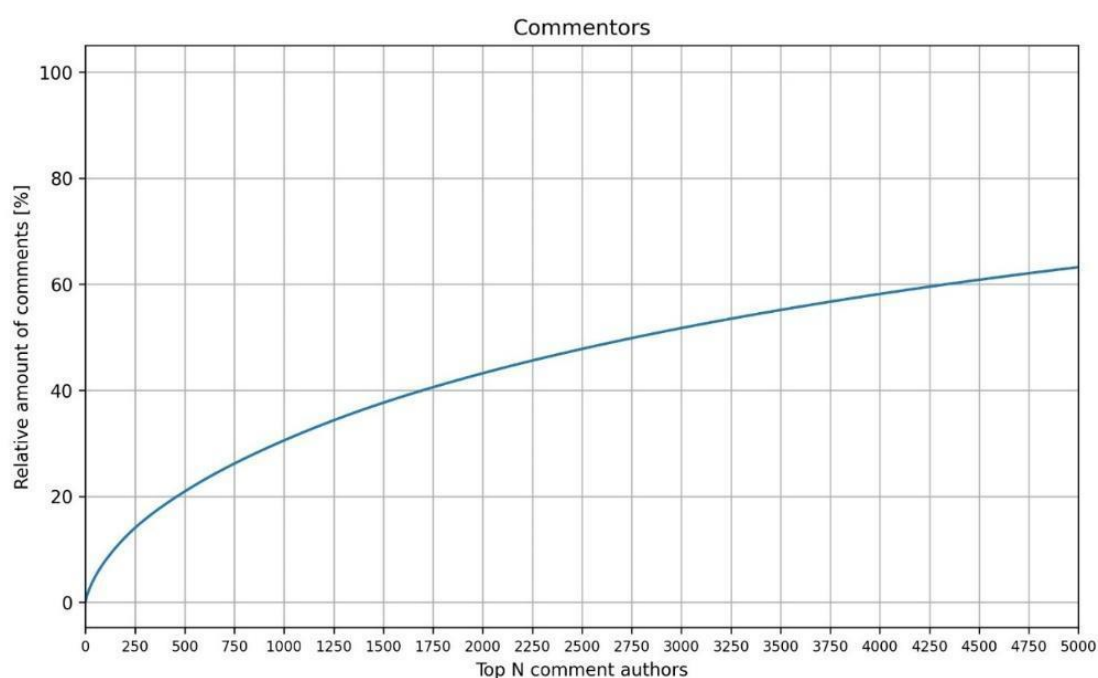


Figure 8 - Percentage of comments published by the 5,000 most active profiles

In relative terms, 5% of the most active users created more than half of the content, 10% of users created more than two-thirds of the content, 15% created more than four-fifths of the content, and 25% of users created more than 90% of the content (see Figure 10).

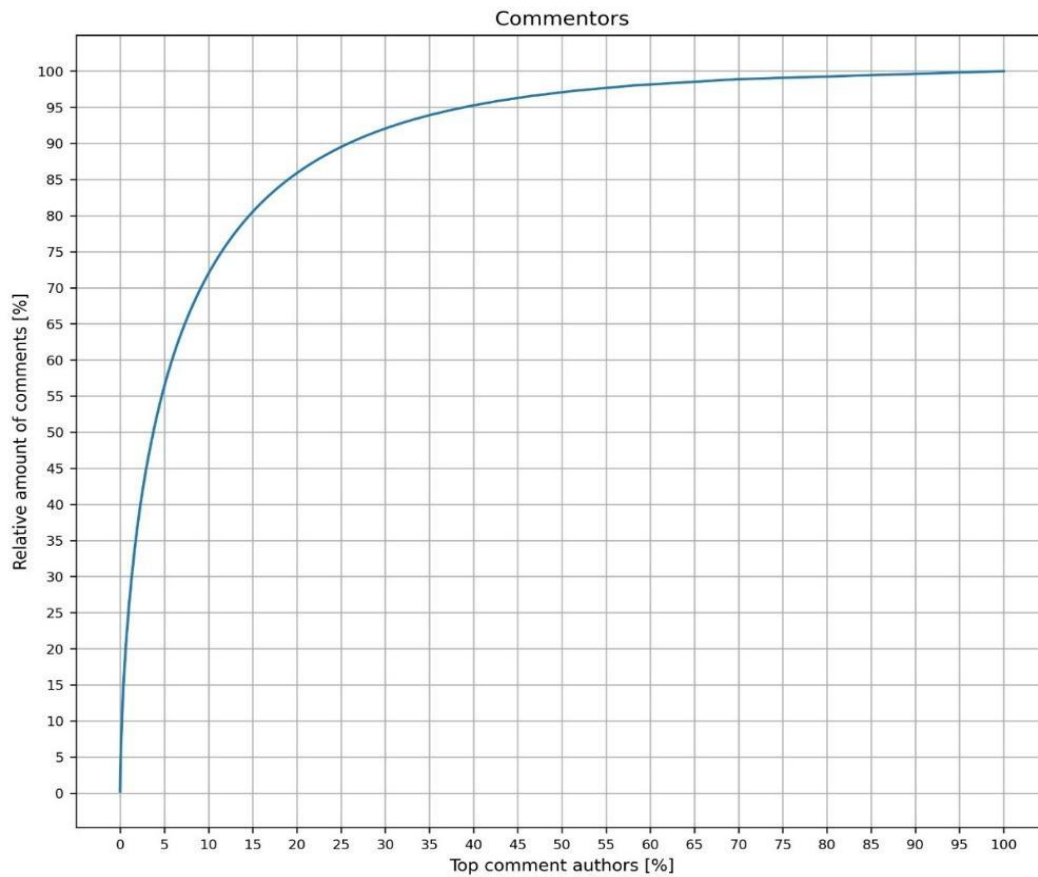


Figure 9 - Percentage of comments versus percentage of commenters

The most active profiles posted up to several thousand comments, the most being 4,252, which works out to more than ten comments per day for this profile. In addition, these most active commenters routinely post across multiple groups. The amount of content published and the regularity of the discussions suggests that the most active profiles might be coordinated. This would be consistent with the nature of many of these profiles showing signs of fraud, i.e., the so-called suspicious profiles.

group_name / comment_id			
LID PROTI PAVLOVI A FIALOVI...	Přátelé, kterým se líbí Andrej Babiš.	Podporujeme premiéra Babiše před podl...	Grand total
		4.3K	4.3K
1K	1.6K	523	3.1K
1		2.6K	2.6K
3	1.4K	1.1K	2.5K
677	972	535	2.2K
	2K		2K

Figure 10 - Activity of selected profiles in the three selected groups (from January 2022 to February 2023)

Characteristics of the 20 most frequently commenting profiles in the groups:

The use of the Google Looker Studio software tool allowed us to sort and collate the data not only in terms of the narrative categories used or the categories of vulgarity, threats or sexism we defined, but also in terms of its authors. Excel spreadsheets with all comments were exported from the software. This allowed, firstly, their quantification, where a simple alphabetical sorting and the use of search tools made it possible to determine the occurrence and numbers of recurring comments, and qualitative analysis, where an important criterion was the "uniqueness" of the comment, which distinguished a particular comment, usually written with some intention, from comments copied, i.e. "wallpapered" in bulk.

The qualitative work procedures were also applied to the analysis of the profiles themselves (personal profiles) or the type of their behaviour in groups. The signs of suspicious or fake profiles were determined, firstly, on the basis of the characteristics of the profiles we examined, which correlated quite clearly with similar research carried out abroad, where the emphasis is on too low or, on the contrary, high number of friends, minimum personal content or unnatural way of behaving/producing content — sharing posts or commenting.

If the personal data or photographs provided allowed it, we tried to identify the commenters as real persons, for example, by using publicly accessible registers and databases of entrepreneurs or other content published on publicly accessible websites.

Suspicious profiles are manifested by substandard behaviour in groups and by the appearance of their profile. As regards behaviour in groups, the following types of behaviour can often be observed:

- **High discussion activity:** These profiles often contribute a large number of comments.
- **Repetition of content:** A significant portion of their comments contain the same or very similar text, including frequent use of stickers or memes.
- **Emoticons and GIFs:** A large proportion of their communication consists of emoticons, memes and GIFs.
- **Single group focus:** Some of these profiles are specialized and active in only one group.
- **Copying posts between groups:** Or conversely, profiles often post the same comment or post in multiple groups.
- **Mutual interaction:** Suspicious profiles often respond to each other.
- **Consensual comments:** A significant proportion of their comments express agreement (e.g., "bravo", "agree", "yes", "exactly").
- **Non-standard language:** They often use non-standard Czech, which may look like machine translation or contain errors common for Russian speakers, especially errors in short and long vowels.

-
- **"Wallpapering" comments:** These profiles sometimes repeat the same comment in a large number of different discussions.
 - **Copying content from disinformation sources:** They often copy entire paragraphs from disinformation sites or Telegram feeds.

When you visit a profile, you may also see other features that relate directly to the form of the commenter's profile:

- **Name and URL do not match:** The name in the profile often does not match the name in the URL.
- **Type of profile photo:** The profile photo is often missing or is a cartoon, animal, flower. Sometimes a single face photo with different filters is used, which may be taken from another profile or from a photo library.
- **Missing personal content:** There are no other personal photos on the profile, especially those that show other people or the user themselves.
- **Illogical interests:** The pages liked in the "interests" section often appear illogical or random, sometimes from different parts of the country or from abroad rather than where the person supposedly lives.
- **Significantly high or low number of friends:** Suspicious profiles either have low numbers of friends or high numbers of friends exceeding several thousand.
- **Affiliation with a specific political party:** Among the liked pages, those linked to a particular political party often predominate.

Key findings:

Of the 20 most frequently commenting profiles in the disinformation groups studied, most of them indeed fulfil the characteristics of suspicious behaviour, not only in terms of the number of comments, but also other characteristics such as copying comments, focusing on one group or, on the contrary, operating in a large number of groups, excessive use of stickers, emoticons, cartoons or memes, and in a few cases, sharing excerpts or links from disinformation websites (*Parlamentní listy*, *Aeronet*, *Nová republika*, *Infovojna*) or Telegram groups.

At the same time, however, more than a third of the persons showed a relatively clear connection to real persons, for example, on the basis of their personal photographs. Another one-third of the people had almost no personal content on their profiles, but some indications suggested that these were older people who usually do not add much content to their personal Facebook profiles, using Facebook more as a medium they read and Facebook groups as a form of communication.

Related to this is the issue of social aspects such as loneliness or the need for community and belonging. For example, the profile with the highest number of comments operates in one particular group where it does virtually nothing but thank, address women by diminutives of their names, wish them good morning or good night. It could easily be

a lonely person or a very successful authentic-looking profile of a professional social media moderator.

In this examined group of the 20 most frequently commenting profiles, there was evidence of interaction between the three suspected profiles on the list. There were two cases of "wallpapering", i.e. copying the same comments in bulk. In one case, these were the author's own comments, in the other case quotes were copied from the aforementioned disinformation sites and Telegram groups regardless of the content of the original post. What was interesting about this profile was that although it posed as a female profile, some of the posts were copied in the masculine.

One of the profiles (it was the one interacted with by the other two suspicious profiles) posted 1,502 times a link to Parliamentary papers (*Parlamentní listy*) to the group and commented almost exclusively under these posts, often just discussing with the other suspicious profiles. The influence of Parliamentary papers was evident when we evaluated specific waves of hate comments against female politicians and was therefore likely caused by only one (!) profile posting links to Parliamentary papers.

Among the profiles was one with non-standard Czech language containing errors typical for Russian speakers in their writing, such as confusion of short and long vowels. Another profile had a strong conspiratorial and anti-Semitic orientation, referring to Jews as the "nosy" or sharing explicit anti-Semitic illustrations.

One profile, believed to be linked to a real person, used brutal threats of violence, murder or rape in its comments, including an explicit threat to murder Prime Minister Fiala.

At least 3 profiles had pages associated with the ANO movement (in one case up to 30 different local cells across the country). Detailed anonymised characteristics of all 20 most frequent commenters can be found on the website www.nenavistnasitich.cz, which is part of the project.

4. Insight into authentic comments by types and subtypes of hate

A better understanding of the types and subtypes of hate speech can have a major positive impact on those affected by it. It can help them realise that hate speech is a systemic problem (i.e. that it is not their fault and that they are not alone in experiencing it). This understanding can reduce the feelings of isolation, shame and self-blame that are a common response to hate speech. In addition, it will enable individuals affected by hate speech to recognize the patterns and tactics used by perpetrators, allowing them to develop strategies to respond to and effectively defend themselves against hate speech. Ultimately, this will help build resilience by giving individuals a sense of ownership and control over their experiences. When those affected by hate speech understand the factors that contribute to it and know how to recognize and respond to them, they will feel empowered to take steps to protect themselves and others from its harmful effects.

Familiarity with the types and subtypes of hate speech can also facilitate the work of police officers, prosecutors and judges by providing a clearer understanding of the nuances of online hate speech and the significant impact it has on the daily lives of those who are targeted. In addition, it can support tailored assistance to those affected by online hate speech. In addition, knowledge of the types and subtypes of hate speech can lead to increased awareness of the severity and impact of hate speech among professionals and the general public.

In the following pages, we will therefore present the types and subtypes of hate speech that we have identified in our research as the ones to which Czech female politicians are most frequently exposed. We will always summarise their most common form and provide examples. We have used the comments in the original form, without grammatical or stylistic corrections/adjustments. All surnames of the attacked female politicians are changed in the comments to the X*** format; if the commenter has given both the name and surname of the attacked female politician, it is given in the X*** Y*** format to prevent possible secondary victimisation of the attacked women.

4.1 Type of hate speech — sexism

A sexist statement is one that expresses and propagates prejudice, inequality or discrimination based on gender. This type of statement often reflects and reinforces traditional gender stereotypes and promotes unequal treatment of women in particular within society. Sexist statements can be either explicit, containing overt discrimination, or implicit, hidden behind seemingly neutral words or wording.

In the case of our research among female politicians, sexist statements often questioned their very presence in politics and their ability to hold public office in the first place, a classic example being various variations of the phrase about returning to the kitchen. There was also the questioning of competence on the grounds of "hysteria", one of the oldest prejudices against women whose behaviour does not conform to prevailing gender stereotypes. The term "hysteria" comes from a now discredited medical diagnosis that was used in the past to pathologize a wide range of normal female behaviour and emotional expressions, attributing them to uterine disorders (from the Greek "hystera", meaning uterus). This historical context highlights that blaming women in politics for hysteria is deeply rooted in sexist ideas that seek to delegitimise and challenge women's voice and authority by portraying them as inherently irrational and emotionally unstable. In politics, accusing women of hysteria is a tactic used to question their competence and suitability for leadership positions. It suggests that women are too emotional or irrational to make rational decisions, a stereotype that is in stark contrast to the expectations of rationality and emotional restraint often associated with men in politics or leadership positions. This double standard not only undermines the credibility of women politicians, but also reinforces the gender binary by conflating leadership and rationality with masculinity and emotionality and irrationality with femininity.

Another subtype was statements problematizing the alleged "unfemininity" of female politicians. Accusations of alleged "unfemininity" reflect an outdated and restrictive view of gender roles, where women are expected to conform to narrow standards of femininity that are often characterised by passivity, emotional expressivity and a focus on appearance. These stereotypes not only undermine women's authority and professionalism, but also serve to reinforce gender binaries and marginalise those who do not conform to traditional gender expectations.

The type of hate speech sexism also includes attacks on marital status, childlessness, or, in the case of married women politicians with children, questioning their competence as mothers and wives.

Subtype of hate speech — questioning the competence of women to work in politics

A large group of statements consisted of variations on the theme that women do not belong in politics, sometimes even accompanied by the comment that a man should be appointed in their place. Politics is described as a job that is not for women. Alternatively, if the politician in question comes across as confident, it is commented that an arrogant woman has no business in politics. When women display confidence, a trait often praised in male politicians, it is pejoratively described as arrogance in women. This double standard serves to penalize women for exhibiting qualities deemed necessary for effective leadership and suggests that assertive behaviour is inappropriate for women. Alternatively, comments

describe a woman in politics as a disaster, especially because she is allegedly not supposed to have an opinion and only "parrots" it. This is intended to suggest that women are incapable of independent thought or leadership and reinforces stereotypes of women as dependent and subordinate. There is great outrage when a woman is in charge of an important ministry. For example, Jana Černochová's tenure as the Minister of Defence has provoked a great deal of comments directed not only against her, but also against allegedly similarly incompetent female ministers from the KDU-ČSL and ANO.

Examples:

- No woman belongs in politics!!!
- the "skirt" is not supposed to rule the army, it should be enshrined in the constitution. Nothing against other ministries but the repressive apparatus and the army should always be ruled by a man.
- Radar singer girl X***, action flash X*** Y***, tattooed dyke X**** and concierge from Vinohrady X***. This is the elite of women in the Czech Republic. That's why the army looks like it does.
- How can you even let that out of your mouth ?? This arrogant and stuck up woman has no business in politics !! And you give her one of the highest positions !!!!
- Knit sweaters and don't comment on anything else you don't have a brain for that
- When a woman appears in politics it smells like trouble, they can't see the tip of their nose and repeat after globalists and fascists in the background
- I'm becoming more and more convinced that women have no business in politics.... Mostly they are disgraced, brooding, childless old maids who are in politics to cure their issues. And, to get their way, they won't hesitate to do anything....

Subtype of hate speech — attacks on marital status or childlessness

Women in politics face an impasse: they are criticised for being childless or unmarried and are told that they lack basic caring qualities or are too ambitious at the expense of family life. On the other hand, those who are married with children are faced with doubts about their ability to reconcile public service and family responsibilities, suggesting that motherhood and professional competence are incompatible.

Attacks on marital status have mainly concerned those female politicians who are divorced and, above all, childless. Childlessness is described as a reason why the politician in question is callous or incompetent because she lacks this "crucial" life experience for women. Childlessness has also been associated with exaggerated ambition or "curing complexes" through political activity. At the same time, childless female politicians are urged "not to reproduce".

Even women who have children and husbands are targeted through this subtype of hateful comments. It is questioned how they could have found a partner or had children in the first place. This was marked, for example, in the case of a local female politician who raged at

a rally against a political opponent and had her children with her. Here, her competence as a mother was questioned or calls were made for the children to be taken away. Thus, if a woman speaks out publicly and takes positions that do not suit the opinion of those debating in disinformation groups, she can be attacked for having a child or for being childless.

Examples:

- take care of a family so you can have children, you are old enough to have them but you are perhaps barren God does not bless you, you heifer
- Divorced, childless, infertile - she's so out of her mind !!
- She's a bitch who doesn't have a kid herself, so what else can you expect from her 🙄 !
- This is not a normal woman but a frustrated witch who can't see the tip of her nose. Stupid as far as she can see and a long way around the corner. That's how a bitter old woman without a man can think. She's probably brain dead or thinking with her pussy. She doesn't care about peace probably she's sharp as a marble.
- And in any case, lecture someone else and go to work for a regular citizen's salary, try living like this with everything. How much you've lived through and raised children. You lack humanity, you behave God knows what you are not. Maybe that's what your parents should have brought you up to.
- Just don't reproduce
- This one should be sterilized so this evil can't breed anymore.
- Luckily she didn't manage to have a child, which is good because such a creature shouldn't breed.
- Lifetime of flow to keep her from breeding, swine !!!
- Poor husband but money doesn't stink even if he's got such a loud mug at home.
- what a desperate man got on it and even gave her the bastards
- Social Services should review the mother's mental competency. This is an example of the irresponsible ramblings of an obviously sick PM, too bad he has more insight into women's rights in Burma than he does into everyday life in Czechia....
- Poor husband if she has one. They're well lashed. If she screams like that at home, poor family. What a hysteric. And what's the social services doing, not taking action when they're dragging kids to meetings. Only a sick mind would go to these events with a child or a drugged addict. And the worse the social services should act. And if she even knows what a secret service agent is, but they were at our time and she wasn't born at the time. That's a purple mess.

4.2 Type of hate speech — appearance

When the appearance of female politicians is attacked, as reflected in examples of hate speech targeting their general appearance, body proportions, weight, age, or hair colour, it represents a multifaceted mechanism of gendered hate speech with several underlying meanings and consequences:

- Objectification and dehumanization — Attacking the appearance of a female politician is a form of sexual objectification that reduces her to her physical features instead of seeing her as a complete person with intellect, abilities and contributions. Such comments often devolve into dehumanisation, and women are labelled with derogatory terms that strip them of their humanity ("monster", "rat", "sow"). These tactics seek to diminish a person's value and legitimacy in the political arena, suggesting that their appearance is more important than their professional achievements or political positions.
- Reinforcing gender expectations — comments about appearance reinforce rigid, gendered expectations about how women should look and behave. Society often places high expectations on women's appearance and expects them to meet narrow definitions of beauty and femininity. Female politicians face an additional layer of scrutiny where deviations from these norms can become fodder for public criticism and overshadow their professional roles and achievements. It is also a manifestation of misogyny, where women are perceived and valued primarily through the lens of their sexual characteristics or attractiveness to men. This diminishes their authority and credibility, suggesting that their primary value lies in their physical attractiveness rather than their intellect or professional qualifications.
- Silencing and intimidation — attacks on the appearance of a politician are intended to silence and intimidate. Such attacks can undermine a woman's confidence and sense of self-worth and potentially discourage her from participating fully in political life. It then sends a message to other women that women in the public eye will be subjected to uncomfortable scrutiny, evaluation and criticism for their appearance or health, which may deter them from pursuing a career in politics or other public engagement.

Examples:

- God,she's disgusting,yuck,no wonder no one would even touch her with a ten-foot pole, maybe shove it up her a**.
- Who gave that monster a say? Every word is a lie, every lie is a word... You're a disgusting woman, man... No matter what yuck.....
- It doesn't even have tits
- This cheeky rat showed her true colours and she should get her teeth fixed, she's got the money to do it, who's supposed to watch it

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- She's already got a sow's mouth! They're eating too much....? Yuck! :-)
 - Don't put peroxide on your head anymore it has eaten your brain 🐷 🐷 🐷
 - I guess this horny blonde forgot all that was before.
 - As beautiful as she is smart 😏

4.3 Type of hate speech — sexual objectification

In the area of hate speech related to sexual objectification (sexualisation), we have identified several subcategories, which are detailed below. Sexual objectification reduces specific women to the status of mere objects for sexual gratification or focuses on the supposed sexual characteristics and needs of the woman in question. Sexual objectification includes attacks on appearance, attractiveness, age, and sexual orientation, among others. Sexual objectification includes the dissemination of visual material with pornographic content, explicit and implicit abusive comments, threats of violence and sexual violence and death. Detailed descriptions of specific acts of violence and their consequences for the woman and specific parts of her body are common. Women's career successes are fundamentally attributed to their sexual activity with appropriate people as part of objectification.

A subtype of hate speech — comparisons to women working in the sex business or porn

Some of the statements assess a female politician as suitable only for the job of "prostitute" or porn actress, because she is allegedly not competent for any other job. Words such as whore or prostitute were also used in a figurative sense, which was intended to indicate alleged bribability and the promotion of foreign interests.

The use of sex business-related language is, as mentioned above, a typical manifestation of sexual objectification, designed to reduce the value of a woman's personal identity to her body and sexual expressions. In addition, this subtype of hate speech attacks a woman's personal integrity, not only in the sense of emphasizing sexual activity, but also attributing negative character traits such as bribability to her. In a figurative sense, the statements again emphasise the prejudice against women, who are attributed passivity and dependence. Thus, women are not seen as independent beings but as someone who obediently fulfils someone else's interests.

Hate speech containing this type of sexual objectification (sexualisation) acts as a tool to silence women and discourage their participation in public and political life. By framing women's contributions through the lens of the sex business, it seeks to delegitimise their voice and presence in the political sphere and perpetuate the gender imbalance of power. This serves to discourage not only those women who are currently targeted, but also other women who observe this treatment of publicly active women, and such treatment can pose a significant barrier to their participation in politics and other spheres of public life.

Examples:

- She's just a military hooker
- How did she start in high school? as a w***e, and that's what she's always been ! But she's completely cool !!
- X*** looks like the most pathetic hooker
- A monster like that should only be making porn with some binary persons..
- You're only fit to be a hooker or a public toilet cleaner you tramp
- X***-a bribable Soroš' bitch!!!!
- A bribable bitch led by the USA and pro-American Brussels !!!
- She's a cunt I say it all the time if she wants to be on TV she better make porn she wouldn't talk much of that shit she talks but nobody would watch that either
- X*** Y*** did porn with Rosenberg when she was young 😂😂😂
- X*** IS AN IDIOT SHOULD GO TO BROTHEL

A subtype of hate speech — hints at sexual attractiveness and sexual needs

A group of hate speech that includes value judgements that a politician's appearance is related to her partner or sexual status ("who would have intercourse with this") or that her views are influenced by her lack of sex ("She needs more sex so she doesn't have time for sh...t"), or claims of her sexual inexperience ("she is staring like she has never seen a dick") or, conversely, that she has gotten to public office "through the bed," embodies gendered hate speech with profound implications for female politicians and other public figures. This form of hate speech goes beyond mere personal attacks and engages in a deeper level of gender discrimination that reflects several significant issues:

- Sexual objectification and personal attacks during women's political activities — here again we find a shift in emphasis from women's professional skills and political function to their personal lives and sexuality. A female politician's political views or competence are somehow linked to her sexual experiences or partnership status, which happens significantly more often than for male politicians. This not only constitutes a barrier to public participation by female politicians and other publicly active women, but also reinforces the stereotype that women's worth and identity are linked to their relationships and sexual behaviour.
- Reinforcement of gender stereotypes and misogyny — these attacks based on gender stereotypes and misogyny reflect the belief that women are inherently less rational or capable and that their emotions or hormonal states (implicitly influenced by their sexual activity) affect their professional judgement. Such stereotypes are not only false, but also harmful, conveying the notion that women are not fit for political or leadership positions or serious professional engagement.

Like other subtypes of attacks involving sexual objectification or attacks on appearance, hints at sexual attractiveness and sexual needs have a significant silencing and intimidating effect. Even a survey of contemporary female politicians showed that hate attacks lead women politicians to limit their involvement in politics in some way. Women who are yet to enter politics or other forms of public engagement may be put off by these types of attacks altogether.

Examples:

- She's definitely not a whore, who would have intercourse with this?
- That's a piece of shit bitch yuck who would fuckit
- What a cow ...omg she must have spread her legs and mouth a lot to be where she is now.
- That's an old bitch, everything done through the bed ! She's disgusting, and she's the Minister of Defence, one would throw up !
- She served all those who are in power today. She gave to this one, she gave to that one, she gave to this one, and so on, until she got through the thicket of blue birds.
- Who did she fuck so that cunt got into government?
- Extremely capable??? She's probably a good kneeler 😊
- Go suck the chairman's dick you cunt
- That takes guts. She must have sucked a lot of dic... to get in there.
- She needs more sex so she doesn't have time for sh...t
- Shame to comment such an idiot I get the impression she misses sex when she wants let her send me an order and I'll think about it.
- You would need a good "stretch"
- X*** should get fucked and prego first and then talk. But since she can't do that she better shut up but it'd be better if she'd give someone.
- Kalousek Should probably deprive her of her virgginity ,he says he is good , he will have to take a hammer and a chisel ,at least he will satisfy her.
- She needs a big black banana and a good f-/-/-/k in the head maybe that would help 😊😊😊😊😊
- she's staring like she has never seen a dick

4.4 Type of hate speech — sexual violence

Threats of sexual violence against female politicians constitute an extremely serious and disturbing form of gender-based hate speech. These threats are not merely expressions of disapproval, but are violent, dehumanising and deeply misogynistic. They aim to intimidate, silence and humiliate women on the basis of their gender, using the threat of physical and sexual violence as a tool of oppression. Assessing these threats in terms of gendered hate speech and their impact involves several key dimensions:

-
- Gender-based violence: Threats of sexual violence are a manifestation of gender-based violence that seeks to exploit gender power imbalances to intimidate and control women. By targeting women politicians, these threats aim to undermine their authority and legitimacy and send the message that women do not belong in the public sphere, especially in positions of power.
 - Silencing and intimidation: Such threats have a profound silencing effect. They are intended to intimidate women politicians and discourage them from participating in political discourse or performing public roles. Fear of potential violence can restrict women's freedom of expression and limit their political engagement, which impacts on the diversity and representativeness of democratic institutions.
 - Sexualization and objectification: These threats reduce women to their bodies, sexualizing and objectifying them in the most violent ways. This approach denies women their professionalism, skills and humanity and instead focuses on their physical vulnerability. It perpetuates the idea that women are primarily sexual objects who can be controlled or punished through sexual means.
 - Impact on mental health and professional life: The psychological impact of exposure to such threats cannot be overstated. Female politicians facing such threats may experience increased stress, anxiety and fear, which can affect their mental health and hinder their ability to effectively carry out their professional duties. This creates an environment in which women have to face not only the normal challenges of public life, but also the additional burden of gender-based violence.

In this group of hate speech, we often encounter threats in the form of instructions describing a specific course of sexual violence, abuse or torture. As can be seen in the example cited, sometimes these threats can be highly sexually explicit, describing cruel torture without a single vulgar word being used.

"In this lady's case, I'd like to heat up a piece of iron and stick it into the back of her body with the cold end. When asked why the cold one, it's so she can't pull it out."

We consider such examples crucial for our research for a number of reasons. **When they do not contain profanity, they are often not picked up by the tools of social network providers and their sexual explicitness is only known from the context, which requires checking not by software but by a human, ideally a native speaker of the language. The emphasis on context is also crucial in the potential investigation or trial of hate crimes. Many perpetrators of hate-motivated crimes (it is questionable to what extent they do it on purpose) walk the line of criminal responsibility. While the perpetrator seeks to make his or her statement criminally or civilly unpunishable, the person affected by this type of hate speech feels the same intimidation and threat as if it were a vulgar or much more explicit statement.**

"Dude, that's the cow of the century send her to Ukraine and let her satisfy those murdering Banderites. And now that there will be so many horny ones there, she will cool her pussy in a bucket for at last a week."

It is also worth noting the linking of threats of sexual violence with prejudices and stereotypes against other ethnic groups or migrants. This is a long-standing phenomenon, for example, NGO workers regularly faced comments about threats of migrant rape at the time of the arrival of refugees in Europe in 2015-2016. Now, Ukrainians tend to be associated with threats of sexual violence by the authors of hate comments.

Examples:

- Although I vowed not to be vulgar on facebook, I can't contain myself here and have to help myself with an old joke." In this lady's case, I'd like to heat up a piece of iron and stick it into the back of her body with the cold end. When asked why the cold one, it's so she can't pull it out." A woman must not be insulted, I understand that, but in her case, her behavior and demeanor does not lend itself to her being a woman. I see it more as some kind of alternative.
- Fucker, get lost, someone should stick a pole up your ass, you stinking bitch!!!
- Exactly hammer her in the head and shove a banana up her ass, hopefully she'd understand!!!
- Shove the banana up your ass and into your filthy mouth, bitch.
- Dude, that's the cow of the century send her to Ukraine and let her satisfy those murdering Banderites
- And now that there will be horny fans there she will cool her pussy in a bucket at last a week 😂👏😂👏😂👏😂👏 CZ CZ CZ
- ...sweater lady down the drain, stick a banana in her anal...
- before that, I recommend to fuck and then de-fuck

4.5 Type of hate speech — threats of violence

Threats of violence or murder against women politicians constitute a serious form of hate speech with profound consequences for those affected, affecting not only their professional lives but also their personal well-being and psychological health. These threats escalate beyond gender-based insults or criticism and pose a direct and tangible risk to the safety and lives of the individuals affected. Assessing this form of hate speech and its impact involves considering several dimensions:

- Imminent threats to safety: Threats of violence or murder are clear forms of intimidation designed to induce fear and feelings of vulnerability. For women politicians, this may require changes in their daily routines, increased security measures, and even changes in the level and strategy of public engagement to

ensure their safety. The constant awareness of potential harm can weaken and distract them from performing their role.

- Psychological and emotional impact: The psychological impact of exposure to such threats is significant. It can cause constant stress, anxiety and fear, which affect mental health and overall well-being. Knowing that one's role in public service has been targeted can lead to feelings of isolation, powerlessness or burnout. This emotional burden can distract from their focus, decision-making and ability to effectively represent their constituents.
- Silencing: Threats of violence and murder are ultimately aimed at silencing women in politics. By making it risky to speak out, take positions on controversial issues or even participate in public life, such threats aim to exclude women from political life, undermining democratic principles and gender equality. The effect of threats of violence or even murder goes beyond the female politicians directly targeted and sends a message to other women and girls who might be considering public or political roles.
- Persistence of gender inequalities: These threats reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities by showing that women face additional obstacles and dangers in politics simply because of their gender. This environment discourages women from participating in political life, contributes to the persistent under-representation of women in political and leadership positions, and hinders progress towards gender parity in public office.
- Impact on democratic engagement: The wider implications for democracy and public participation are profound. When politicians are targeted for their views or participation in public life, it threatens the foundations of democratic debate and the free exchange of ideas. This reduces the quality of political discourse, which can lead to a more polarised and less inclusive political climate.

This broad type of hate speech is divided into subtypes that differ in their focus but do not differ in their severity and intensity.

Subtype of hate speech — specific type of violence, threat of retribution

In this subtype of hate speech, characterized by threats of violence, we observe different forms of aggression: conditional threat or speculative aggression. Commenters often use hypothetical scenarios, formulating what actions they might take if they were given the opportunity to meet the politician in real life. These descriptions often focus on physical violence, particularly to the facial area, suggesting a desire to cause visible harm or disfigurement.

In addition, some comments refer to the hope or expectation that a "higher power" will bring retribution against the woman for her actions or views. This type of rhetoric not only threatens direct physical harm, but also seeks to intimidate and silence women by implying

that they deserve punishment or harm for their public roles and opinions. This form of hate speech is particularly disturbing for several reasons:

- Personal and direct threats: By specifying actions they would take in real life, commenters create a direct and personal threat level. This can amplify the perceived threat, making it more tangible and frightening.
- Psychological impact: Focusing on physical violence, especially in the facial area, has a profound psychological impact because it not only threatens physical harm, but also aims to attack an individual's identity and self-esteem. The threat of disfigurement is a powerful tool of intimidation designed to induce fear and insecurity.
- Fatal retribution: The claim that a higher power will exact revenge on the female politician adds a layer of fatalism and inevitability to the threat. It implies that the actions of the female politician are not only disapproved of by the commenter, but will also be morally or divinely punished.

Examples:

- She's got a mouth just right for a shoe, especially when she opens it, she's a pro-Nazi monster
- She needs a facelift and throw down the loo
- X*** is a war monger! I'd beat her to a pulp, bitch!
- BITCH IF I HAD YOU AT HOME YOU'D BE BLUE IN THE FACE!!!!
- Break that Brussels bitch's arm in two places and kick her in the ass.
- She should be hit hard, she's a dumb, pompous idiot
- The stupidity and dumbness of this cunt knows no bounds, I'd be honoured to kick her arse first in a chance encounter!
- FUCK OFF YOU FUCKING CUNT. IF I WAS IN PRAGUE I'D SMASH YOUR FILTHY MOUTH YOU'RE LUCKY I'M NOT THERE
- I'd love to meet her in real life. I'd pull the spit out of my heel and spit it in her face
- I'D HIT HER IN HER DIRTY LITTLE MOUTH SHE'S A DUMBASS WHO HAS NO BUSINESS BEING THERE SHE'S JUST ATTACKING PEOPLE OR SHE HAS NO BRAIN.
- I'd impale her on a pole and drive her around the country showing what a Czech idiot looks like.
- We must hope that one day the day will come... and the bill will come. And it'll be hard. We have not had this here before, that kind of scum - the whole government.
- Fate will catch up with you or you reap what you sow!!!
- Why is the witch praying she should go to hell, she deserves nothing else. Baba Yaga who do not do anything for the people karma is free
- That bitch is getting more and more confident, but she's very wrong. It's gonna be her turn, and I wouldn't want to be in her shoes.

A subtype of hate speech — a specific method of murder

Among the most serious subtypes of hate speech we encounter are explicit expressions of murderous intent, where commenters detail how they wish, or even how they would carry out the death of a woman in public office. This deeply disturbing form of hate speech includes not only direct threats and detailed fantasies of killing the person, but also suggestions that the politician should harm herself or end her own life. Again, there is a situation here where commenters are likely to be purposely walking the very line of free speech by, for example, using conditional language, purposely speaking hypothetically. Again, these comments are no different in their impact on the daily lives and psyches of those who are the target of these threats.

I'll cut your head off (direct threat) vs. *Have your head cut off* (hypothetical statement)

A particularly dangerous aspect of the threats of violence is the extension of these attacks to the politician's immediate family members. This represents a deeply disturbing escalation of hateful comments because it impacts not only the primary target — the politician herself — but also her family members. Knowing that your family is also the target of hate speech and threats can significantly increase the level of fear, anxiety and stress felt by the primary target — the politician. Adding to all the psychological impacts mentioned above are concerns for the safety of your loved ones. Extending threats to family members exploits a deeper level of vulnerability, as individuals often feel a strong protective instinct towards their loved ones. This can cause them to perceive hate speech as more personal and invasive, deepening the sense of being under siege. The fact that family members of publicly active women may become targets of such attacks may become a reason for women politicians themselves to consider their future public involvement and may discourage other women from seeking political office.

Hateful comments that include death threats often include dehumanization. The target is compared to insects or pests, emphasizing the desire not only to eliminate them but also to exterminate them. This dehumanizing rhetoric serves to justify and promote violence by stripping the target of their humanity and equating them with creatures commonly associated with disgust and fear.

Threats of murder, which include specific brutal details, can cause significant fear, anxiety and psychological trauma to the primary and secondary targets. This can significantly affect their mental health, sense of security and ability to perform their public roles. By expressing murderous intent in public forums, these commenters contribute to the disturbing normalization of violence against women and public figures.

Examples:

- We've already had a bunch in the post of the minister of defence. Even a country singer, or Vondra. But this is a pearl. When the yankees build a base, I'd add her to the concrete foundation. The Americans would surely be happy 😊
- I'd recommend a bullet in the back of the head.
- It would also take a good sniper to keep her mouth shut and not irritate the nation.
- You bitch you'd better pour acid down your throat and get out of here
- i'm sure it can be cured...with pitchforks, rope,deep water...
- X*** you Cunt, you'll be hanging Soon like the whole government....
- Tie her to the barrell of that tank and gently pull the trigger
- Drown it before it reproduces 🧑 🤢
- Stab ,put on salt and pepper ! 😄
- Somebody please kill that stupid stupid bitch. And fuck, put a capable man in there. It's really fucked up what that bitch is doing. CZCZCZ
- This thing that was supposed to end up in the curtain should be sent under the plants once and for all !!! This cunt of all cunts should be hanging out on a lamp with a sign around her neck like in the war when, according to her führer, we are in it !
- It's high time she was put out and the others too (put out like Mrázek was).
- "Brave woman"- just make sure you look in your car and under your car and behind your car every day.....
- I'd take a pickaxe and shovel and bury only your ass will show so people have a place to park their bike
- Let her hang herself,or we will 😡 😡 😡
- It's only a matter of time before somebody cuts this cunt's head off
- Put a sweater around your neck and tighten it
- Shoot the cow on the spot without trial for treason ⚠️ I will gladly and willingly drown as I see fit and if necessary I will send Putin the money to carry out the denazification in the Czech Republic ⚠️ ⚠️ ⚠️ ⚠️
- Catch.. segregate.. exterminate... 🤢 🤢 🤢 🤢 🤢
- This rat should be executed.
- Die bitch!!!this vermin needs to be killed like a chicken with bird flu...
- X*** is acting like a bitch off the chain. This is not a normal woman anymore. I'm gonna go and get you first, bitch!
- You see, you Cunt X*** where you led it you should be hanged you rats out there
- Yuuuuuuuuck that's a nasty rat in human skin!!!
- To overpriced gas with them!!!
- You idiot, you feel that nobody knows your family in Litomyšl, many people from your neighborhood know you, so shut up and shuffle your feet like the opposition, you get out, how many people you have already robbed and you shit on da family, especially that you love money ,Arab bitch.

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- Karma is for everyone. I'm just waiting for her baby to be killed so I could be as heartless.

4.6 Type of hate speech — other categories

In our research on hate speech against female politicians, we identified a complex array of derogatory expressions that go beyond the above categories and include themes associated with a range of prejudiced and discriminatory expressions. Thus, this type includes hate speech with ethnic overtones, ageist comments aimed at older women in politics, unsubstantiated attributions of mental disorders, assumptions about sexual orientation, and interpretations of mental characteristics based on the physical appearance or facial expressions of female politicians. We also included what we have tentatively termed "creative" comments, where we ourselves were shocked not only by the brutality but also by the range of imagination of the commenters.

This segment of hate speech embodies a multifaceted attack on female politicians that not only exploits gender-based biases but also intersects with various forms of discrimination. Ethnic slurs, ageism, ableism, homophobia and caricatures are used to undermine and devalue the identity, contribution and humanity of these women. Such attacks are not random or merely offensive; they are strategic and aim to use social prejudice and stigma to isolate and intimidate targets. For example, falsely attributing mental disorders to female politicians is a form of ableism that stigmatizes mental health issues and calls into question the rationality and competence of women. It exploits the harmful stereotype that women are more emotionally unstable and therefore unsuitable for leadership roles. Assumptions or derogatory comments about sexual orientation serve to further marginalise women politicians by either "othering" or demeaning them on the basis of their real or perceived LGBTQ+ identity. This not only violates their privacy, but also perpetuates homophobia and discrimination.

Comments that imply malice, emptiness or abnormality simply from a woman's appearance or expressions are deeply dehumanizing. They reduce women to caricatures, negate their individuality and humanity, and often invoke misogynistic tropes that associate women with deception or inherent evil.

The impact of such hate speech on women politicians and public figures is profound and multifaceted. Psychologically, it can lead to increased anxiety, stress, and feelings of isolation, affecting their mental health and well-being. Professionally, it can discourage women from fully participating in public discourse, silence their voices and reduce the diversity of perspectives in political spaces. Socially, it contributes to the perpetuation of discrimination and intolerance and undermines the principles of equality and respect that underpin democratic societies.

Moreover, the personal nature of these attacks — targeting aspects of identity such as ethnicity, age and sexual orientation — exacerbates this harm, so that it is not only an attack on the public persona but also on the private individual. This can deter not only the immediate targets but also other women from engaging in politics or public life for fear of similar attacks.

Examples:

- I'd wash her face in Ukrainian shit.
- For-Arab tattooed slut disgusting 🤢🤢🤢
- Put her against the wall and make her paint everyone black. Arab swine!!!!!!
- What's that got on her arm some goat-fucking-stan writing ? In goat-fucking-stan she would have been either beaten with rocks or collectively fucked and then dismembered. 😊
- This is a coooooooooow, why is this shit even breathing?
- What shall we call her - BLOODY RENOULT ?????
- Mary, you should go retire, you're just embarrassing yourself and you the president? please that would be another disgrace, like that filth Fiala who is the biggest fraud out there 🤢
- Fucking thief retire and don't bother us
- And the idiot has spoken... jump in the coffin
- Look into those eyes. There's nothing behind them but darkness and emptiness. Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of FB, has a similar look. Behind those eyes is not a separate spiritual individuality, but a demon's cave.
- Evil comes right out of her eyes. Just look at her facial expressions.
- Notice her facial expressions when she speaks Any psychiatrist can tell that this woman is mentally disturbed when she speaks. What will grow out of her children they will probably be homosexuals or lesbians, the world has turned upside down , everything is falling apart because of people who have Lost faith in God, we will end up very bad and prophecies will be fulfilled I as a believer in Jesus Christ look forward to these people being swept out and put into the pids of hell to cleanse the world of those who call themselves people who are self controllt. Satan ofhell.
- Watch the body language. This woman is ripe for psychiatric treatment. Diagnosis : Hysteria in the fourth stage!
- She's not a woman, there are so many strange genders nowadays..... and she's one of them, we'll never know what kind of creature she is....
- So we have about 87 genders dyctated by the EU and I still wonder which group this lady belongs to and last but not least the confirmation that a title does not give a patent on reason and I don't mean to insult any animal herewith, whether it has horns or not.
- how can "this" be born? Quite simply, you make a big party, bring in monkeys, sheep and other such beasts and then this comes out of it, X***.
- You'll have a golden time in the forced labour, you fascist roll thief

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- That cow, if they taped her mouth shut, she'd die of it! She'd choke on her own shit!
 - Bitch with a bullet instead of a tampon 🦆🦆🦆

5. Conclusion

Our comprehensive analysis of hate speech against female politicians reveals a full spectrum of targeted, gendered attacks that aim not only to undermine the competence and credibility of women in public office, but also to erect barriers that may discourage other women from aspiring to such roles. This strategic use of hate speech serves as a tool to reinforce gender bias and discourage women from participating in the political arena.

Overview of types and subtypes of hate speech:

- Sexism: Includes questioning women's participation in politics, doubting their competence based on stereotypes such as hysteria, and criticising their "unfemininity". Sexist statements often reflect and reinforce traditional gender roles, suggesting that a woman's primary place is in the home, not in public or political office. This is particularly so when women hold a high constitutional position or are the head of an important ministry. Sexism as a type of hate speech includes, but is not limited to, the following two subtypes, which are:
 - Questioning competence: a significant proportion of hate speech suggests that politics is not a suitable field for women. This appears mainly on the prejudice that when a woman has her own views that she insists on, it is referred to as arrogance. At other times, on the other hand, the ability of women to have and form their own independent opinions is questioned. This type of hate speech is particularly insidious because it directly attacks women's ability and rights to participate in public life.
 - Attacks on marital status and childlessness: This sub-type of hate speech explores women's personal lives and suggests that childless or unmarried women should be less competent or empathetic because they supposedly lack this "crucial" experience of motherhood. It also includes attacks on women who are mothers because it questions their ability to balance family and political life.
- Attacks based on appearance: These attacks focus on women's appearance, body proportions, age, or perceived physical defects, serve to objectify and demean women, reduce their value to their physical attributes, and detract from their professional qualifications and achievements.
- Sexual objectification: It includes explicit or implied offensive comments, threats of violence or sexual violence, and unsubstantiated assumptions about sexual orientation or attraction. It aims to reduce women to sexual objects and to question their professional achievements by attributing them to sexual behaviour - "she got the job because she had sex with someone".
- Threats of sexual violence: These are among the most disturbing forms of hate speech. They use graphic descriptions of violence to intimidate and terrorize female politicians and target their family members as well. This escalation of hate speech

represents an attempt to exploit a deeper level of vulnerability in order to silence and control women by making them fear for the safety of their loved ones.

- Threats of violence and physical elimination: These are explicit threats that speculate about the murder of the target or detail how the perpetrator would like the female politician in question to be abused or murdered. These threats not only create fear and anxiety, but also seek to silence women and discourage their participation in public life.

The impact on those affected by hate speech and on society as a whole:

The different types and subtypes of hate speech identified in our research have a profound impact on both individual targets and society as a whole. For those affected by hate speech, these attacks can lead to psychological trauma, professional limitations, and a pervasive sense of insecurity and isolation. They undermine women's self-esteem, disrupt their mental health and can discourage them from participating in or continuing public and political work.

At a societal level, gender hate speech reinforces existing gender biases and inequalities and perpetuates a culture that devalues women's contributions and abilities. It suppresses democratic engagement by silencing critical voices and limiting the diversity of perspectives available in public discourse. This not only harms targeted individuals, but also impoverishes political dialogue and impedes progress towards more just and representative governance.

Points to consider for police officers, prosecutors and judges who investigate or judge hate speech:

This research sheds critical light on the nature and impact of hate speech against female politicians and offers valuable considerations for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges tasked with addressing such crimes. The findings underscore the need to rethink the approach to hate speech within a legal and societal framework and highlight its profound implications.

- 1) Online hate attacks cannot be defended by the right to express political dissent: This research highlights that hate speech cannot be dismissed as a mere by-product of public or political engagement. The severity of attacks, including threats of murder, goes beyond mere disagreement or criticism. Such hate speech constitutes a targeted effort to intimidate and silence, which requires serious legal and social intervention.
- 2) Recognition of the seriousness of online hate speech: The online sphere is not divorced from reality, but forms an extension of it, where hate speech can cause tangible harm. The explicit and brutal nature of the comments identified in the research highlights the urgent need to treat online hate speech with the same seriousness as physical acts of violence, given its profound psychological impact on victims.

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- 3) Impact on human rights and public participation: Hate speech, especially when it is gendered, undermines fundamental principles of equality and freedom and denies the target groups — this research focuses on women — their right to participate in public life. This constitutes a serious violation of human rights that impacts not only on individual victims but also on the wider societal commitment to democratic participation and equality.
 - 4) Discouraging public participation and promoting discrimination: The legitimate fear of being the target of hate speech can deter individuals, particularly women and members of ethnic or sexual minorities, from participating in public life. This creates a discriminatory barrier to entry into the public and political arena and perpetuates cycles of exclusion and marginalisation.
 - 5) Hate speech need not be explicit or vulgar: Research highlights that hate speech need not be vulgar. Threats and derogatory comments may be cloaked in language written without vulgarity, but still contain deeply offensive language, demonstrating the need for subtle understanding and interpretation in legal contexts.
 - 6) Moving along the fine line of free speech: Perpetrators often exploit the boundaries of free speech and label their comments as hypothetical or write them in a conditional to avoid potential criminal liability. This tactic does not lessen the traumatic impact on those affected by hate speech. On the contrary, it underscores the need for legal and policy frameworks that can deftly navigate and address the complexities of free speech and hate speech.

The implications of this research yielded, for the first time in the Czech environment, categories of hate speech based on both quantitative analysis using software and qualitative linguistic-semantic analysis of more than 1.8 million comments in disinformation groups on Facebook. Using these categories, the authors of the research would like to contribute to a concerted effort by law enforcement, lawyers and legislators to devise strategies that effectively address hate speech while respecting freedom of expression. This means strengthening legal definitions, improving detection and prosecution mechanisms, and encouraging informed public discourse that actively challenges hate speech and promotes inclusivity and respect for all individuals in the political and public spheres.

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