

The Content and Context of Hate Speech

Rethinking Regulation and Responses

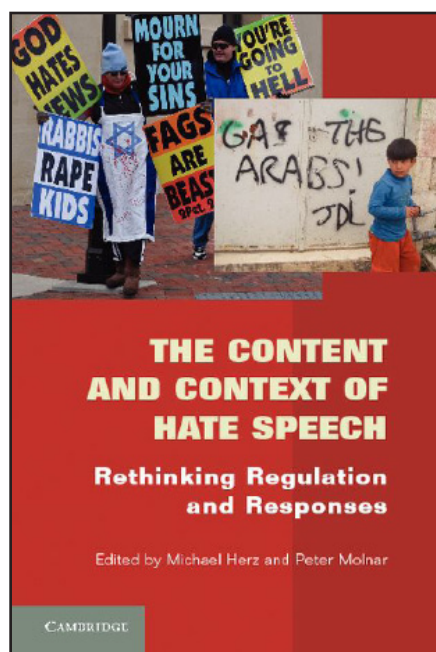
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The contributors to this volume consider whether it is possible to establish carefully tailored policies for “hate speech” that are cognizant of the varying traditions, histories, and values of different countries. Throughout, there is a strong comparative emphasis, with examples, and authors, drawn from around the world. A recurrent question is whether or when different cultural and historical settings can justify different substantive rules without making cultural relativism an easy excuse for content-based restrictions that would gravely endanger freedom of expression.

Essays address the following questions, among others: Is “hate speech” in fact so dangerous and harmful, particularly to vulnerable minorities or communities, as to justify restricting freedom of speech? What harms and benefits accrue from laws that criminalize “hate speech” in particular contexts? Are there circumstances in which everyone would agree that “hate speech” should be criminally punished? Is incitement that leads to imminent danger a more reliable concept for defining restrictions than “hate speech”? Does the decision whether to restrict “hate speech” necessarily entail choosing between liberty and equality? What lessons can be learned from international law?

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Table of Contents

Preface: Hate Speech and the Coming Death of the International Standard before it was Born (Complaints of a Watchdog) | *Miklos Haraszti*

Preface: Hate Speech and Common Sense
Adam Liptak

Introduction

Part I. Overviews

1. Interview with Robert Post
2. Is there a case for banning hate speech?
Bhikhu Parekh
3. Hate speech | *C. Edwin Baker*
4. Interview with Kenan Malik
5. Hate speech and the demos | *Jamal Greene*
6. On American hate speech law | *Floyd Abrams*

Part II. Refinements and Distinctions

7. Social epistemology, holocaust denial, and the post-millian calculus | *Frederick Schauer*
8. Denying experience: holocaust denial and the free speech theory of the state | *Julie Suk*
9. What's wrong with defamation of religion?
Kwame Anthony Appiah
10. Responding to "Hate Speech" With Art, Education, and the Imminent-Danger Test
Peter Molnar
11. Reconceptualizing counter-speech in hate speech policy (with a focus on Australia)
Katharine Gelber
12. Hate speech and self-restraint
Arthur Jacobson and Bernhard Schlink
13. Hate speech in constitutional jurisprudence: a comparative analysis | *Michel Rosenfeld*

14. One step beyond hate speech: post-soviet regulation of "extremist" and "terrorist" speech in the media | *Andrei Richter*

15. Hate speech and comprehensive forms of life
Alon Harel

Part III. Equality and Fear

16. Hate speech and political legitimacy
Jeremy Waldron
17. Reply to Jeremy Waldron | *Ronald Dworkin*
18. Waldron, Machiavelli, and hate speech
Stephen Holmes
19. Shielding marginalized groups from verbal assaults without abusing hate speech laws
Yared Legesse Mengistu
20. Interview with Nadine Strossen
21. Interview with Theodore Shaw

Part IV. International Law

22. Does international law provide for consistent rules on hate speech? | *Toby Mendel*
23. State-sanctioned incitement to genocide: the responsibility to prevent | *Irwin Cotler*
24. A survey and critical analysis of Council of Europe strategies for countering "hate speech"
Tarlach McGonagle
25. The American Convention on Human Rights: regulation of hate speech and similar expression
Eduardo Bertoni and Julio Rivera Jr.
26. Orbiting hate: satellite transponders and free expression | *Monroe Price*