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# **Hate speech in Poland – summary of the national opinion poll**

Stefan Batory Foundation

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## Hate speech in Poland – summary of the national opinion poll

‘I detest fags – they are degenerate human beings, they should be treated’ – every fifth Pole thinks that such a statement is admissible in the public discourse. Almost two thirds of young Poles have encountered examples of anti-Semitic hate speech on the Internet. About the same percentage of Polish young people heard hate speech towards Romani people from their friends. Every third adult Pole has read racist statements on the Internet, and as much as 70 percent of young Poles declare that they have encountered such statements on the Internet. A surprisingly high percentage of Poles accept hate speech – in particular towards Jews, Romani people, and non-heterosexual persons – and see nothing offensive in it. But the representatives of the minorities are positive that such statements are offensive and should be forbidden. These are the results of the latest study performed by the University of Warsaw Centre for Research on Prejudice and the Stefan Batory Foundation.

The study had three stages. The first, based on an existing database of internet hate speech (compiled by the Foundation ‘Local Knowledge’), a list of 30 statements of various levels of hostility against six minorities (Jewish, Ukrainian, Romani, African, Muslim, and LGBT) was selected. Additionally, the list was supplemented by examples of media statements from public figures (two offensive statements for every minority group from politicians, journalists, commentators or musicians).

In the first stage of the study, a survey using CAWI technique on 270 representatives of the minorities was performed (the most numerous groups in the sample were sexual and Jewish minorities). The objective of the survey was to find out how the minorities react to the hate speech towards them and to the selected statements seen by the minorities as examples of hate speech. The results of the survey showed that the representatives of the minorities firmly declared that the statements seen by them as examples of hate speech should be forbidden.

Based on the survey of reactions from the representatives of the minorities, a list of statements for the main study was selected. The study covered representative random samples: a group of 653 young Poles aged from 16 to 18, and a representative random sample of 1007 adult Poles. The survey used the CAPI technique and an identical questionnaire for both groups. The participants of the survey were presented with the statements seen by the representatives of the minorities as hate speech. In order to present similar examples concerning different minorities, statements on comparable subjects and of comparable hostility level were selected.

When hate speech against Jews is concerned, 10 percent of young Poles and 10 percent of adult Poles accept public statements such as: 'As far as sheenies and hostility towards them are concerned, it is only a real assessment of the actions of these louses and Davidian fascists'. 19 percent of adults and 21 percent of young people accept statements such as: 'Jews must realize that they themselves made Poles hate them because of their treachery and their crimes. And today, they try to hide their crimes and pass the buck'. 14 percent of young Poles and 14 percent of adults declare that they very often encounter such statements. Young people encounter this type of hate speech mainly on the Internet (59 percent of young Poles encountered anti-Semitic hate speech on the Internet) and when talking with their friends (38 percent). Adults hear this speech mainly when talking with their friends (29 percent), on the Internet (29 percent), and on the TV (26 percent). Among young people, the level of acceptance for the hate speech is related to their right-wing political views, strongly hierarchical social views, being against censoring other people's statements, and anti-Semitic attitudes. When adults are concerned, support for such hate speech is less related to their right-wing/hierarchical views.

As far as hate speech against Ukrainians is concerned, 19 percent of young Poles and 10 percent of adults see the following Internet post as admissible: 'The Ukrainians can only murder defenceless women and children'. The well-known statement made in a radio programme hosted by Kuba Wojewódzki and Michał Figurski about the rape of a Ukrainian girl should be admissible in the opinion of 5 percent of young people and 6 percent of adults. 5 percent of young Poles and 5 percent of adults say that they very often encounter hate speech against Ukrainians. Young people encounter instances of such hate speech mostly on the Internet (46 percent of young Poles) and when talking with their friends (21 percent). Adults encounter such language mostly on the Internet (26 percent), when talking with their friends (19 percent), and on TV (20 percent). Acceptance of hate speech towards Ukrainians is not related to political views, but rather to anti-Ukrainian attitudes (in particular for adults) and to support for strong social hierarchy (for young people).

When Romani people are concerned, the most frequent place where hate speech is encountered is the Internet (66 percent of young Poles, 27 percent of adults) and – specifically for this group – talks with friends. As much as 60 percent of young Poles and 49 percent of adults heard anti-Romani statements from their friends. Every fourth young Pole and every fifth adult hear hate speech towards Romani people very often. What is more, 16 percent of young Poles and the same percentage of adults think that the statement: 'Gypsies are and always will be thieves' (a citation from a song by a band Bracia Figo Fagot) is admissible, and every tenth Pole (young and adult, irrespectively) do not see the statement as offensive. Acceptance for anti-Romani hate speech

is a result of anti-Romani prejudices, and is very weakly related to the support for freedom of speech, which indicates that Romani people are a group that is not protected by political correctness norms in Poland.

Racist hate speech is seen by Poles as much more unacceptable than the one directed towards Romani people. 89 percent of adult Poles and as much as 91 percent of young people said that the statement: 'Negros are not humans but monkeys' was unacceptable and should be forbidden. On the other hand, hate speech towards black people seems to be the most common on the Internet. As much as 70 percent of young Poles encountered racist sayings on the Internet. 58 percent of young Poles heard such statements when talking with their friends. Adult people seem to have less frequent contact with racist opinions – 29 percent of adults encountered them on the Internet, 30 percent when talking with their friends, and 25 percent heard them on the TV. When young people are concerned, acceptance for racist hate speech is strongly related to their support for a strong social hierarchy, which can indicate that they believe that some races are 'better' than others. Perceived competence of black people strengthens the tendency to forbid racist hate speech – people seeing black people as intelligent and competent see hate speech towards them as unacceptable.

The survey showed that hate speech against non-heterosexual people receives the highest acceptance in Poland. 35 percent of adult Poles and 38 percent of young Poles see as acceptable the recent statement from a leader of All-Polish Youth organisation: 'I understand that some people can have homosexual inclinations, this is a kind of handicap, weakness [...] But poofs and activists who want privileges for homosexual relationships and child adoption should be fought'. Even the most offensive statement about homosexual people ('I detest poofs – they are degenerate human beings, they should be treated') was seen as admissible by 22 percent of adult Poles and 20 percent of young people. Only 59 percent of adults said that such statements should be forbidden. Homophobic hate speech is encountered by young people mainly on the Internet (77 percent), when talking with friends (65 percent), and on the TV (33 percent). Adult Poles most commonly hear such statements from their friends (43 percent) and on the TV (41 percent). Acceptance for this kind of hate speech is strongly related to homophobic views. When adults are concerned, both right-wing and left-wing supporters opt for admissibility of such statements – for young people the attitude is related to right-wing views.

The level of acceptance for anti-Muslim hate speech is also relatively high. 15 percent of adult Poles and 19 percent of young people think that the statement: 'Muslims are stinky cowards, they can only murder women, children and innocent people' is admissible. The Internet is the main vehicle for hate

speech towards Muslims – both for young people (55 percent) and adult Poles (28 percent). Interestingly enough, the support for anti-Muslim hate speech is not related to the level of Christian faith and the observance of religious practices on the part of respondents, but it is rather strongly related to the belief that Muslims are a threat to the Polish culture. Thus, the acceptance for hate speech towards Muslims is related to anti-immigrant fears rather than to any religious prejudices.

To sum up, the surveyed Poles (both adults and young people) expect that hate speech towards Ukrainians and Africans/black people to be forbidden, but they are willing to accept hate speech against LGBT people, Romani people and Jews. The acceptance for hate speech, especially among young people, is strongly related to their right-wing, hierarchical attitudes. People with right-wing views were in particular tolerant for hate speech towards non-heterosexual people. Young Poles witness hate speech in everyday life much more frequently than adults, but their familiarity with such statements need not lead to their acceptance for hate speech and has no bearing on their attitudes towards strangers. But for adults, their contact with hate speech brings farther reaching consequences – such adult people are more prejudiced and declare lower acceptance for Jews, Ukrainians, Africans or LGBT people they meet.

When young people are concerned, their acceptance for hate speech is a result of prejudices rather than support for freedom of speech. But the acceptance for hate speech is not just another sign of increasing verbal aggression – young people with a higher level of verbal aggression do not necessarily support hate speech.

## **The aim of the opinion poll**

In the modern world, hate speech is generally seen as a grave abuse of human rights, though we have no clear definition of hate speech, so it is not easy to prosecute it as an offence. According to recommendations from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, hate speech is all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, undermining democratic order, cultural cohesion and pluralism (Recommendation No. R/97/20).

When discussing the problem of hate speech, it is worth focusing on the consequences of hateful language for its victims – the minority groups. Psychological research led in the United States showed that the incidence of suicide was higher among immigrant groups exposed to hate speech (Mullen and Smyth, 2004). The model of harmful language presented by Laura Leets



and Howard Giles (1997) indicates that reactions to hate speech are similar to reactions to other traumatic experiences. First, as a result of the loss of dignity, strong emotional reactions are common: despondency, anger and sadness. Next, the victims try to understand the experience and assign responsibility. In time, the victims start to feel hatred and sorrow. The emotions can give rise to aggression against the perpetrators of hate speech, but usually are suppressed, leading to depression, learned helplessness, and finally addictions – drug dependence or alcoholism.

The research project led by the Centre of Research on Prejudices aimed to obtain a comprehensive diagnosis of the social context of hate speech in Poland. We wanted to understand the scale of social acceptance for hate speech directed against different minority groups, the social perception of particular forms of hate speech, the reception of hate speech by representatives of affected minority groups, and the thematic structure of hate speech acts. What is important, the survey was led on adult Poles samples and on a sample of school youth, as we wanted to diagnose attitudes and awareness of the age group that was most exposed to the experience of hate speech. We also tried to examine the correlation between the acceptance of hate speech and world-views and psychological factors. The report presents the results of our research.

## Preliminary research

### Choice of statements – analysis of the Internet and other media content

Before we started the proper research (aimed at evaluating the acceptance for hate speech), we prepared the core part of the questionnaire – the list of hate speech statements. First, we decided that the list should contain statements concerning the following minorities<sup>1</sup>:

- Jewish
- Ukrainian
- Russian
- Romani
- African/black people
- Muslim
- sexual minorities

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<sup>1</sup> During the implementation of the project the list was changed. Initially, the project covered Russian minority (later excluded from the questionnaire survey on a representative sample in view of the Crimean crisis). From the content research Muslim minority was excluded.

Certainly, the choice fails to cover all minorities affected by the problem of hate speech, but previous research (e.g. the Polish Survey on Prejudices 2009, [raportmniejszosci.pl](http://raportmniejszosci.pl)) suggests that these are the minorities that, in recent times, most commonly encountered attitudes of dislike and hate speech. We also decided that the list should contain authentic (and not prepared by us) statements from Internet users and public figures (celebrities, politicians, professors and other known personalities). To use prepared statements would probably be easier and would enable us to choose possibly similar statements for every minority. But we wanted the survey to be ecologically as accurate as possible, i.e. based on statements that are actually used among Poles.

To select statements from Internet users, we used a database containing 2193 statements, prepared and made available to us by the Foundation 'Local Knowledge'. The database was created under the project *Minority Report – monitoring of the Polish Internet for 'hate speech' and 'hostile language'*, aimed at developing an IT system helping to: '(1) crawl (search automatically) Internet forums of the biggest Polish portals, (2) automatically select posts containing elements of hateful language or hate speech, (3) record and then present to selected users, tagged posts in the database' (Troszyński, 2011). The database made available to us contained statements posted in April 2011 on forums of Polish Internet portals [onet.pl](http://onet.pl), [gazeta.pl](http://gazeta.pl), [wp.pl](http://wp.pl), [interia.pl](http://interia.pl).

For every minority, we chose 30 statements that were thematically most similar and of different intensity of hatefulness: 10 high, 10 medium and 10 low in intensity of hate speech. When we couldn't find enough thematically related statements, we added statements possibly most similar to the ones already chosen.

The list of statements from Internet users was supplemented by statements from known personalities. In most cases, the statements were known to the general public (2 statements for every minority).

## Minorities on hate speech – pilot survey

The list was additionally verified using the method of competent judges: we asked organisations of minorities covered by the survey to evaluate which statements were most offensive to them and thus most representative of hate speech. Based on their answers, we narrowed down the set of statements to be used in the survey on a nationwide sample.

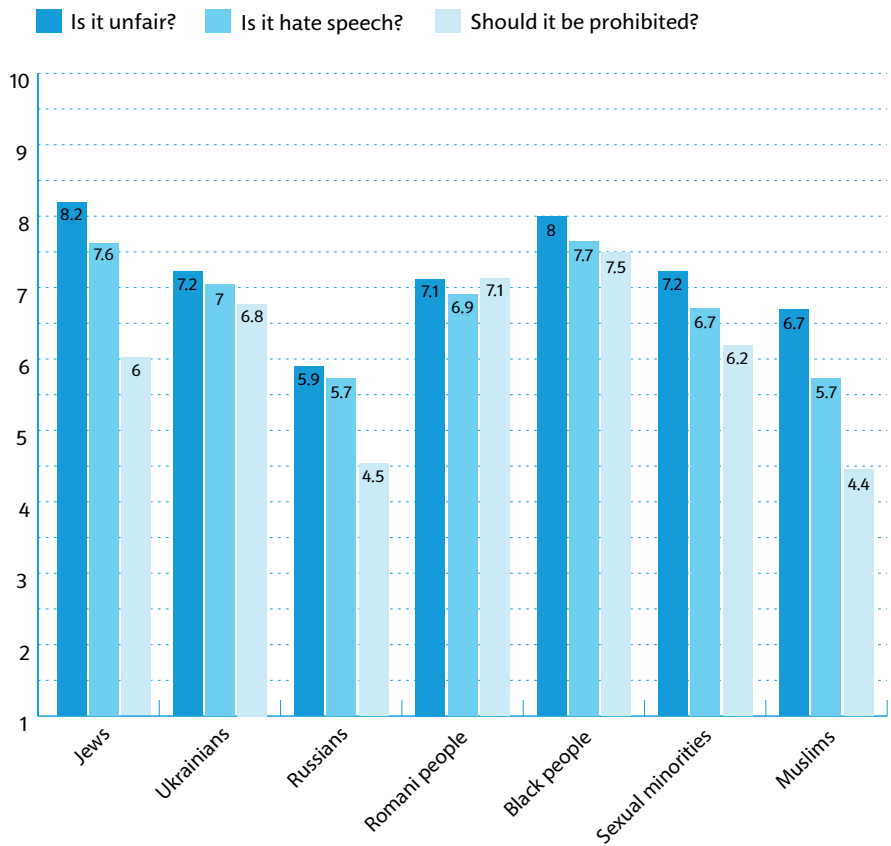
### Survey of the minorities

**Competent judges.** The survey, in the form of queries sent by electronic mail to minority organisations, covered 276 persons (120 persons of Jewish origin,

122 non-heterosexual persons, 13 persons of Ukrainian origin, 6 persons of African origin, 6 persons of Romani origin, and 4 Muslim persons). The group of respondents included 124 women and 152 men (average age,  $M = 38.35$ ,  $SD = 16.83$ ). The majority (75 percent) of respondents declared higher education. More than half of them (65 percent) lived in cities with over 500 000 inhabitants. 70 percent of respondents declared left-wing views (from radical to moderate), 17 percent – centrist views, and 12 percent – right-wing views (from radical to moderate).

**The procedure of the survey.** The ‘judges’ of the hate speech were sent via e-mail the link to a questionnaire developed in Qualtrics software. After reading the instructions, every judge indicated his or her minority, and then was directed to the relevant part of the questionnaire. Every respondent was shown, in random order, 30 statements concerning his or her minority, and at the end 2 statements of public figures. Their task was to evaluate every statement by answering three additional questions: 1) *Do you think that the statement is unfair for <name of minority >?*; 2) *Do you think that the statement is hate speech?*; 3) *Should statements like that be prohibited on Internet portals/in nationwide media?* The answers were given by indicating a number on a scale from 1 – ‘Definitely not’ to 10 – ‘Definitely’. After answering the questions and giving demographic data, the respondents were thanked for participation in the survey.

**FIGURE 1.** The average evaluations of 32 statements concerning the surveyed minorities as to their offensiveness, hate speech intensity, and possible prohibition.



## Results and selecting statements for surveys

**Analysis of evaluations form judges.** Before selecting statements for the actual survey, we compared the distribution of evaluations of statements from different minorities. The answers to the questions on offensiveness, hate speech intensity and prohibition of the statements were averaged for every minority (FIGURE 1). The results suggest that statements selected for different minorities were, in general, of similar offensiveness (from 8.2 for the Jewish minority to 5.7 for Muslims).

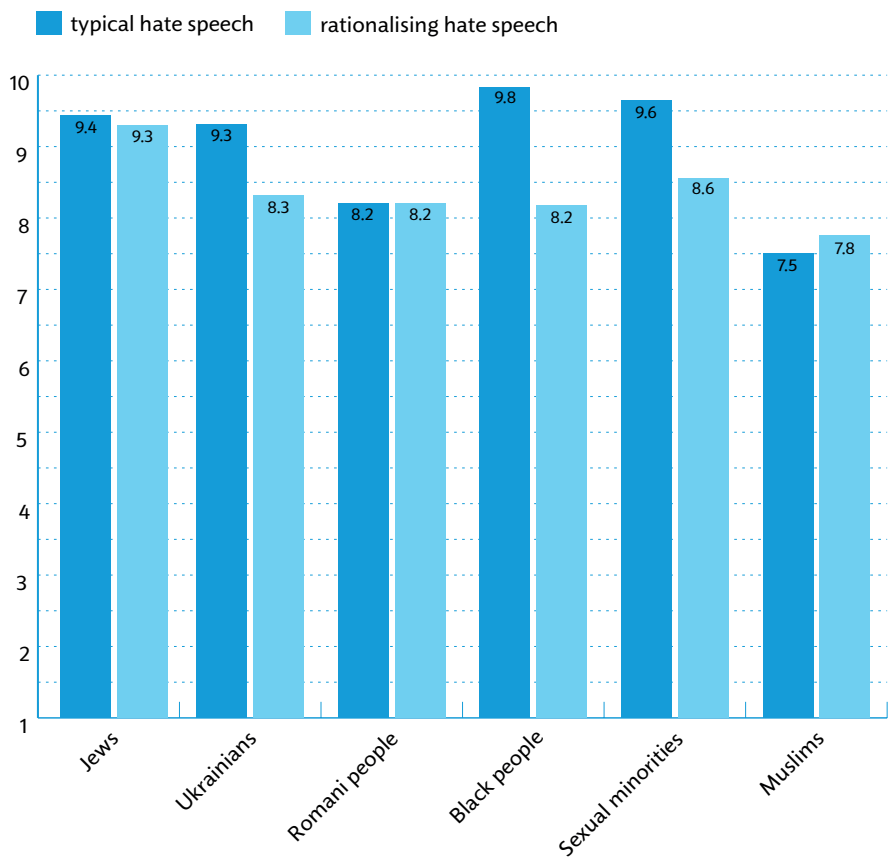
**Selection procedure of statements for the actual survey.** For every minority, we summed up evaluations of all statements. Based on that, we selected two most extreme statements for every group, additionally differentiating between two types of statements: typical hate speech statements and rationalising statements (including an element of justification for a given view). Statements for the actual survey were selected in such a way that statements of both types were represented in every group. It should be noted that both typical hate

speech and rationalising statements were evaluated as similarly offensive, hateful and worth prohibiting (see FIGURE 2).

We also selected statements from public figures, using as a main criterion their extremity, i.e. from two statements we selected the one that was seen as more unfair, more representative for hate speech and more worth prohibiting.

As a result, based on the initial survey we prepared a short list of 18 statements (3 statements for every one of the 6 minorities). The list became the core element for the actual survey.

**FIGURE 2.** Average evaluation of statements on every minority selected for the main survey, representing typical and rationalising hate speech.



## Hate speech map – analysis of the hate speech content

In the first stage of the project, we also decided to examine the content of hate speech concerning different groups, using the method of concept mapping. The method helps to explore the content structure measured by qualitative methods (free statements), using quantitative tools, i.e. quantification and statistical analysis.

For the material of the research, we took the statements gathered in the automated search of the Internet (see the chapter: Choice of statements – analysis of the Internet and other media content). 30 statements for every one of the six groups (Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, Romani, African, sexual minorities) were chosen. Then, the statements<sup>2</sup> were sorted by a group of competent judges. The group was made up of six social psychologists (four women and two men), specialising in intergroup relations. The process of sorting consisted of grouping all 180 statements, according to their content, into a freely chosen number of categories, other than the minority groups they were directed to.

The analysis showed 8 relatively consistent categories (see Table below) of thematic topics of the statements which were labelled by us accordingly. Some categories proved to be purely offensive (e.g. 'Disgust') expressions of contempt and disgust towards minorities. Similar purely offensive category is 'Primitive/no civilisation/no intelligence' including statements that dehumanised described minorities and denied them any intellectual qualities. Two other categories, 'Murders/aggression/genocide' and 'Theft/deception/scam' describe negative, criminal and immoral behaviours of minorities, in the context of individual (or family) contacts with their representatives, or historical contacts between Poles and the groups. The category 'History – faults and ingratitude towards Poles' relates mainly to historical or sometimes present contacts between groups and deals with faults towards Poles. The category 'It's their fault/dislike has some reasons' also contains rationalising statements that try to explain negative behaviours or attitudes towards minority groups. The last category 'They dislike us/others also dislike them' contains statements about negative attitudes of the minorities towards Poles and similar attitudes of other groups towards the minorities.

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<sup>2</sup> Judges were presented with statements in their original form.

## Categories of hate speech content and examples of statements from different categories.

CATEGORY	Primitive/no civilisation/no intelligence
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>Black people only recently came down from trees</i></li> <li>2 <i>Russians are primitive and stupid</i></li> </ol>
CATEGORY	It's their fault/dislike has some reasons
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>Jews themselves are responsible for their fate</i></li> <li>2 <i>No entry for Romani people is not because they are Romani people, but because their behaviours were dangerous for other guests, so they were banned from entering someone's private property.</i></li> </ol>
CATEGORY	Theft/deception/scam
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>What do Romani people have to do with theft? A lot. Unfortunately, most people known to me experienced it personally, or some member of their family have fallen victim to such theft.</i></li> <li>2 <i>(Almost) every Russian is cunning, suspicious and duplicitous. What they like the most is to steal, take bribes, drink, show their golden teeth, live in a tank, and live at other people's expense.</i></li> </ol>
CATEGORY	Murders/aggression/genocide
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>And by the way – my family had many contacts with Russians, but it doesn't mean that I should justify their crimes</i></li> <li>2 <i>You suggest that I shouldn't write about Jewish murderers because it's racial hatred, and Gross may write about Polish murderers because he's a Jew, a sacred cow, if we try to say something bad about him, everyone will say we are bad</i></li> </ol>
CATEGORY	History – faults and ingratitude towards Poles
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>Polish anti-Semitism is a reaction to Jewish disdain for Poles and slandering Poles in our own country</i></li> <li>2 <i>So for the majority of Poles, genocide actions from their co-inhabitants, Ukrainians, during the World War II were incomprehensible; they still can't understand it.</i></li> </ol>

CATEGORY	Disgust
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
1	<i>I detest gays and lesbians; they should be burned on a stake; in this case, I am not tolerant and will never be. Amen.</i>
2	<i>I detest poofs – they are degenerate human beings, they should be treated.</i>
CATEGORY	They dislike us/others also dislike them
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
1	<i>Because Jews have a phobia against Poles and they are cheaters</i>
2	<i>Gypsies are a strong and tight group. They benefit from it (support, identity, community spirit), but also lose (they are not respected in any place in Europe for the reasons given in the former posts).</i>
CATEGORY	Neutral
	EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS <sup>a</sup>
1	<i>Fortunately, average Ukrainians are normal, they are not nationalists.</i>
2	<i>Gays insult nobody at their parades.</i>

a) ORIGINAL PHRASING OF THE STATEMENTS WAS GIVEN.

The distribution of content categories (see FIGURE 3) proved to be highly correlated with stereotypes concerning groups affected by hate speech:

The statements directed against Jewish minorities are usually rationalising and contain elements of derivative prejudices – try to shift the responsibility for the antipathy on Jews themselves. Another category is ‘rationalisations’ related to history and Jewish faults towards Poles. In addition, we can find several statements of the category concerning dislike and aggression.

Hate speech against African/black people contains exclusively dehumanising phrases and phrases describing their low intelligence.

In relation to LGBT persons, most common are statements expressing disgust; other statements are either neutral or refer to dislike from other groups.

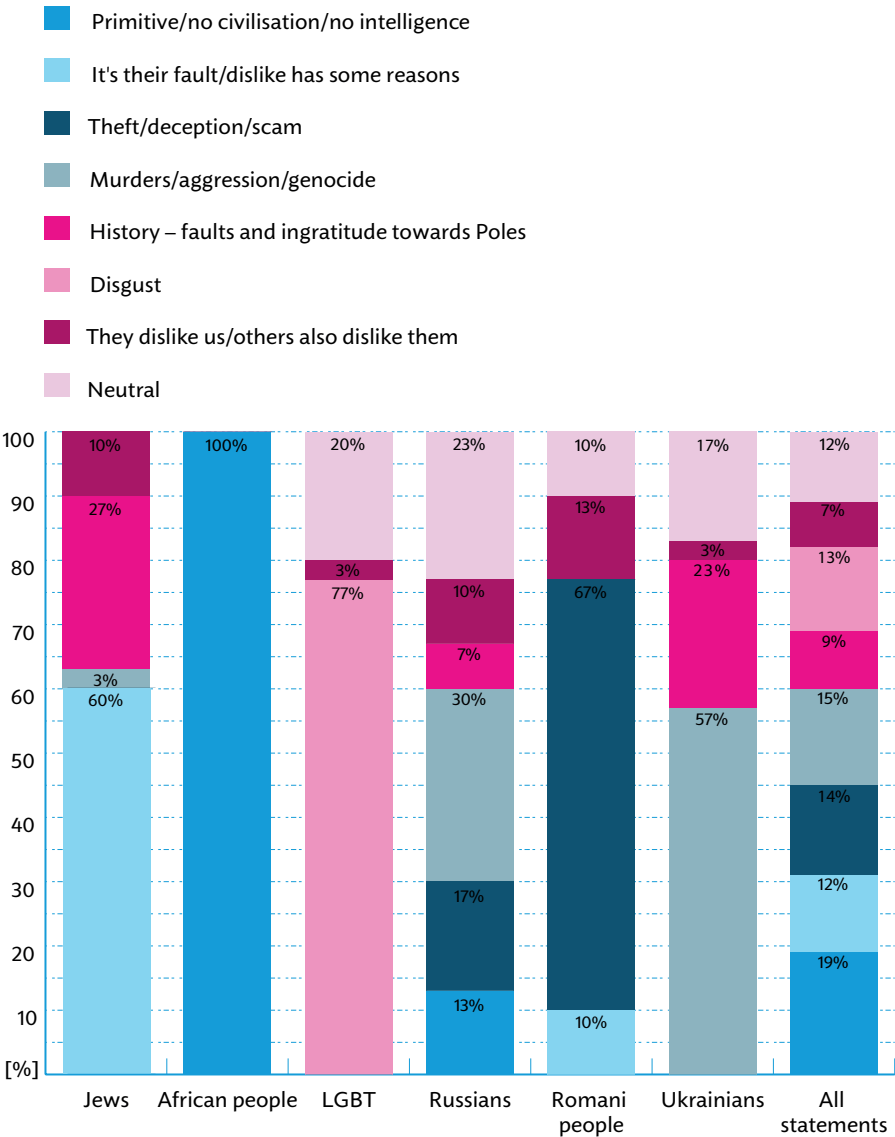
Hate speech towards Russians is the most diverse one. Statements about aggression and murders dominate, but they constitute only 30 percent of all statements. Other categories are the ones concerning their lack of honesty, civilisation, and perceived dislike from and of the minority. Only few statements referred to historical faults. There are also relatively many neutral statements about Russians.



Hate speech towards Romani people focuses mainly on stereotypes related to theft and dishonesty. Some statements also describe antipathy towards Romani people from other groups and try to rationalise the antipathy towards the group.

Statements about Ukrainians fall mainly into the category related to aggression and murders. The other category, as in the case of Jews, are statements on historical issues.

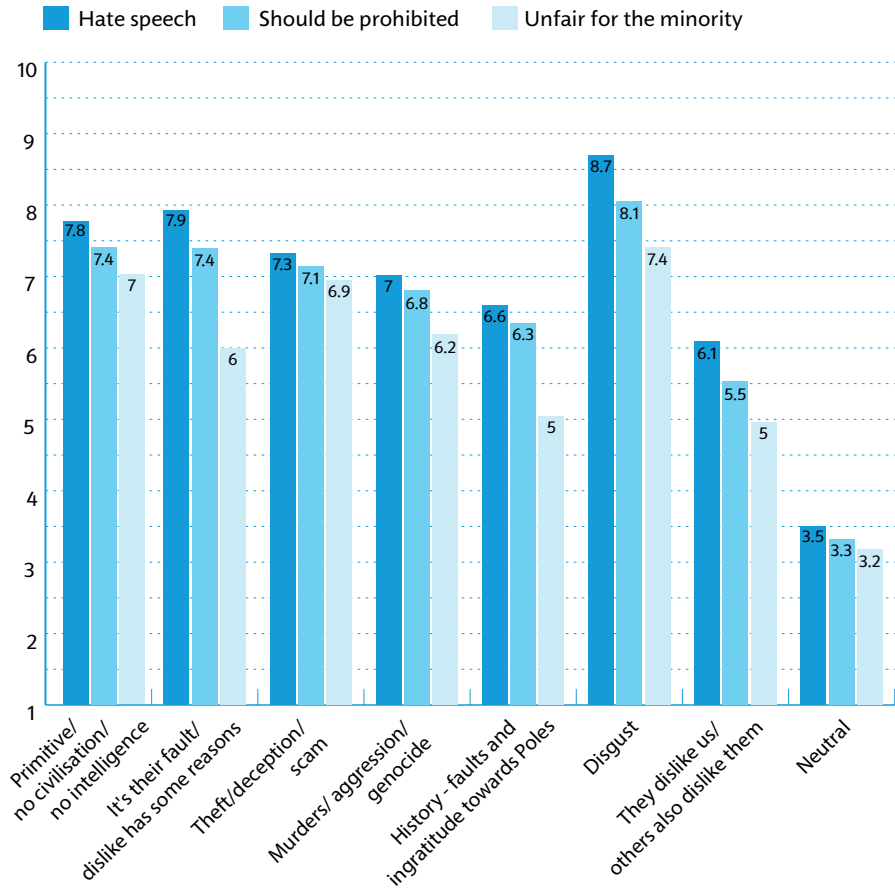
**FIGURE 3.** Percentages for statements concerning particular groups falling under different content categories.



The last analytical stage was aimed at correlating the categories to evaluations of particular statements from the survey on reactions of the minorities themselves. Representatives of the minorities affected by hate speech evaluated statements in three aspects: 1) Is the statement unfair to the minority it concerns; 2) Is the statement a hate speech; 3) Should such statements be prohibited? All three aspects of the evaluation were highly correlated.

On the scale for evaluating whether given statements constitute hate speech, the highest scores were given to statements from categories 'Disgust', 'Primitive' and 'It's their fault'. Statements from categories 'Murders' and 'Theft' were seen as slightly less hateful. Less hateful still, were seen the categories related to history and antipathy from other groups. Statements from the neutral category were given distinctly lower evaluations than all other categories (FIGURE 4). Similar structure of answers can be seen in the case of opinions on prohibition of such statements. But in the case of evaluating how unfair the statements are, a difference can be detected – the categories 'It's their fault' and 'History' are seen as relatively less unfair.

FIGURE 4. Average evaluations from minorities for statements of different categories.



# Nationwide survey

## Method

The actual survey was conducted in March and April 2014 by the Public Opinion Research Centre on two random samples (simple draw from PESEL databases): nationwide sample ( $N = 1007$ ) of adults more than 18 years old, and youth sample ( $N = 653$ ) of persons aged between 16 and 18 years. In both cases, the survey was conducted using the technique of personal questionnaire interviews. In order to improve the quality of results, in both samples weights were used (post-stratification weights) calculated for age, gender, place of residence, education, county and professional activity.

For both groups an almost identical questionnaire was used. The whole interview consisted of about 200 various questions.

## Structure of the questionnaire:

### Main part

- The list of hate speech examples concerning 6 minorities (respondents were asked to indicate the level of their acceptance for the statements).
- Several scales – potential predictors for acceptance for hate speech (described below).

Social and demographic questions.

## Predictors for acceptance of hate speech

### SDO – Social Domination Orientation (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999)

The scale measures personal belief that society needs a structure based on deeply rooted hierarchy of social groups. The respondents were asked to evaluate five statements using a scale from 1 – *I definitely disagree* to 5 – *I definitely agree*; ( $\alpha = 0.65$ ,  $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). The table below presents the statements to be evaluated.

---

#### SOCIAL DOMINATION ORIENTATION

1. Probably it is good that some groups are at the top and others are at the bottom.
  2. Less important groups should know their place.
  3. We should do everything to equalise different groups (reverse coded).
-

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4. We should enhance social equality. (*reversed question*)

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5. Better groups should dominate lesser groups.

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### RWA – Right Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1998)

The scale measures inclination to submit to power and authority figures, and predisposition to act in line with accepted traditions (conventionalism). The respondents were asked to evaluate 6 questions using a scale from 1 – *I definitely disagree* to 5 – *I definitely agree*; ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ,  $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). The table below presents the statements to be evaluated.

---

#### RIGHT WING AUTHORITARIANISM

1. What our country really needs is a good dose of law and order rather than promoting civil rights and freedoms.

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2. Turning our back to tradition will some day prove to be fatal.

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3. Submission to and respect for authority figures are the most important values that should be taught to children.

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4. What our country really needs is a strong and determined leader who will defeat the evil and will show us the right way.

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5. In the long run, decency and respect for law are better for us than continuous undermining of the principles our community is based on.

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### Verbal aggression (Buss and Perry, 1992)

The scale measures the inclination to aggressive verbal behaviours, including the acceptance of verbal aggression in solving important problems and conflicts. The respondents were asked to evaluate 5 statements using a scale from 1 – *I definitely disagree* to 5 – *I definitely agree*; ( $\alpha = 0.58$ ,  $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). The table below presents the statements to be evaluated.

---

#### VERBAL AGGRESSION

1. If I disagree with my friends, I tell it to them openly.

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2. When other people disagree with me, I can't help arguing with them.

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3. When people make me angry, I tell them what I think about them.

---

4. I often disagree with other people.

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5. My friends tell me that I am a bit quarrelsome.

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## Support for censoring extreme messages

The attitude towards prohibiting hate speech directed at a minority can be a sign of prejudices. But it can also be that it reflects general views on freedom of speech and censorship. To verify which alternative is true, in our survey we asked questions concerning censoring extreme messages. The scale used by us was based on the questionnaire prepared by Hense and Wright (1992), originally containing 20 statements. For our survey we selected 5 statements (based on the analysis of factor loadings and adequacy in relation to the rest of the questionnaire). In constructing the indicator we used only 3 statements ( $\alpha = 0.46$ ,  $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) – the remaining two were discarded in view of their very low correlation with the other statements. The respondents were asked to evaluate every statement using a scale from 1 – *I definitely disagree* to 5 – *I definitely agree*. The table below presents the statements to be evaluated.

---

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CENSORSHIP
1. Everyone should have the right to express his or her opinions, no matter how unpopular or controversial they are. ( <i>reversed question</i> )
*2. Manifestations of extremist political groups should be legally forbidden.
*3. Disseminating materials (books, articles etc.) offensive for other people should be forbidden.
*4. Persons having extremist views should not be allowed to present them at the university.
5. Right to express our thoughts and freedom of speech are more important than protecting someone's feelings. ( <i>reversed question</i> )

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\* ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE COMPLEX INDICATOR

# Characteristics of hate speech against particular groups

## The questionnaire

The questions presented in the table below were asked for every minority and for all statements concerning every minority.

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### QUESTIONS CONCERNING STATEMENTS

Do you think that the statement is offensive for the minority [name of the minority]?

*Answer scale (1-7) from 1 – Definitely offensive statement to 7 – Definitely inoffensive statement.*

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Do you think that such statements should be allowed or prohibited?

*Scale of answers (1-7): from 1 – Definitely allowed to 7 – Definitely prohibited.*

---

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

How often do you encounter similar statements?

*Scale of answers (1-7) from 1 – Never to 7 – Very often.*

---

Where do you encounter similar statements?

1. TV; 2. Radio; 3. Papers; 4. Internet; 5. Manifestation/protest/rally (from participants); 6. Manifestation/protest/rally (from speakers); 7. In conversations with friends (e.g. at work, at school); 8. In other situations.

---

## Questions about hate speech concerning Jews

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning Jews.

---

### STATEMENTS

1. As far as sheenies and hostility towards them are concerned, it is only a real assessment of the actions of those louses and Davidian fascists.

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2. Jews must realise that they themselves made Poles hate them because of their treachery and their crimes. And today, they try to hide their crimes and pass the buck.

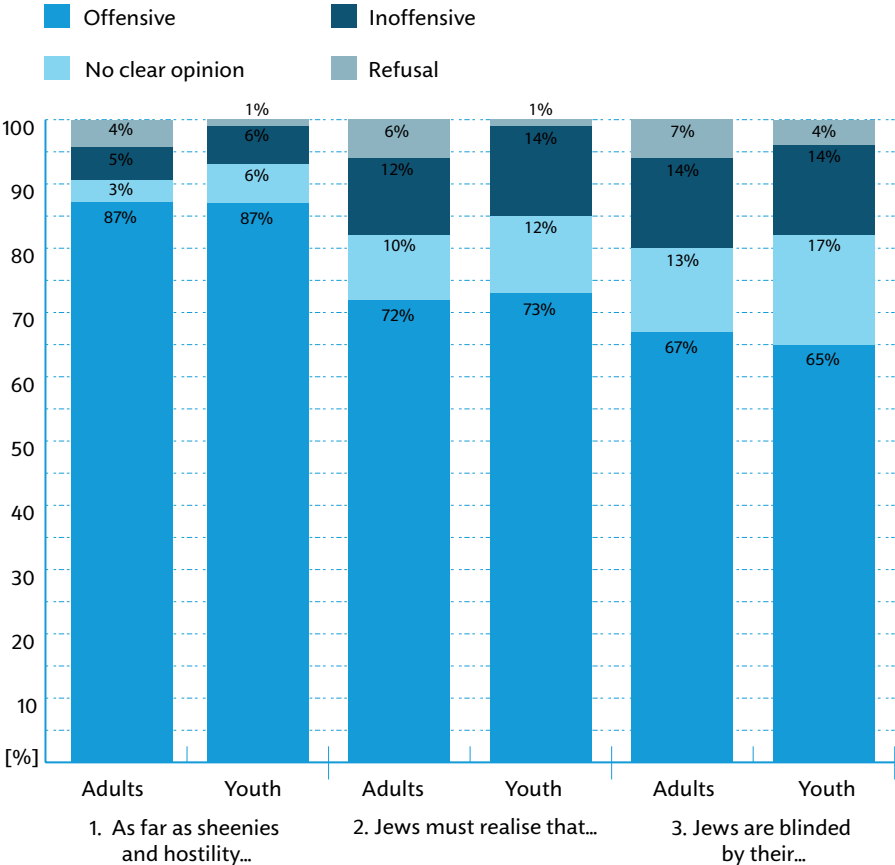
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3. Jews are blinded by their hatred and desire for revenge. That is the main reason why they joined the security apparatus of Bolsheviks, then Soviets in the borderlands, and finally secret political police after the war.

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# Perceived offensiveness of and acceptance of hate speech concerning Jews

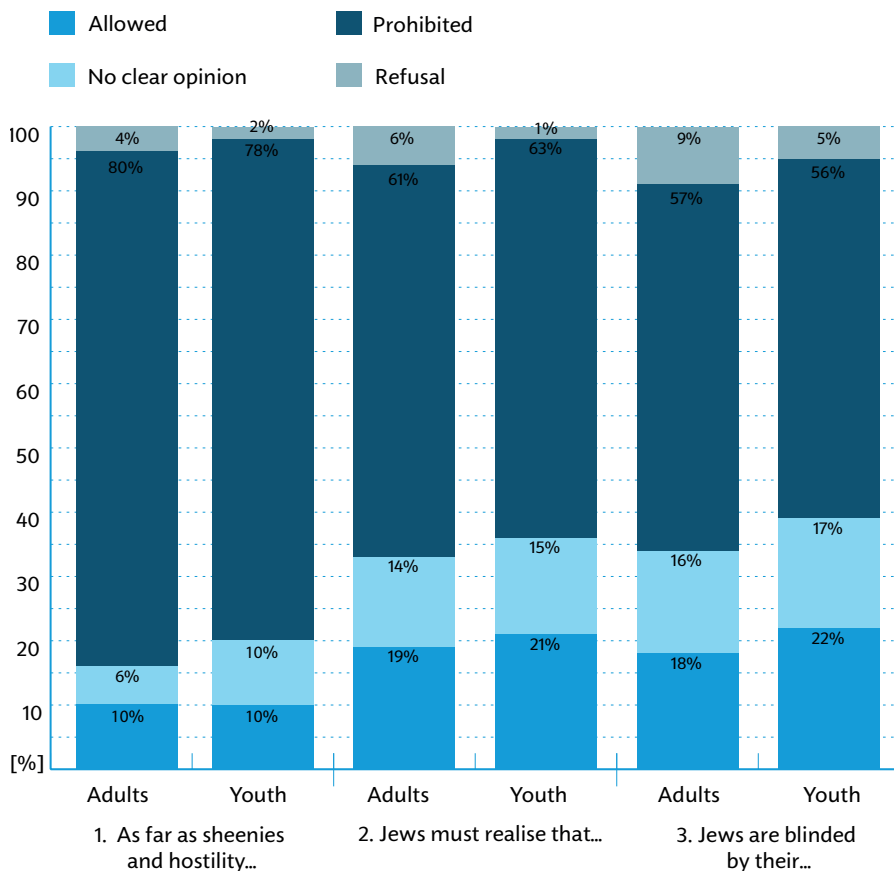
**FIGURE 5.** Distribution of answers to questions about offensiveness of presented statements in adult and youth groups (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statement were summed up in two categories).



General answers from respondents show that, regardless of the form of the statements and media where they are presented, the great majority of them see the presented statements on Jewish minority as offensive (see FIGURE 5). The results show that opinions in both samples (adults and youth) are similar. Significant differences can be noted in perceptions of different types of statements in both groups. Statements containing elements of argumentation are seen as relatively less offensive in both groups. The least offence (though still about 65 percent of respondents in both groups see it as offensive) is taken from the statement from the media, though it is worth noting that it contains an element of argumentation and refers to historical relations between national groups. In the case of purely offensive statements, almost 80 percent of adults and youth opt for some kind of prohibition for such statements (see FIGURE 6).

In the case of statements containing an element of argumentation, 60 percent of respondents opt for their prohibition, and the percentage is slightly lower for the media statement.

**FIGURE 6.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether presented statements should be allowed or prohibited in public sphere.



## Prevalence and places of contact with hate speech concerning Jews

Over 36 percent of adults declared that they never encountered similar statements, while among youth, only 26 percent declared that they never encountered such statements. It is worth noting that similar percentages of both youth and adults (12 and 9 percent respectively) say that they encounter such statements commonly or very commonly (see FIGURE 7).

In the group of young people, the Internet dominates – it is there where almost 60 percent of youth encounter contents offensive for Jews (see FIGURE 8). Among adults, only 30 percent of respondents indicate the Internet. Young people (40 percent) more often than adults (30 percent) hear such statements



in private conversations. The third source of statements offensive for Jews is TV, but mainly for adults. Adults much more commonly encounter such messages in traditional media.

**FIGURE 7.** Declared prevalence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).

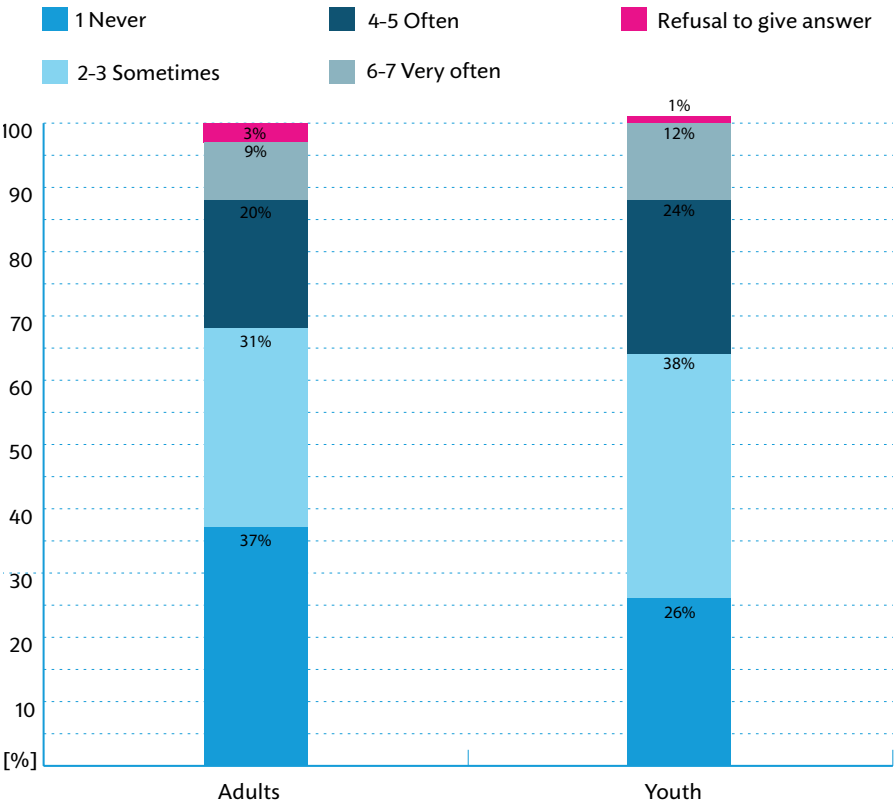
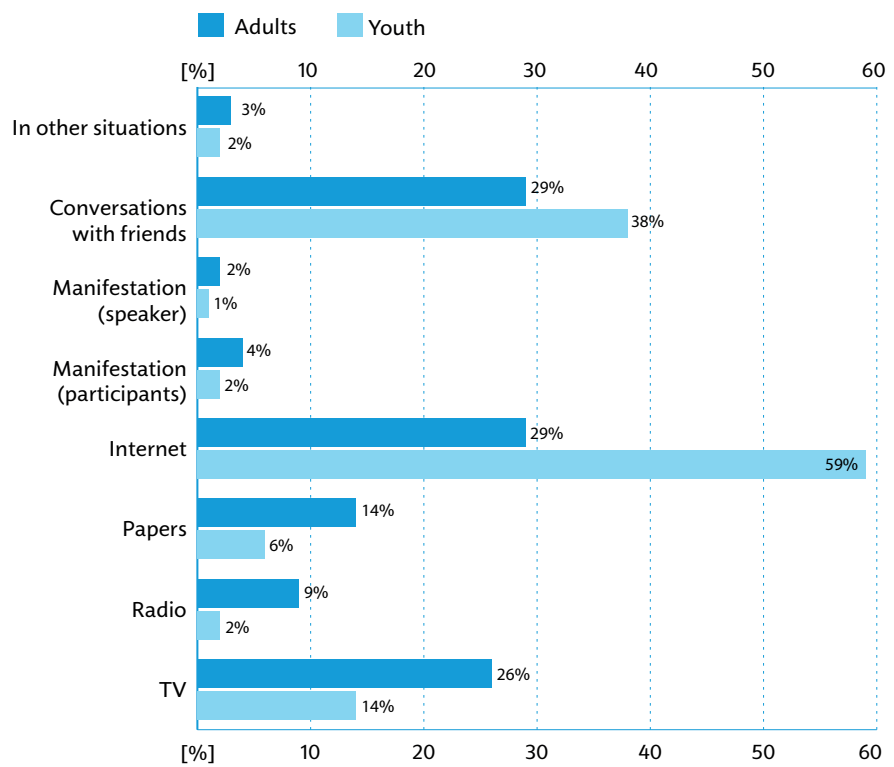


FIGURE 8. Places where adults and youth encounter anti-Jewish statements.



## Questions about hate speech concerning Ukrainians

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning Ukrainians.

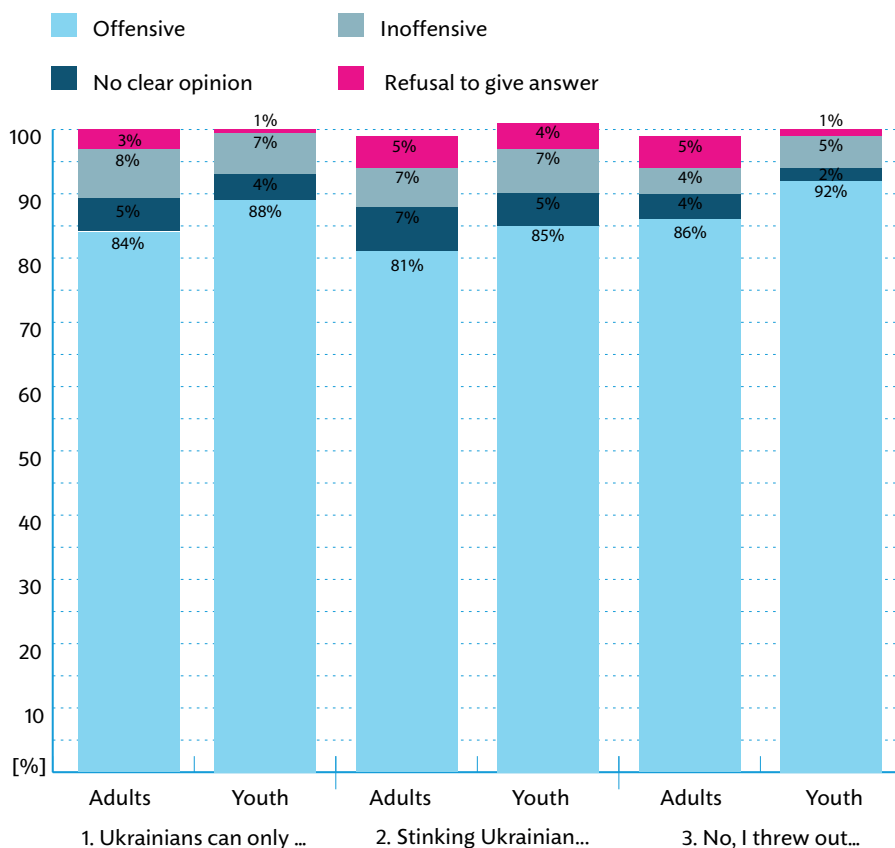
STATEMENTS
1. Ukrainians can only murder defenceless women and children.
2. Stinking Ukrainian, probably a heir of the Trizub gang!!
3. No, I threw out my Ukrainian woman. F: Good idea... I haven't thought about it... You know what? I won't pay her today. W: You know what, I'll let mine come back, take the money from her, and throw her out again. F: I tell you, if mine was a little bit prettier, I would even rape her. W: I don't know how mine looks, because she's on her knees all the time.

## Perceived offensiveness of and acceptance of hate speech concerning Ukrainians

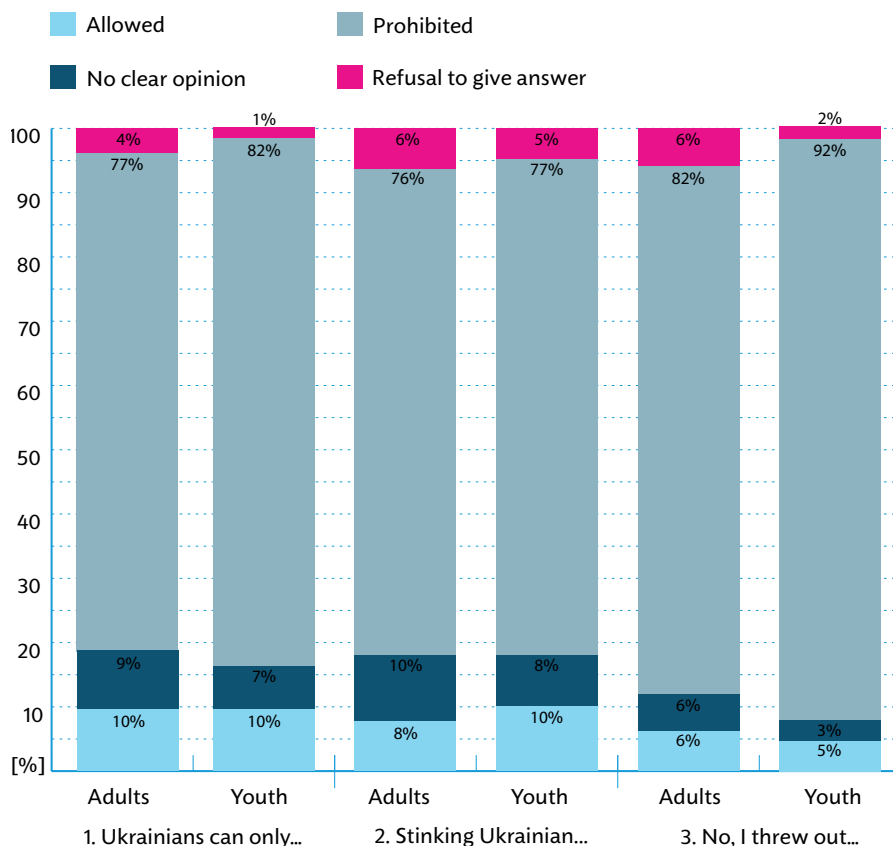
As FIGURE 9 shows, all three statements are seen as definitely offensive for a Ukrainian minority by the great majority of Poles. The percentages for all three statements are similar, between 81 and 92 percent.

The great majority of Poles think that the statements should be prohibited (FIGURE 10). But it is worth noting that the percentage of Poles willing to prohibit statements concerning historical matters is lower than in the case of the statement about Ukrainian women employed by Poles to clean their apartments (in spite of the fact that the survey showed that they were seen as equally offensive). Hate speech presenting one's nation as a victim can increase acceptance for verbal aggression against the minority seen as the perpetrator of the crimes.

**FIGURE 9.** Distribution of answers to the question about offensiveness of presented statements among adults and youth (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statements were summed up in two categories).



**FIGURE 10.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether public expression of presented statements should be allowed or prohibited (in the graph, different answers for allowing or prohibiting the statements were summed up in two categories).



## Prevalence and places of contact with hate speech concerning Ukrainians

Compared with the whole population, young people slightly more often declare that they encounter hateful statements concerning the Ukrainian minority (see FIGURE 11). Both in the youth group and in the whole population, percentages of people declaring that they have never encountered hateful statements concerning the Ukrainian minority is the highest among all researched minorities (48 percent of youth and 42 percent of general population).

In the general population, the Internet (26 percent), TV (20 percent), and conversations with friends (19 percent) were most commonly indicated as the places of contact with hate speech towards Ukrainians. Manifestations were the least common answer (see FIGURE 12). Among young people, the structure of answers was similar: the Internet (46 percent), conversations with friends (21 percent) and TV (12 percent). Like in the case of statements concerning all

other minorities, it is worth noting that young people much more commonly than adults indicate the Internet as a place where they encounter hate speech.

**FIGURE 11.** Declared incidence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).

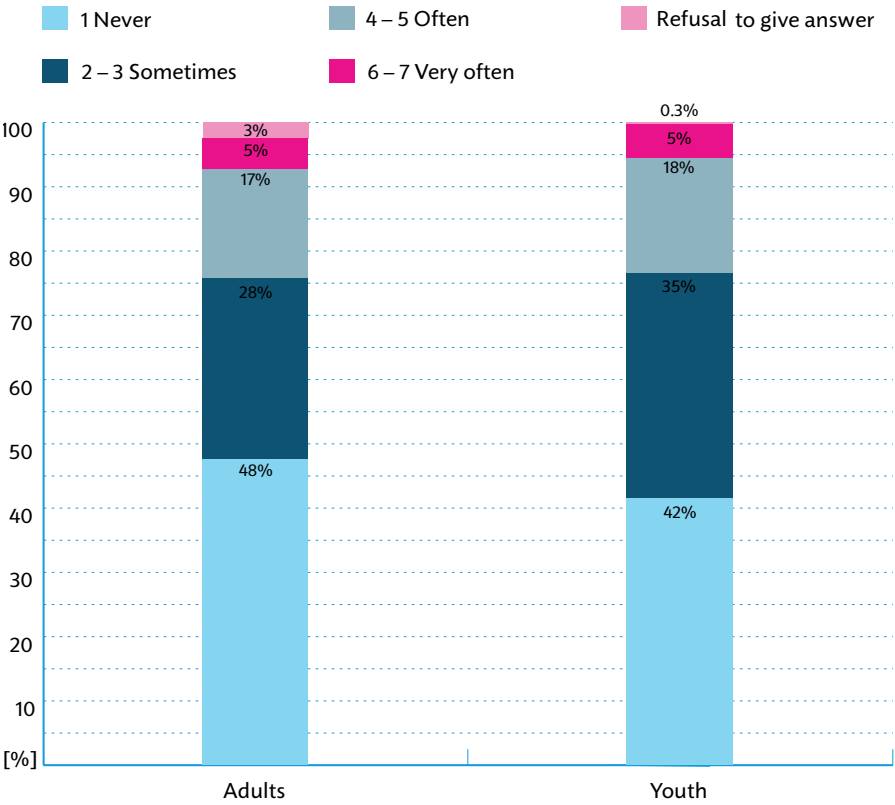
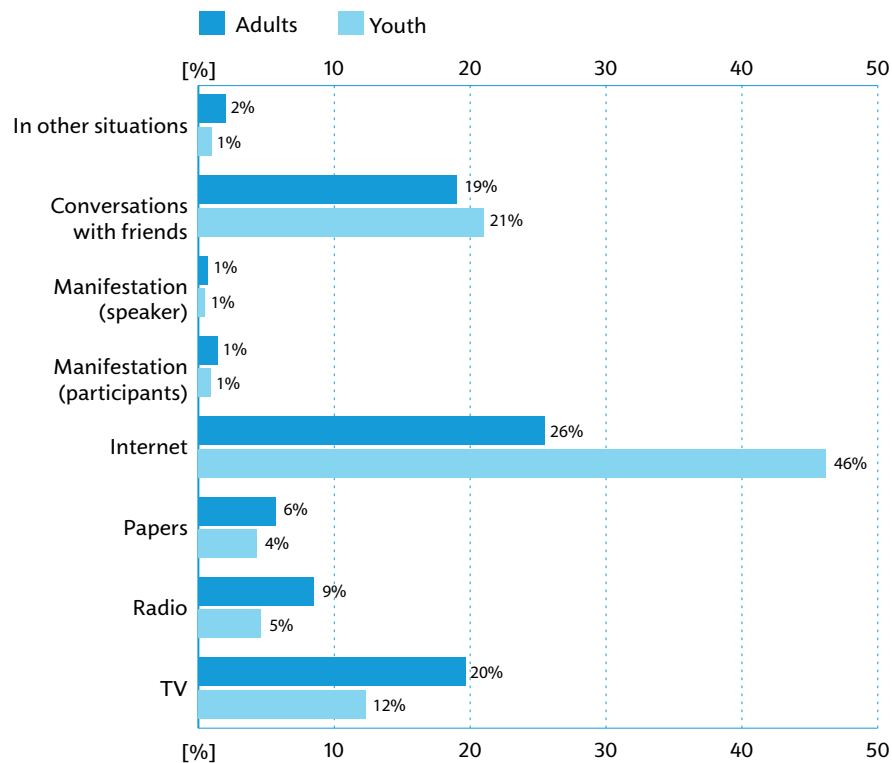


FIGURE 12. Places where adults and youth encounter anti-Ukrainian statements.



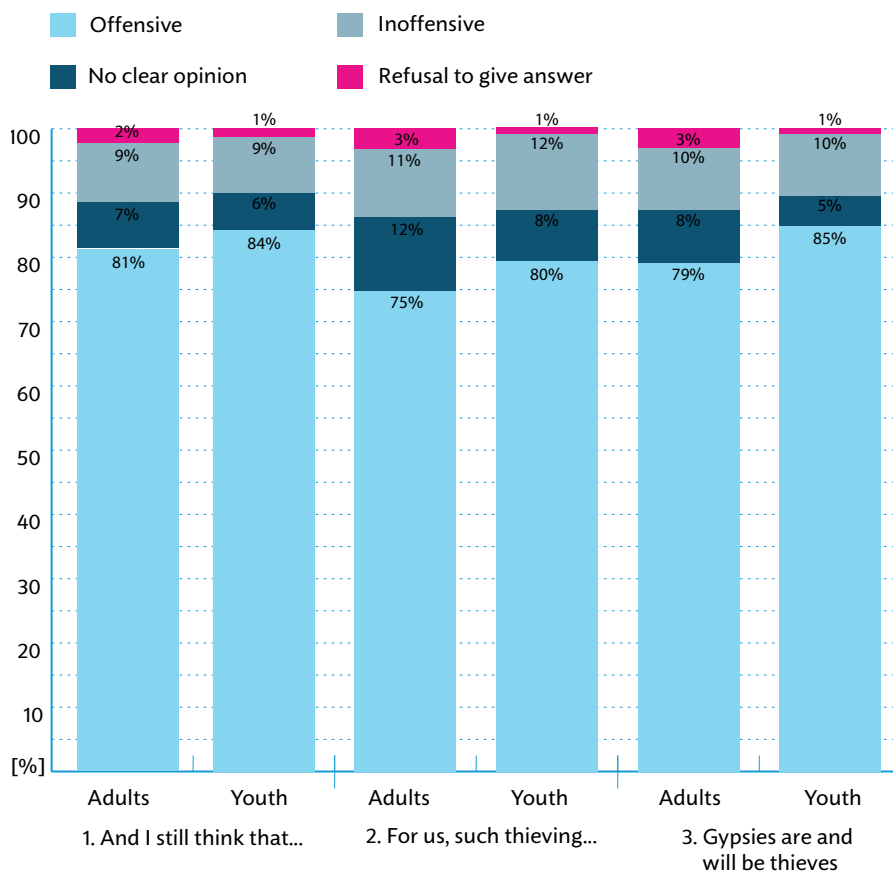
## Questions about hate speech concerning Romani people

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning Romani people.

STATEMENTS
1. And I still think that Gypsies are thieves and slobs, they are mafia and organised crime people when stealing and begging are concerned.
2. For us, such thieving is against the rules, and for Gypsies it is the norm.
3. Gypsies are and always will be thieves.

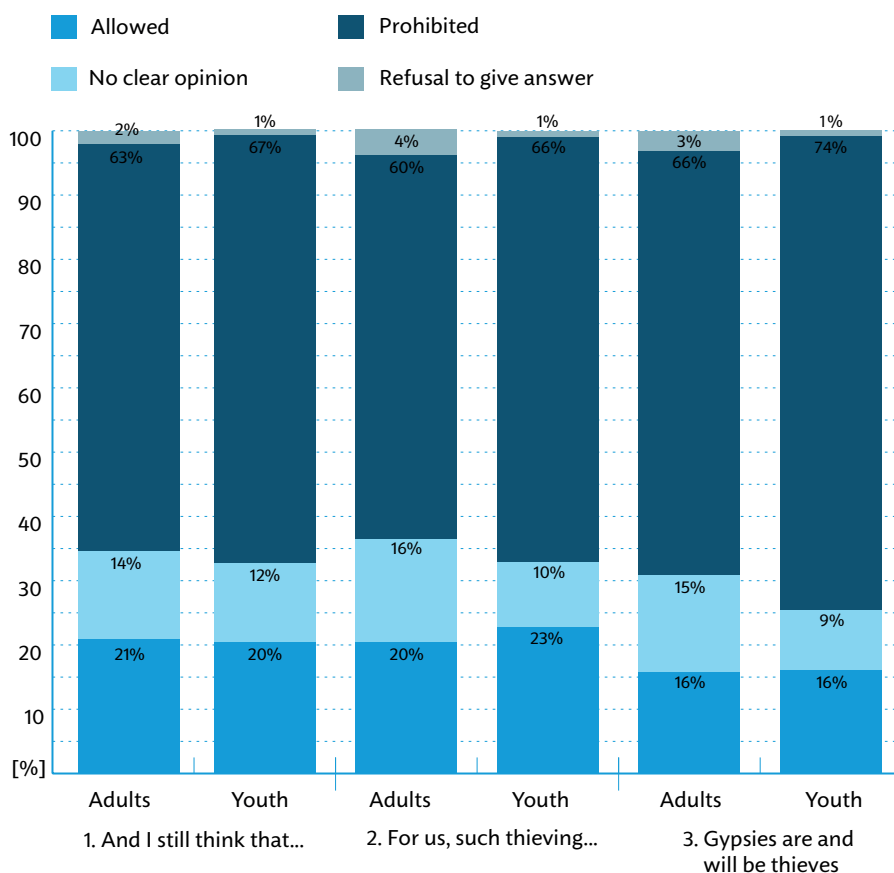
Figures 13 and 14 present a summary of results of the evaluation of offensiveness and willingness to prohibit public expression of hateful statements concerning Romani minority. Like in the case of Jewish and Ukrainian minorities, the offensiveness and the willingness to prohibit were slightly more commonly indicated by youth than by adults. The rationalising statement was seen as slightly less offensive and was slightly less commonly indicated as worth prohibiting.

**FIGURE 13.** Distribution of answers to the question about offensiveness of presented statements among adults and youth (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statements were summed up in two categories).



The great majority of Poles see the presented statements as offensive (the result for inoffensiveness is around 10 percent), but the percentage of Poles willing to prohibit such statements is relatively low (about 20 percent of Poles even think that such statements should be allowed, and an additional 9-16 percent of them have no definite opinion on the matter). In other words, the fact that a statement is offensive for Romani minority (to a great extent) does not mean that it should be prohibited. It should be noted that all presented statements referred to the widespread stereotype of Romani people (Gypsies) as thieves. The structure of the results suggests that a part of the population (25-36 percent) see no reason for prohibiting statements that can be seen by them as hurtful, but at the same time true.

**FIGURE 14.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether public expression of presented statements should be allowed or prohibited (in the graph, different answers for allowing or prohibiting the statements were summed up in two categories).



## Incidence and places of contact with hate speech concerning Romani people

Only a small percentage of Poles have never encountered hate speech against Romani people (see FIGURE 15). More common contact was declared by young people (at least occasional contact with such hate speech was declared by 85 percent of youth and by 74 percent of general population).

Both in the general population and among young people, the most common sources of contact with hate speech are the Internet and friends (see FIGURE 16). Again, the Internet is more often indicated by youth (66 percent) than by adults (27 percent). But it is worth noting that as much as 60 percent of young people indicated friends as a source of hate speech concerning Romani people (higher percentage was noted only in the case sexual minorities). While common contact with hateful statements on the Internet can result from the sense of anonymity and impunity on the web, the high incidence of such



statements in conversations with friends can indicate an absence of relevant correctness norm: to say that Gypsies are thieves is not seen by young people as something tactless or inappropriate.

**FIGURE 15.** Declared incidence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).

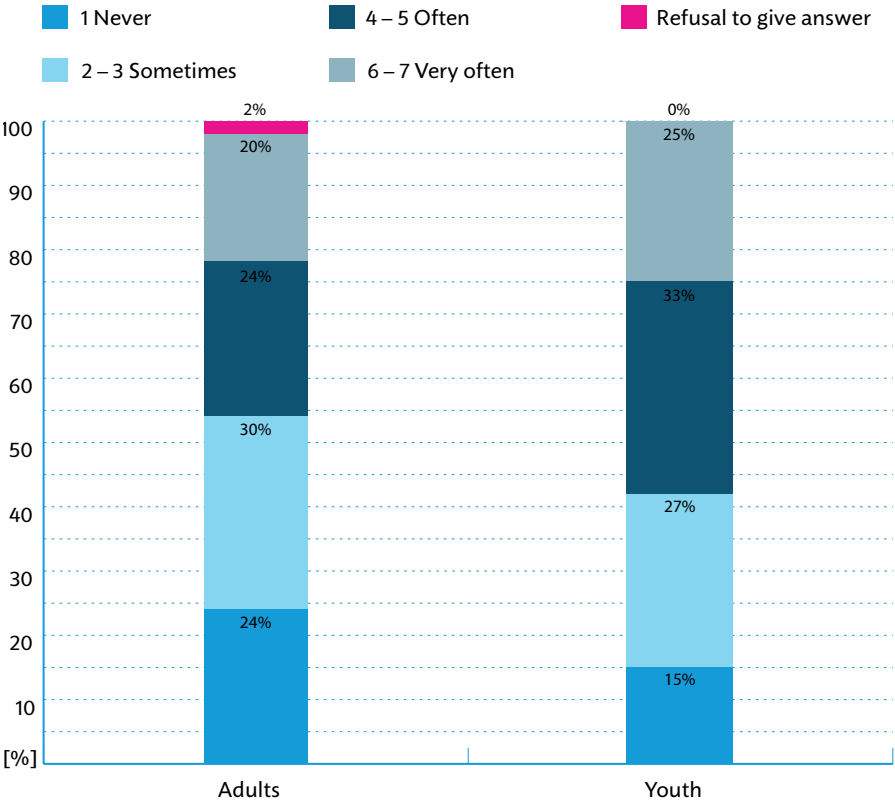
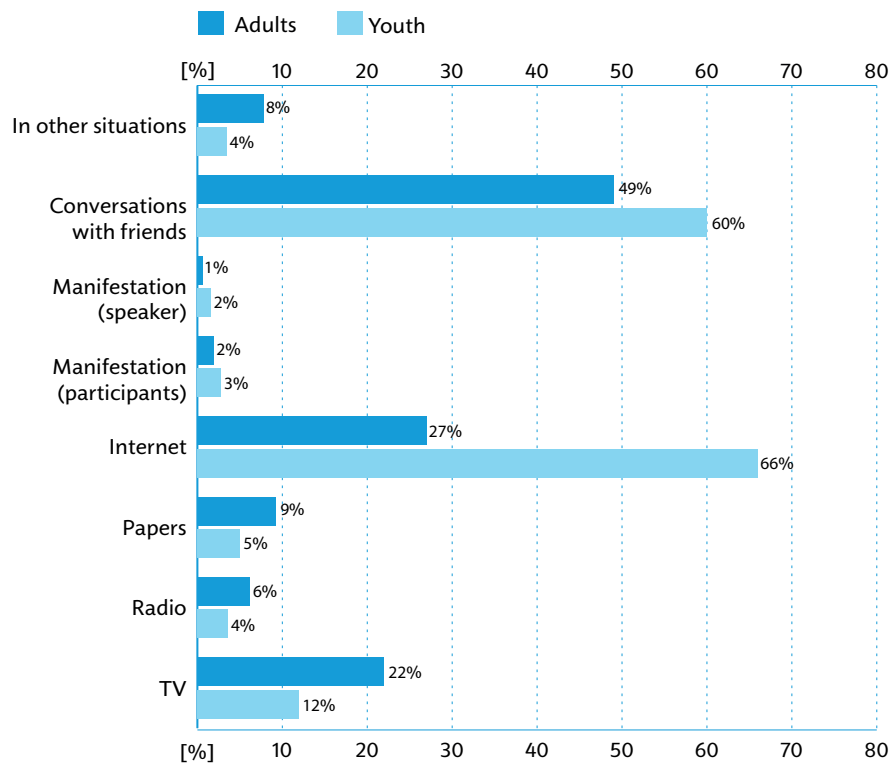


FIGURE 16. Places where adults and youth encounter anti-Romani statements.



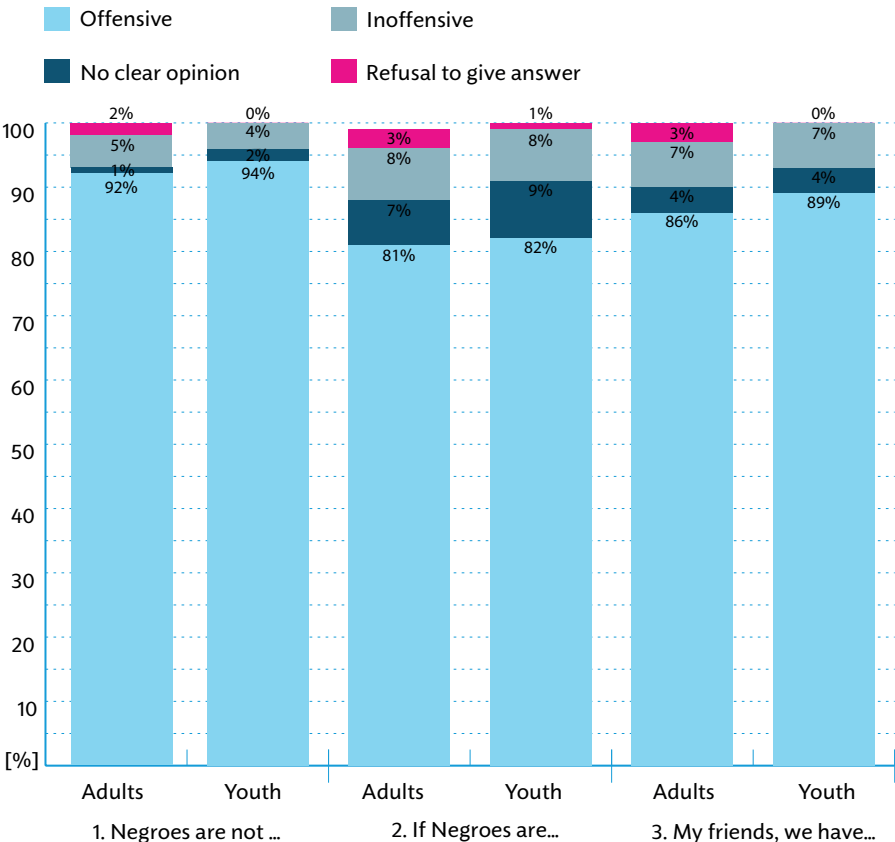
## Questions about hate speech concerning black people

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning black people.

STATEMENTS
1. Negroes are not humans but monkeys.
2. If Negroes are equal to us, then why in thousands of years they haven't invented anything except tam-tams.
3. My friends, we have a Negro. (...) Come here, brother! He hasn't washed himself, you see!

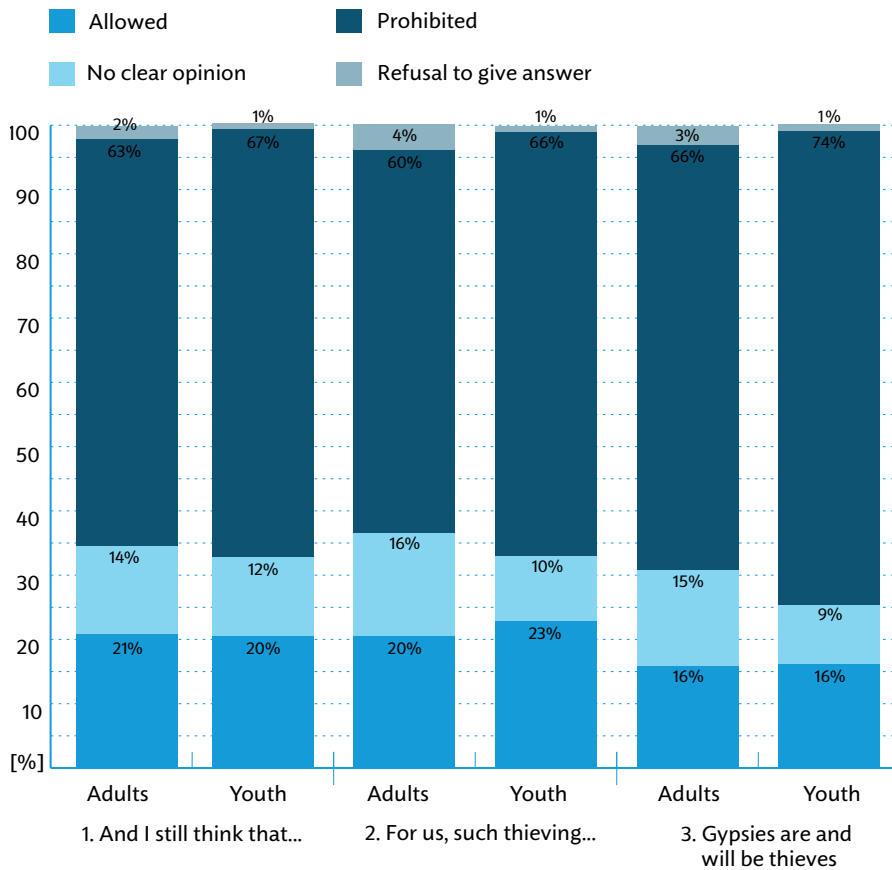
# Perceived offensiveness of and acceptance of hate speech concerning black people

**FIGURE 17.** Distribution of answers to the question about offensiveness of presented statements among adults and youth (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statements were summed up in two categories).



The great majority of respondents (both young people and adults) opted for prohibiting the first, most offensive statement (see Figures 17 and 18). The third statement, more rationalising than vulgar, should be prohibited according to 81 percent of adults and 85 percent of youth. Over 70 percent of respondents declared that the second, ironic and rationalising statement should be prohibited.

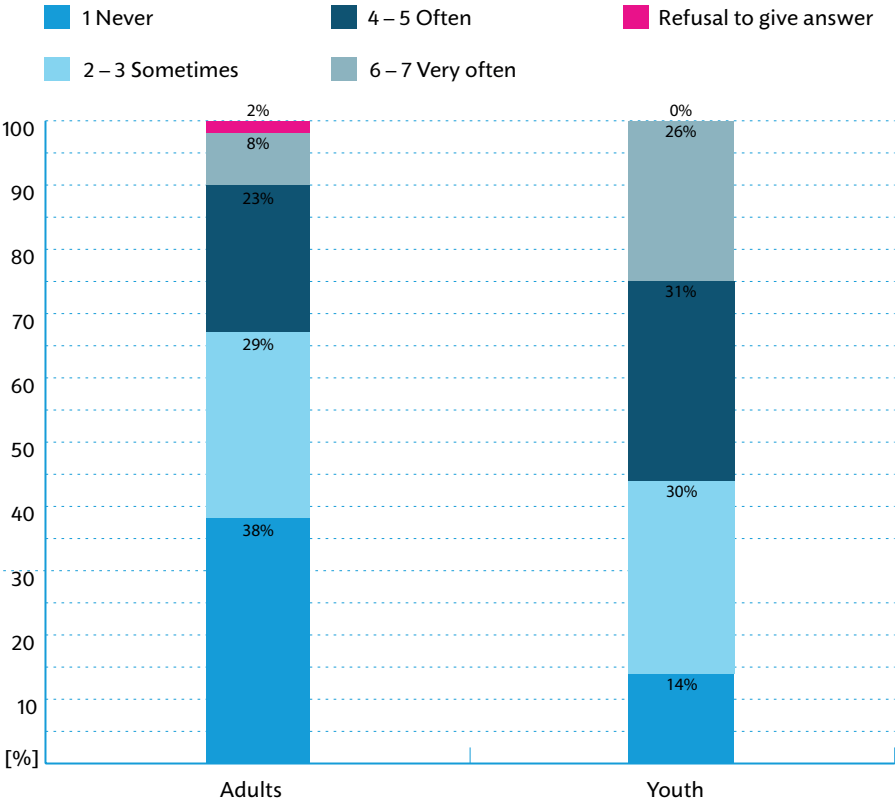
**FIGURE 18.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether public expression of presented statements should be allowed or prohibited (in the graph, different answers for allowing or prohibiting the statements were summed up in two categories).



## Incidence and places of contact with hate speech concerning black people

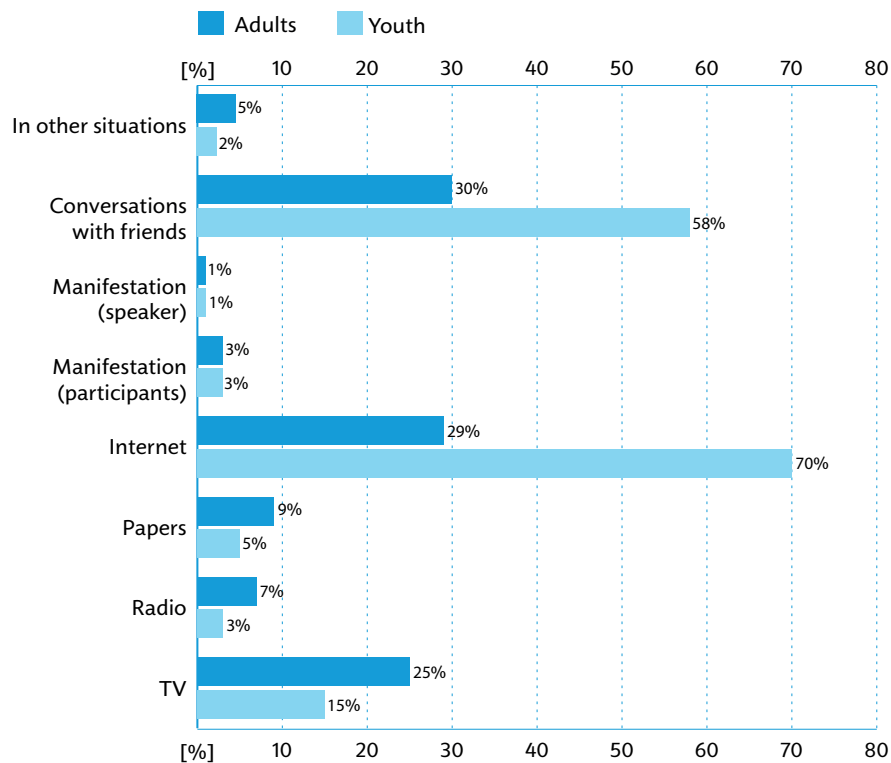
About 38 percent of adults and 14 percent of youth said that they had never encountered such statements (see FIGURE 19). Over 50 percent of young people and 30 percent of adults declared common or very common contact with such statements.

**FIGURE 19.** Declared incidence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).



The figure below (FIGURE 20) presents the incidence of contact with such statements in mass media and in everyday interactions. Like in the case of hate speech concerning other groups, young people most commonly encounter racist hate speech on the Internet (70 percent). Such speech is also often heard by young people in conversations with friends (58 percent) and on TV (15 percent). Among adults, the situation is similar, but in general, they declare less common contacts with hate speech from any of the three sources.

FIGURE 20. Places where adults and youth encounter racist statements.



## Questions about hate speech concerning sexual minorities

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning sexual minorities.

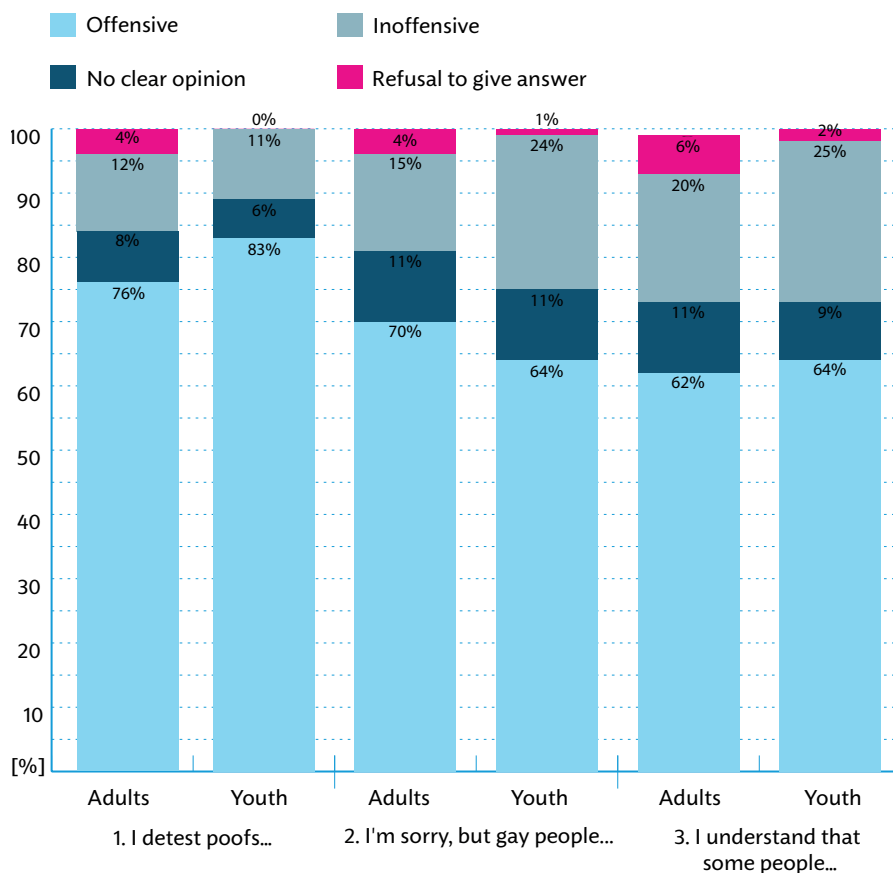
### STATEMENTS

1. I detest poofs – they are degenerated human beings, they should be treated.
2. I'm sorry, but gay people – this part of the statement makes no sense – make me feel disgusted...
3. I understand that some people can have homosexual inclinations, this is a kind of handicap, weakness [...] But poofs-activists who want privileges for homosexual relationships and child adoption should be fought...

## Perceived offensiveness of and acceptance of hate speech concerning sexual minorities

The figures below (Figures 21 and 22) show that, regardless of their form and sources, the presented statements are seen as offensive by the majority of respondents.

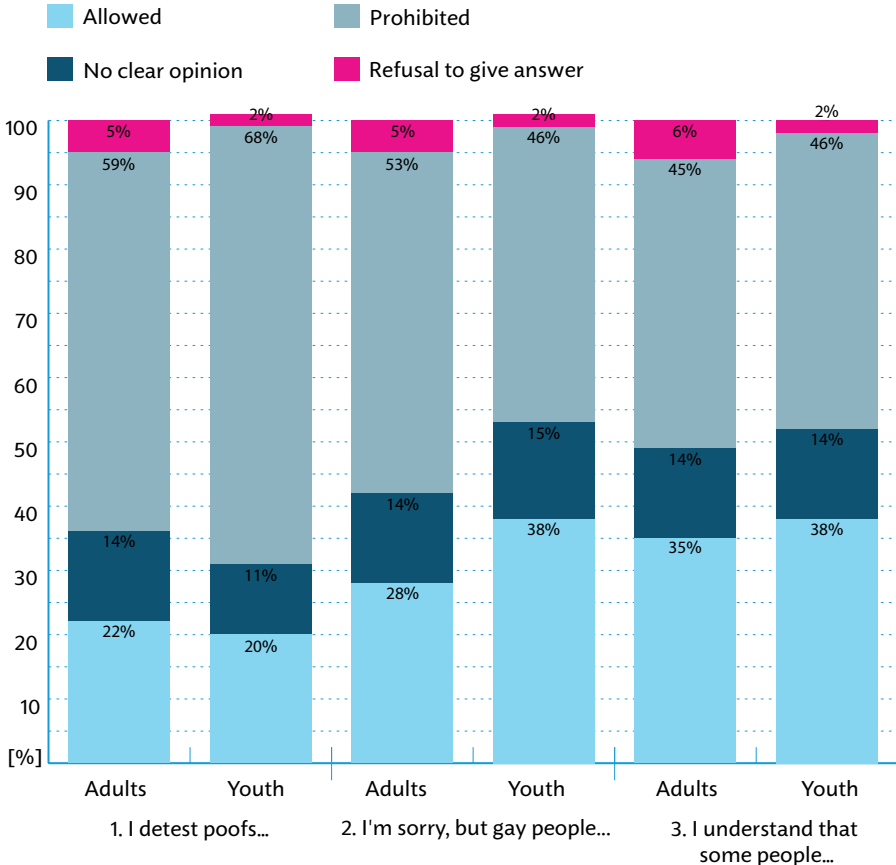
**FIGURE 21.** Distribution of answers to the question about offensiveness of presented statements among adults and youth (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statements were summed up in two categories).



The first statement, most characteristic for traditional hate speech, was seen as the most offensive by both groups of respondents. In addition, young people more commonly (83 percent) saw it as offensive than adults (76 percent). The second statement, containing an apparent rationalising element, was slightly more commonly seen as offensive by adults (70 percent) than by youth (64 percent). Almost one fourth of young respondents described it as inoffensive. The third statement, definitely the most rationalising one, was similarly evaluated by youth. Also adults saw it as much less offensive than the other statements. Thus, the results show that traditional kind of hate speech is seen as more offensive, in particular by young people.

Distribution of answers concerning allowing or prohibiting of the presented statements shows similar structure, though both youth and adults were less willing to prohibit hateful statements than to describe them as offensive. General distribution of answers is similar to evaluations of offensiveness of the statements.

**FIGURE 22.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether public expression of presented statements should be allowed or prohibited (in the graph, different answers for allowing or prohibiting the statements were summed up in two categories).



### Incidence and places of contact with hate speech concerning sexual minorities

The great majority of respondents have had contact with hate speech against sexual minorities, and over 40 percent of them have encountered it commonly or very commonly (see FIGURE 23).



FIGURE 23. Declared incidence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).

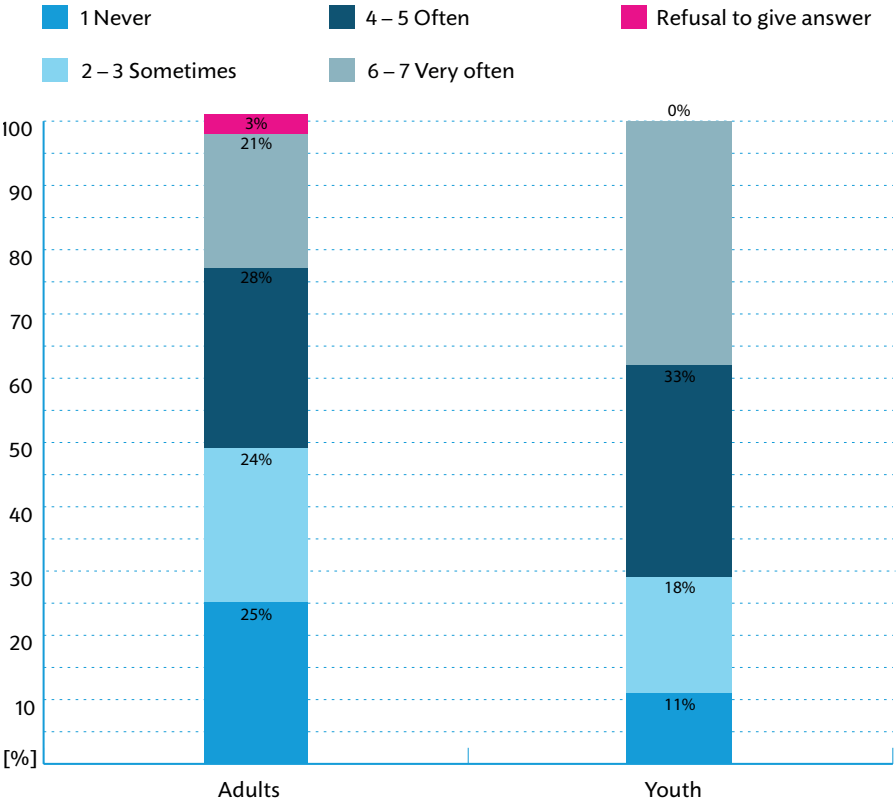
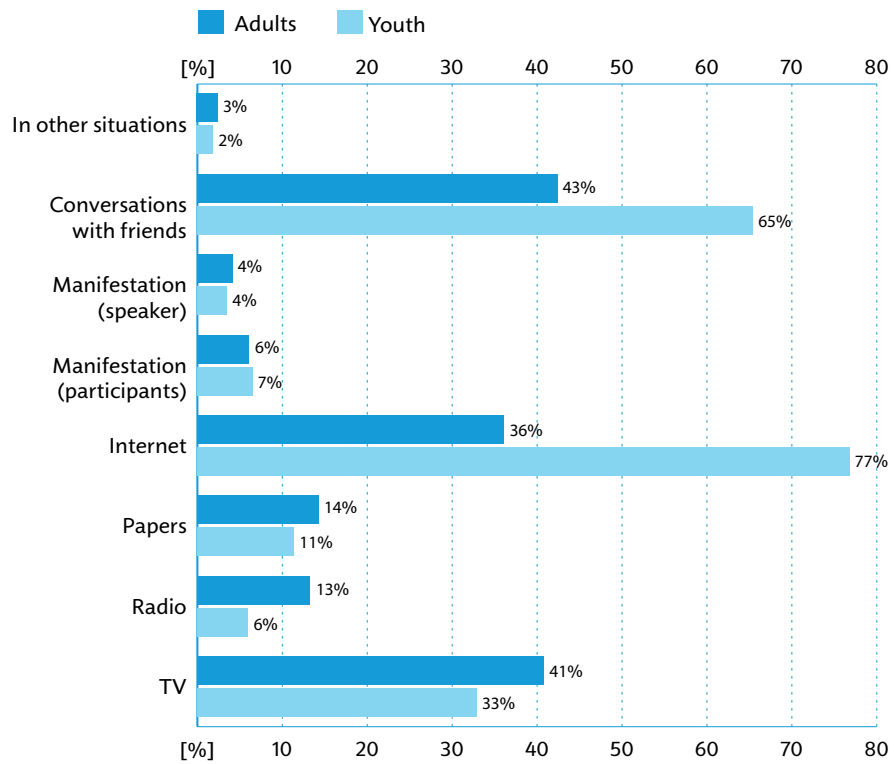


FIGURE 24 shows that respondents (and in particular youth) encounter hate speech against sexual minorities mainly on the Internet, and also in conversations with friends or on TV.

FIGURE 24. Places where adults and youth encounter hateful statements concerning sexual minorities.



## Questions about hate speech concerning Muslims

The table below presents hate speech statements concerning Muslims.

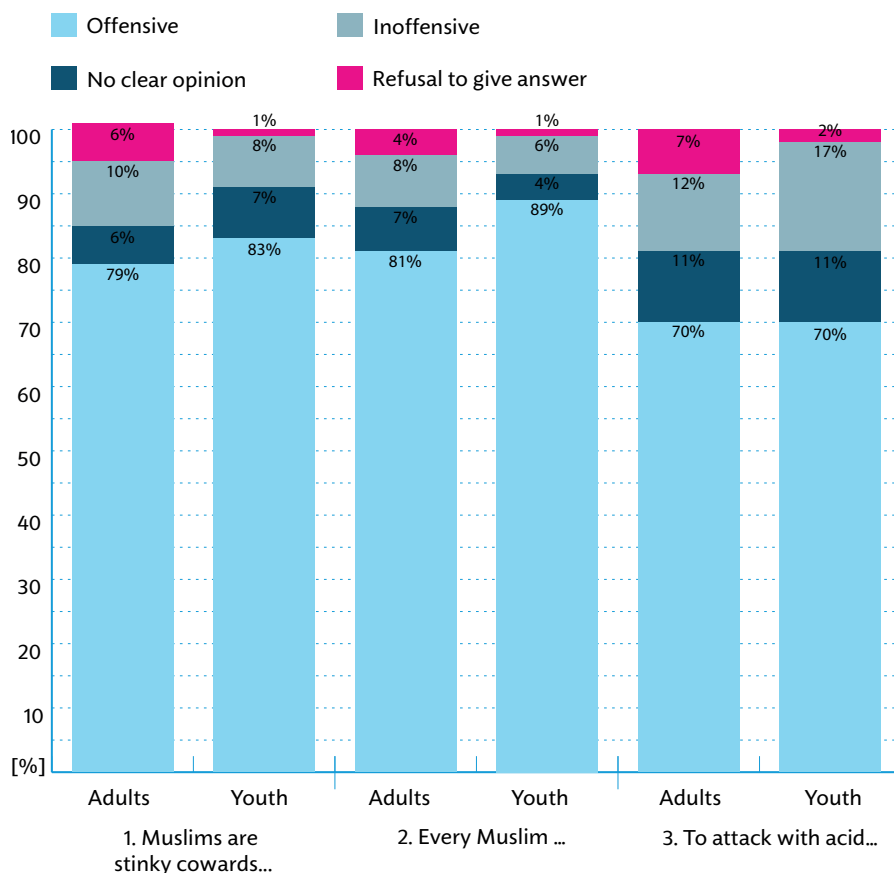
### STATEMENTS

1. Muslims are stinky cowards, they can only murder women, children and innocent people.
2. Every Muslim is not right in the head, there are no exceptions.
3. To attack with acid is an old way to get even with other people among Muslims.

## Perceived offensiveness of and acceptance of hate speech concerning Muslims

The answers given by respondents show that, regardless of their form or sources, the presented statements are seen as offensive by the great majority of them (see FIGURE 25).

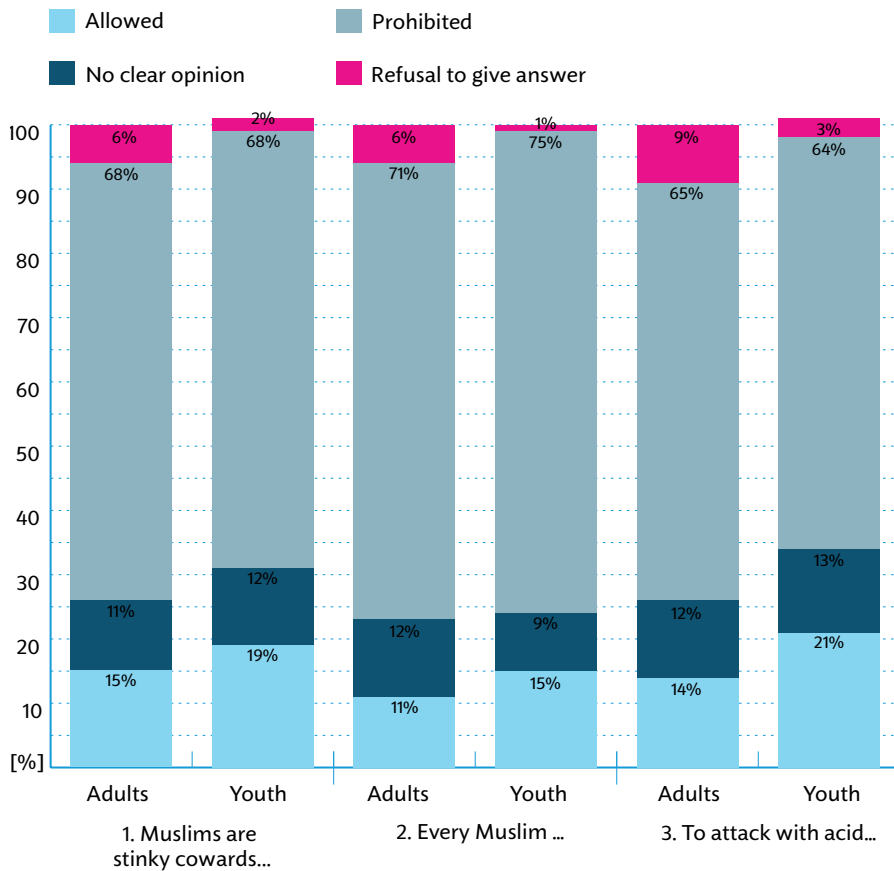
**FIGURE 25.** Distribution of answers to the question about offensiveness of presented statements among adults and youth (in the graph, different answers for offensiveness or inoffensiveness of the statements were summed up in two categories).



The results show that in both groups the majority of respondents (70-89 per cent) think that all the statements are offensive, but significant differences between the two groups can be noted. Compared with adults, young people see the statements representing traditional hate speech as more offensive, and the rationalising statements as less offensive. Similarly, young people see as less offensive the statements from traditional media (radio, TV). It should be noted that the media statement contains rationalising elements.

When the question of allowing expressions of such opinions is concerned, again the majority of respondents from both groups (64-75 percent, see FIGURE 26) rather or definitely opt for prohibiting them. Youth more often than adults accept expressions of hate speech against Muslims. In both groups, rationalising hate speech meets with significantly higher acceptance than traditional hate speech.

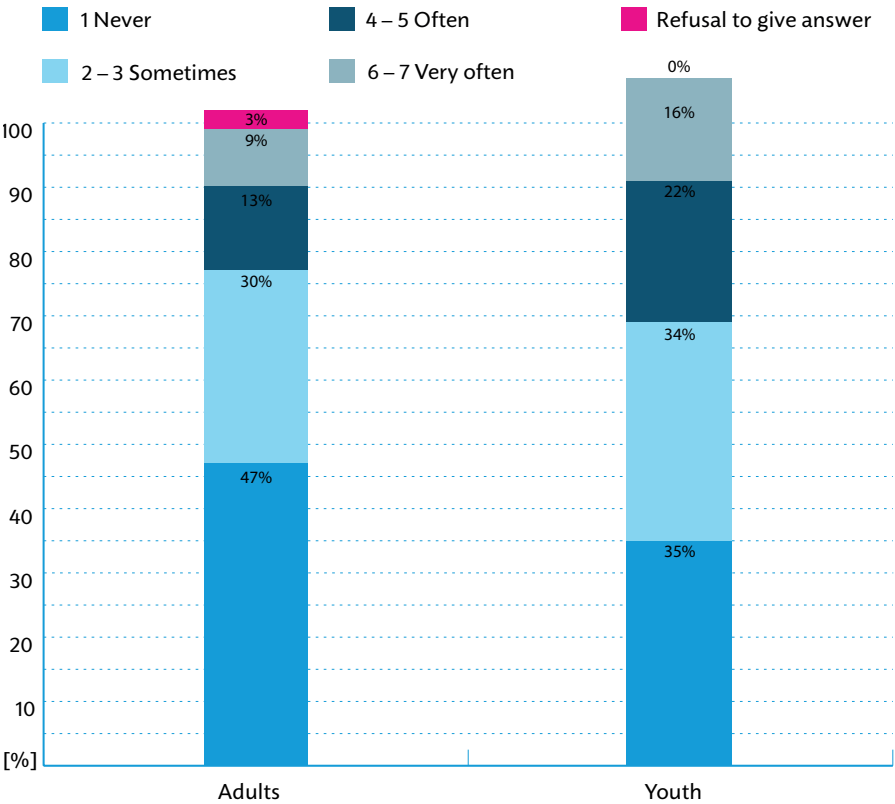
**FIGURE 26.** Distribution of answers in the groups of adults and youth to the question whether public expression of presented statements should be allowed or prohibited (in the graph, different answers for allowing or prohibiting the statements were summed up in two categories).



## Incidence and places of contact with hate speech concerning Muslims

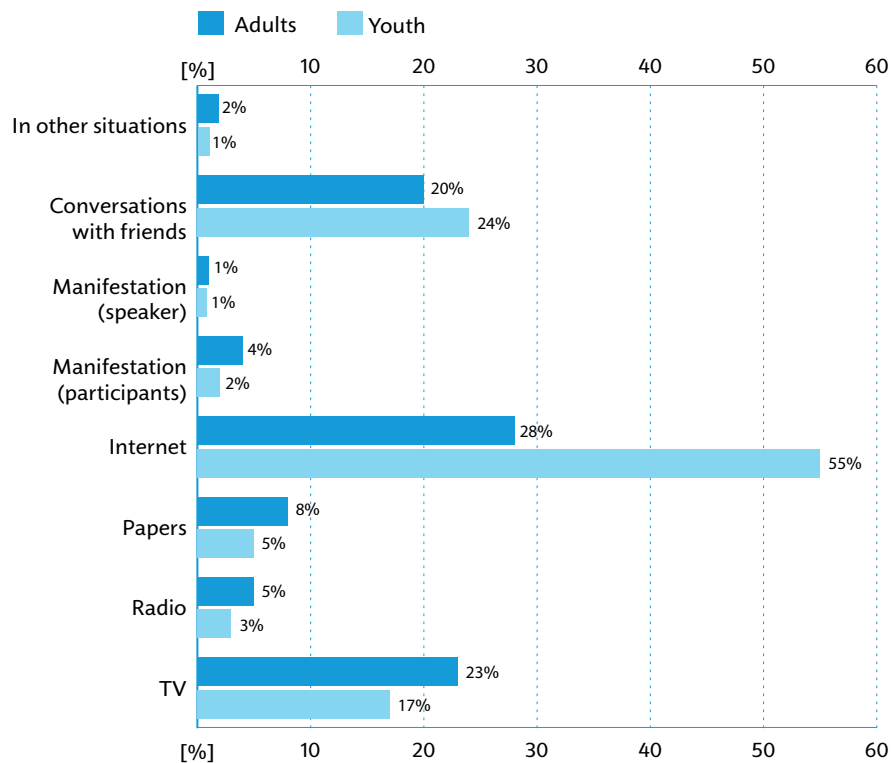
47 percent of adults and only 35 percent of young people declared that they had never encountered similar statements about Muslims. Over 15 percent of adults and youth declare that they encounter such statements relatively often (see FIGURE 27). The results for both groups show that young people encounter such statements significantly more often than adults.

**FIGURE 27.** Declared incidence of contacts with similar statements (categories 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 are summed up in the graph).



Both groups encounter hateful statements against Muslims on the Internet – almost 55 percent of young people and only about 30 percent of adults (see FIGURE 28). For youth, the second source is conversations with friends, and the third source is TV. Among adults, after the Internet, the main source of such statements is TV, and then conversations with friends. In general, adults more commonly encounter such messages in traditional media.

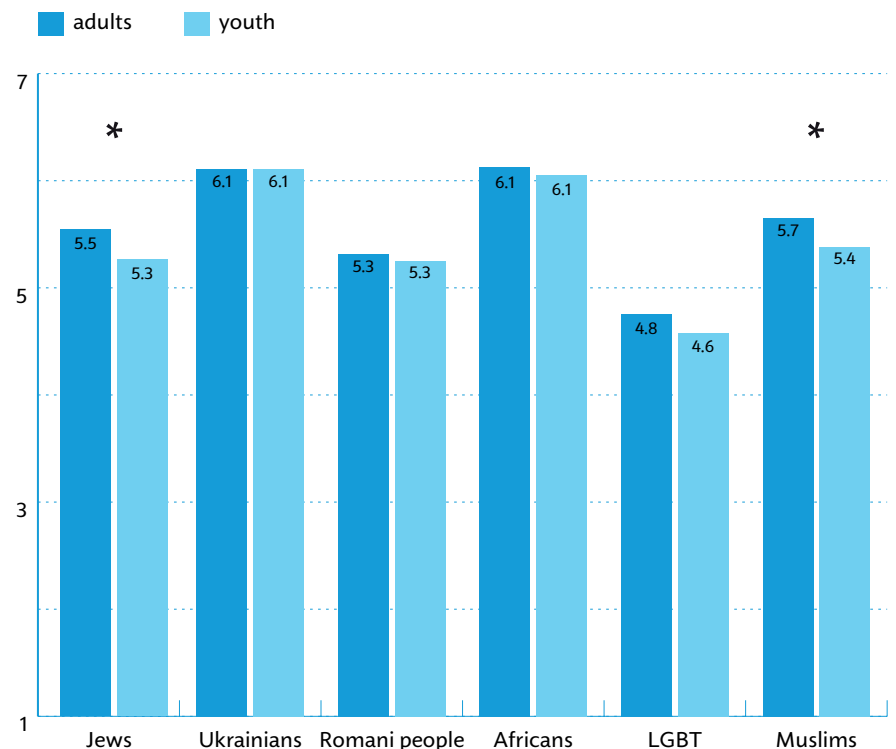
FIGURE 28. Places where adults and youth encounter hateful statements against Muslims.



## Hate speech – general mechanisms

In order to compare acceptance of hate speech against different groups, we analysed average attitudes to examples of hate speech for every group. The analyses – presented in FIGURE 29 – were performed separately for the sample of adults (dark blue bars) and the sample of youth (light blue bars). The height of the bar indicates the average level of acceptance for hateful statement against the group (scale from 1 – *The statement should be fully allowed* to 7 – *The statement should be prohibited*).

**FIGURE 29.** The average preference for prohibiting (vs. allowing) expressions of hate speech against different minority groups. (Separate results for youth and adult samples; the stars indicate significant differences between results for both samples).



### Acceptance for hate speech – adults

Analyses of answers given by adults show significant differences in their attitudes towards hate speech concerning different minority groups. Hate speech against LGBT persons has the highest level of acceptance ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ). Hate speech against Romani people is seen by them as slightly less acceptable than hate speech against LGBT persons ( $M = 5.31$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ). Still less acceptable is hate speech against Jews ( $M = 5.54$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ ) which however is more acceptable than hate speech against Muslims ( $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ). Hate speech against Ukrainians is seen by them as still less acceptable than hate speech against Muslims ( $M = 6.11$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ). Hate speech against Ukrainians is seen as equally unacceptable as hate speech against African/black people ( $M = 6.13$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ). Thus, it is evident that some groups are less protected by political correctness norms (in particular LGBT persons and Romani people) and hate speech against them is relatively more acceptable among adults.

Hate speech is more commonly accepted by men than by women, by older than by younger persons, and by persons living in bigger cities. Education and financial standing have no significant influence on the level of acceptance for hate speech.

## Acceptance for hate speech – youth

Among young people, differences in their attitudes towards hate speech against different minorities are even bigger. The level of acceptance for hate speech against LGBT persons is also the highest ( $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ). Hate speech against Romani people is seen as less acceptable than hate speech against LGBT persons ( $M = 5.25$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ). Hate speech against Jews is seen as equally acceptable as hate speech against Romani people ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ). But hate speech against Jews is more acceptable than hate speech against Muslims ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ), though the difference is not very big. Hate speech against African/black people is seen as still less acceptable than hate speech against Muslims ( $M = 6.06$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ). Hate speech against African/black people is seen as equally unacceptable as hate speech against Ukrainians ( $M = 6.11$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ). Thus, among young people the hierarchy of acceptance for hate speech against different groups is similar as for adults – Ukrainians and African/black people are the groups most protected by correctness norms, and LGBT persons, Romani people and Jews are the least protected groups.

The youth see hate speech as more acceptable than adults, though differences are not big. Young people are more willing than adults to accept hate speech against Jews and Muslims.

Also among young people, like in the group of adults, men/boys are more willing to accept hate speech (against all minorities) than women/girls. We also noted significant correlation with subjective perception of financial standing – young people with worse perceived financial standing more commonly saw the statements as acceptable. It is interesting to note that hate speech was more commonly accepted by persons whose fathers were better educated. The type of school had no significance.

## Acceptance for hate speech and incidence of contacts with hate speech among adults and youth

The reasons for differences in acceptance for hate speech between young people and adults are not only political views. It is worth noting that young people much more commonly encounter hate speech. Respondents were asked how often they encounter hate speech (i.e. statements similar to those presented in the questionnaire) in their environment; respondents were required to choose an answer from the scale from 1 – *Never* to 7 – *Very often*. The average answer among youth was 3.42 ( $SD = 1.31$ ), and among adults – 2.82 ( $SD = 1.37$ ). Greater exposure to hate speech can explain the differences in acceptance for hate speech between adults and young people. On the other hand, the exposure to hate speech among adults increased their reservations towards Jews, Ukrainians, African/black people, LGBT persons and Muslims, while among young people, the exposure to hate speech was correlated only with



reservations towards Ukrainians and African/black people, being the groups for which hate speech is seen as the least acceptable. Thus, we can assume that the youth is so often confronted with hate speech that the experiences have no influence on their attitudes.

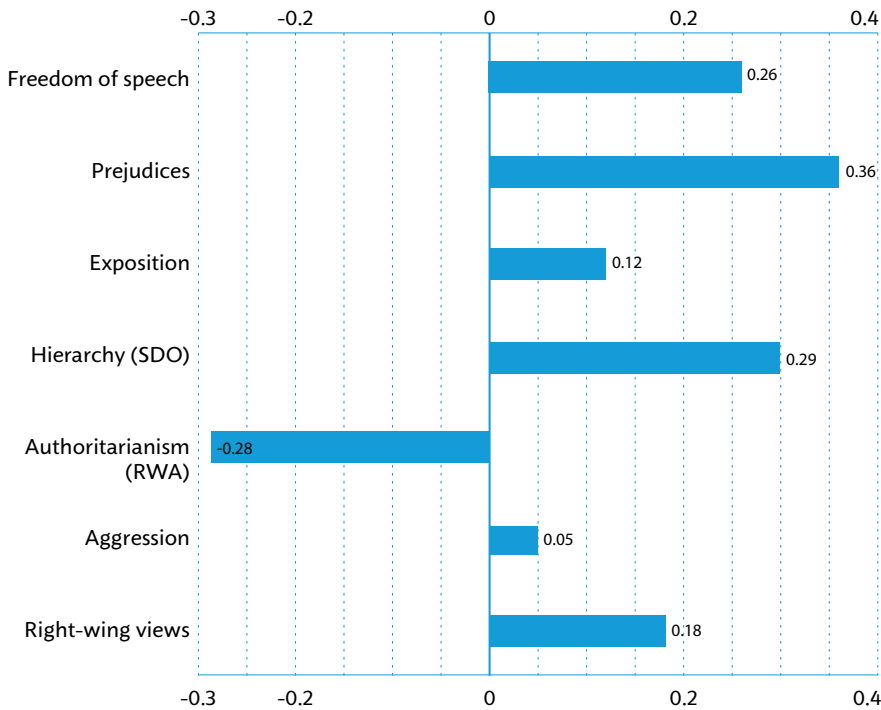
It is also worth noting that the exposure to hate speech is significantly correlated with verbal aggression. Persons more commonly encountering hate speech declare higher level of verbal aggression than persons having less frequent contact with hate speech. The correlation is stronger among young people than among adults.

Additional analyses enabled us to find out what demographical factors are connected with the incidence of exposure to hate speech. Among adults (over 18 years of age), more common contact with such statements (as compared with all analysed groups) was declared by younger rather than older people. What is interesting, hate speech was more commonly encountered by persons better educated and living in bigger cities. No difference in exposure was found between men and women or boys and girls, or between persons having better or worse perception of their financial standing. But among young people, we found a significant, but weak correlation with education of father (but not mother) – young people with better educated fathers (or guardians) declared significantly more frequent contacts with statements containing hate speech. We also detected a significant difference between high school students ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) and technical school students ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ), and vocational school students ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) – the latter declared significantly less common contacts with hate speech than the former. The average for junior high school students was not significantly different from averages for other types of schools.

### Acceptance of hate speech and views of adults and youth

In the next stage, we wanted to check what psychological and ideological factors are correlated with the acceptance of hate speech – i.e. who more commonly see hate speech as acceptable (among youth and adults). FIGURE 30 shows the significance of different variables among young people.

**FIGURE 30.** Influence of psychological factors (hierarchy, authoritarianism, aggression), attitudes (freedom of speech, prejudices, right-wing views) and situation (exposure to hate speech) on acceptance for hate speech among young people.

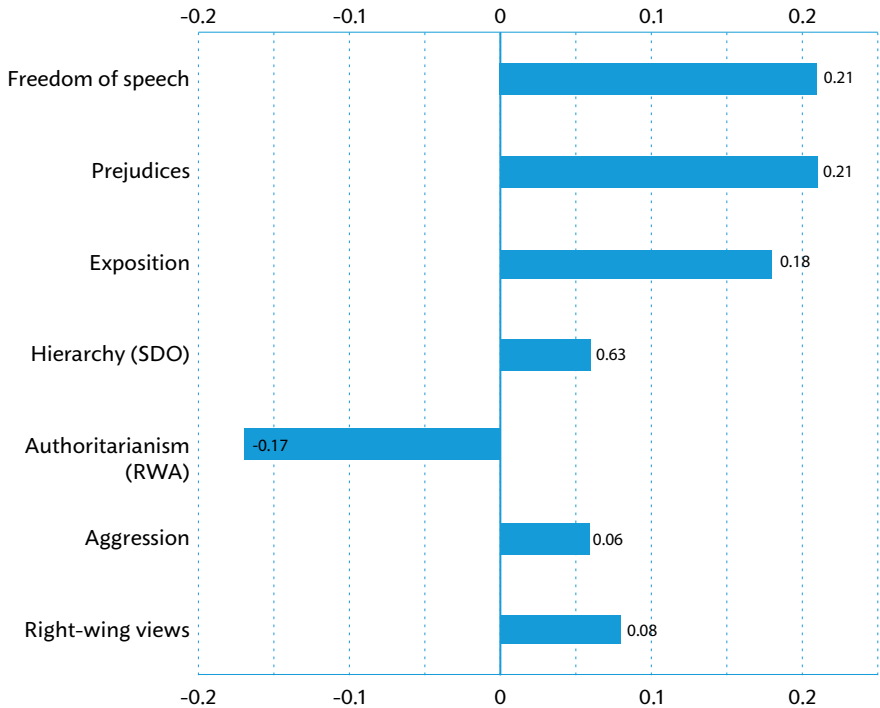


Analysis of correlations shows that among young people hate speech is significantly more commonly accepted by persons having right-wing views, hierarchical views (i.e. believing that ‘minorities should know their place’), prejudiced against minorities (not accepting minorities in their environment), and opting for freedom of speech and more frequently encountering hate speech in their environment. But the strongest correlations were those connected with attitudes towards minorities – acceptance for hate speech is more correlated with dislike of minorities than with belief in freedom of speech. No correlation with verbal aggression was detected – more aggressive young people do not necessarily have a higher level of acceptance for hate speech. Thus, hate speech is not simply another manifestation of verbal aggression. Negative correlation between acceptance of hate speech and authoritarianism was a bit surprising. Authoritarian persons – i.e. persons more obedient to authority figures and attached to traditional order – were more willing to prohibit hate speech. It can be a sign of the existence of a norm in Poland that prohibits such hateful statements, and authoritarian persons want to observe the norm. Young people accepting hate speech want to act against such social norm.

Another analysis of correlations concerned adults (see FIGURE 31). Among adults, the strongest correlations of acceptance for hate speech were: belief in freedom of speech, prejudices (not accepting minorities in their environment)

and exposition to hate speech in their environment (persons more commonly encountering hate speech saw hate speech as more acceptable). Among adults, acceptance for hate speech was not correlated with aggression and very weakly correlated with hierarchical and right-wing views. As in the case of youth, authoritarian persons opted for prohibition of hate speech.

**FIGURE 31.** Influence of psychological factors (hierarchy, authoritarianism, aggression), attitudes (freedom of speech, prejudices, right-wing views) and situation (exposition to hate speech) on acceptance for hate speech among adults.



### Acceptance of hate speech – summary

Among young people, the acceptance of hate speech to a great extent results from broader prejudiced views based on a hierarchical picture of the world where some groups dominate others. In the case of adult Poles, the acceptance of hate speech results from opposing censorship, or belief in freedom of speech, though is also correlated with prejudices against minorities. Both adults and youth more often see as hate speech those statements that contain offensive and vulgar expressions – their willingness to prohibit hate speech that is free of openly offensive words is much weaker.

Today, young people are much more exposed to hate speech than adults (as witnessed by declared exposure to hate speech). But contacts with hate speech strongly influence attitudes of adult Poles more so than young people. Among adults, exposure to hate speech is a crucial factor which influences their level of acceptance for representatives of minorities in their environment.

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