

Representation of Islamophobia on Social Media: Facebook Comments Analysis

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Abstract : The digital age has inevitably changed the way in which hate crime is committed. The cyber world has become a highly effective means for individuals and groups to be targeted, harmed, and marginalized, largely through online medium. Facebook has become one of the fastest growing social media platforms. At the end of 2013, Facebook had 1.23bn monthly active users and 757 million daily users who log onto Facebook. Within this online space, there are also an increasing number of online virtual communities, and hate groups who are using this freedom to share a violent, Islamophobic and racist description which attempts to create a aggressive virtual environment. This paper is a research on the rise of Islamophobia and the role of media in spreading it. This paper focusing on how the media especially Facebook is portraying Islam as the religion which promotes violence and ultimately playing a significant role in the global rise of Islamophobia against Muslims. It is important to analyse these 'new' communities by monitoring the activities they conduct, because the material they post, potentially can have a harmful impact on community cohesion within society. Additionally, as a result of recent figures that shows an increase in online anti-Muslim abuse, there is a pertinent need to address the issue about Islamophobia on social media. On the whole, this study found Muslims being demonized and vilified online which had manifested through negative attitudes, discrimination, stereotypes, physical threats and online harassment which all had the potential to incite violence or prejudicial action because it disparages and intimidates a protected individual or group.

Keywords : Islamophobia, online, social media, facebook, internet, extremism

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