Why all that hate?

And what can be done

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The problem and its dimensions

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- An intense negative emotion, closely related to anger, disgust and contempt
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- "We hate ... groups more *because of who they are*, than because of what they do"
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Dangerous for individual targets, dysfunctional for societies, and very difficult to address

Who becomes a target?

- Not random, but embedded in political ideology/world views, so connected to political ideas of *justified inequality* (Bobbio, 1997)
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  - Haters: (White) (male) persons, low or medium education, routine occupations …
  - Targets: Groups seen as inferior *and/or* driving status loss
  - I.e. women; sexual, ethnic, religious minorities, but also: the poor, the handicapped, …
- (Partial) exceptions: conflicts between these groups, politicians as targets

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- And a business model for influencers and platforms

Some potential solutions

1. Hate: an individual phenomenon relating to *groups*, existing in a social environment (social learning & communication)

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2. Link between ideas and emotions and behaviour not automatic but rather conditional on
   - (Perceived) costs
   - (Perceived) approval from relevant others

This provides some leverage

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- Regulation of (social) media can reduce "supply"
- (Political) elites avoiding hateful/polarising language, stressing values of unity and tolerance instead
- Policies that reduce societal conflict

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- Strengthen societal norms against hate to reduce approval
- The (sometimes silent) majority is *not* hateful and anti-democratic
  - European societies are more educated and tolerant than ever
  - Encourage them to speak out & correct social misperceptions (pluralistic ignorance)
  - (Re-establish) existing social norms of civility and tolerance (counter speech and demonstrations, elite consensus)

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Supporting victims

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- But its also good politics, because it makes them (and societies as a whole) more resilient