

Facebook: A Platform for Hate Speech against Muslims

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ABSTRACT

Incitement, violence and hatred contents have become commonplace on Social Networking Sites especially on Facebook to particular group of people especially Muslims. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Facebook is used as a platform for hate speech against Muslims and Islam and which terms are used to refer to Muslims by observing and analyzing particular Facebook pages, groups and posts on one hand, and by observing and analyzing the comments of the users towards these pages, groups and posts on the other hand. Qualitative research methodology has been used for the present research and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been used to analyze my data by using micro and macro levels according to Van Dijk. This study examined 88 of different posts, pages and comments and found about 373 cases of hate speech directed against Muslim on Facebook platform.

The data were collected from the 1st of January 2018 until the 30th of March 2018. My procedures went through many stages. Firstly, I started saving posts from the pages I already followed on Facebook, then searching for pages which directly indicate to spread hate speech against Muslim by the “search button”. In addition to that, by the “save” item that Facebook offers for the post, I started saving all the posts I needed and which I have found them linked to my aims and objectives, then, I started to collect my materials by taking screen shots from my mobile for all the pages, posts, and comments that have a relation to hate speech against Muslim.

The findings revealed three main common themes of the data, which include “the fear of “Islamization”, relating Muslims with violence or “terrorism”, and the stereotypical

image of Muslim women. Overall, this study found Muslims being dispraised online which had discovered through bigotry, negative attitudes, arrogance, discrimination, stereotypes and online harassment which all had the potential to provoke violence or prejudicial action.

Keywords: Facebook, Hate Speech, Bigotry, Muslims, Critical Discourse Analysis.

ÖZ

Tahrik, şiddet ve nefret içerikleri Sosyal Paylaşım Siteleri, özellikle Facebook'taki belirli insanların olduğu gruplarda, özellikle Müslümanlar' da, sıradan bir hale geldi. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma Facebook'un, özellikle Müslümanlar ve İslam'a karşı nasıl bir nefret söylemi platformu olarak kullanıldığını ve hangi terimlerin Müslümanlara hitap ettiğini gözlemleyerek ve belirli Facebook sayfalarını, gruplarını ve paylaşımlarını analiz etmenin yanı sıra, kullanıcıların bu sayfalara , gruplara ve paylaşımlara yaptıkları yorumları gözlemleyip analiz edip araştırmayı hedefler. Bu çalışma için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır ve Van Dijk'in mikro ve makro seviyelerini kullanarak verileri incelemek için Eleştirel Söylem Analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma 88 farklı paylaşımı, sayfayı ve yorumu incelemiştir ve Facebook platformunda Müslümanlara yönelik yaklaşık 373 nefret söylemi vakası bulmuştur.

Veri 1 Ocak 2018 tarihinden 30 Mart 2018 tarihine kadar toplanmıştır. Yöntemlerim birçok aşamadan geçmiştir. İlk olarak, Facebook üzerinde takip etmiş olduğum sayfalardaki paylaşımları kaydederek, ardından "ara tuşu" ile direkt olarak Müslümanlara karşı nefret söylemini yayma belirtisi gösteren sayfaları arayarak başladım. Buna ek olarak, Facebook'un paylaşımlar için sunduğu "kaydet" tuşu ile ihtiyacım olan tüm paylaşımları kaydetmeye başladım ve bunların hedeflerim ve amaçlarıma ilişkili olduğunu buldum, ardından Müslümanlara karşı nefret söylemi ile bağlantısı olan sayfaları, paylaşımları ve yorumları cep telefonumdan ekran görüntüsü olarak verileri toplamaya başladım.

Bulgularım veriler için üç ortak tema ortaya çıkardı. Bunlar “İslamlaşma korkusu”, Müslümanları şiddet ya da “Terörizm” ile ilişki kurmak ve Müslüman kadınların basmakalıp olarak resmedilmesini içermektedir. Genel olarak, bu çalışma her biri önyargılı davranış ve şiddeti kışkırtma potansiyeline sahip olan dar kafalılık, olumsuz tavır, kibir, ayrımcılık ve stereo tiplere yoluyla Müslümanların çevrimiçi olarak kötülendiğini bulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Facebook, Nefret Söylemi, Dar Kafalılık, Müslümanlar, Eleştirel Söylem Analizi

DEDICATION

To my family

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The growing of hate speech towards particular groups of the world such as Muslims, in the latest years has become a concerning issue. Therefore, online hate speech performances and practices are growing and the concern have been shown for several human rights about using Internet in this field, in particularly, Social Media Networking to constitute a platform for all forms of discrimination. According to Alastair Jamison (2009), the appearance of social media gives the chance to the hate groups for adding more platforms like Twitter and Facebook to show and spread hate, bigotry, and discrimination.

Hate speech as defined by Feldman, Dake and Copsey (2013) “is any language form which is used to represent people in a harmful way in regards to their religion, race, gender, ethnicity, race, and mental or physical disability. With promoting and encouraging hate and provoking. “Regulating Hate Speech Online” an article written by James Banks (2010), shows that the immediate growth of the SNS has been simulated as a means of communication by increasing extreme right-wing websites and hate activity in online space.

The pliability and anonymity that Internet gave to its users made the aggressive teasing, and hatred expression smoothly and unproblematic in a landscape, and just away from traditional law enforcement fields (Banks, 2010). With all the good sides

of opportunities that SNS give their users such as communicating, sharing ideas, conveying their opinions, beliefs and feelings. By contrast, it has a bad side or even an evil side by creating a space for users to deliver their hate, prejudice and partiality. Therefore, the Social Media particularly Facebook provide opportunities for “cyber hate” (Jaishankar, 2008). Precisely, this study discusses the issue of hate speech against Muslims on Facebook, and the reason for choosing Facebook is that it is the scale which combines more than 1.7 billion users around the world and through this Facebook has become a popular target for all to express and share whatever they want whenever they want.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, Social Networking Sites have become priority in our daily lives and events to become a vital social platform for computer-mediated communication (Lin & Lu, 2011). Boyd and Ellison (2007) claimed that SNS is the space that allows users to create his or her profile, to engage with other users from all over the world, to share images, text, and to join members by groups. Moreover, SNS allows people to express themselves by sharing their opinions, and improve and preserve interactions with others (Lin & Lu, 2011).

Facebook is one of those SNS which makes it easy for us to connect with publics in different zones in the world. It allows us to share and convey our feelings, opinions and beliefs to a large number of audiences. These audiences can be your family, friends, or even anonymous audiences that you don't know in person.

Although Facebook has brought people from all over the world to be closer to each other, in some cases, Facebook plays the opposite role. Facebook also can create a gap

between people who are using this platform for their specific agenda. For example, Facebook gives a freedom of speech for its users to talk about whatever they want. But, sometimes, these debates or views may turn to be a hate speech towards a specific group of people. What is hate speech? Does hate speech consider to be a freedom of expression? These questions come to my mind before starting my research in order to figure out that those commentators which are full of hate towards particular group of people have the right to do that or not is an intriguing issue.

The need to make a balance between providing users of SNS and entry for free speech while ensuring that such discussions are conducted, rationally, responsibly, reasonably and ethically becomes a necessity. Pöyhtäri (2014) gives two ways to relate hate speech with freedom of speech and its limitations. Firstly, he says that individuals should practice freedom of speech without any restrictions. He adds that if a harm is triggered to someone directly, restrictions are defensible in this case, so, in our online use I think it is difficult to apply the “harm principle” in practices. The other way is to “see speech as an act that can cause various sorts of damages, direct and indirect, not only to its recipients but also to society on the whole” (Pöyhtäri, 2014).

1.2 Motivation for the Study

On April 5, 2017, Channel 4 News, a page which I follow on Facebook posted a report about a Muslim woman after Westminster terror attack in March that killed five people. The report showed that this Muslim woman has been criticised and attacked by some of social media users because of a photo presented her looking at her phone and passing by the victims of the terror attack in Westminster Bridge.



Texas Lone Star @SouthLoneStar · 1 mo.

Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror attack, casually walks by a dying man while checking phone

#PrayForLondon #Westminster #BanIslam



Figure 1: A Picture of the Women who Have Faced Online Abuse.

The one who posted this picture wrote that “Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror attack, casually walks by a dying man while checking phone” and he ended his statement with hashtag #BanIslam. Later on, the photographer who shot this photo spoke to the media to defend her and he said that there were other photos that showed she was very upset. The girl also had spoken to the media to defend herself against those haters. She said that the image didn’t show that she was talking to other people who were near the victims, she added that she was shocked and that she was trying to figure out what is happening and to see if she can help them, then, she called her family to tell them that she was ok.

Here, it comes to my mind that because she was a Muslim woman who wears hijab is only the reason to attack her. Why this woman had to defend herself as a criminal? This might happen to anyone, not only Muslims, because hate speech does not only

limited to Muslim, there is online abuse against gender, Jews, homophobic etc. Therefore, I thought that as Muslim girl I have to study this issue so I started to save posts on Facebook including hate speech against Muslim.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore how Facebook is used as a platform for hate speech against Muslims and Islam and which terms are used to refer to Muslims by observing and analysing particular Facebook pages, groups and posts on one hand, and by observing and analysing the comments of the users towards these pages, groups and posts on the other hand.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The phenomenon of Islamophobia and hate speech in particular is rising in our world today, despite the great efforts made over the last three decades in the field of dialogue between cultures and alliance of civilizations. The situation has turned from a joint action to promote these noble values and ideal principles to cooperate to face of this abhorrent phenomenon and to disseminate a discourse of racial and religious hatred and racism, in a way that is detrimental to international peace and security.

Moreover, hate speech has spread through the media on a large scale, a speech mostly directed at one religion without another religion, and on a particular culture, with a focus on Islamophobia, intimidation and contempt in a flagrant violation of international law (Bennett, 2016). The Islamic culture on some pages, posts, and comments on Facebook is insulted in its general concepts, distorting the Islamic civilization in its diverse meanings and diverse fields, and denying its superiority over successive human civilizations, indicating that this kind of religious discrimination, as a sequences it is important to study hate speech on Facebook and try to find solutions

to regulate hate speech on this platform in order to stop one of the reasons that create the conflict of cultures and conflict of civilization as well.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Although this research has reached its aim, there were some unavoidable limitations. Four main limitations of the study are generalized as follows. First of all, the research was conducted by the first of February and the data were collected from 1st of February until 31st of March 2018 therefore two months limited the material which have been analyzed. Secondly, because of the limitation of time, this research was conducted only on particular pages and restricted to the following pages : “Anti- Islam Alliance”, “Exposing Islam”, “Anti Islam- Australia”, “Ban Islam & and Shariah Law”, “Boycott Halal Certification in Australia”, “Stop Islamization of the World”, “The Independent”, “Daily Mail”, “The New York Times” or related to news channel like “BBC”, “Aj+” therefore sample and population including posts, comments and users or commentators were limited by those pages. Thirdly, there were only one data collection method. The data were only analysed through critical discourse analysis. Finally, because of the different accent and slangs that commentators have been using, I had some difficulties to translate and understand some words used to refer to Muslims.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter involves a review of literature in relation to the research focus. In this session, I review literature with respect to Social Networking Sites, a background into the one of the SNS platform being used in this research, which is Facebook, Facebook as a political instrument, hate speech, Critical Discuss Analysis and as well the theoretical focus of the study which is the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

2.1 Internet as a Public Sphere

The internet is a matrix of communication networks within cyberspace. (Dodge & Kitchin, 2001; Conradie, 2000). As a global network of computers, the internet transcends physical barriers as it commences at the local area and works its way through the service provider, to regional, national and international telecommunications networks. With the advent of the WWW during the early 1990s, the internet became instrumental in the communication networks as it enabled people to transcend time and space and to communicate and share information. The establishment of the WWW lead to easier navigation on the internet as well as greater accessibility and thus paved the way for the internet to become a commercial medium (Dodge & Kitchin, 2001).

To explain the internet as public sphere, the institutional criteria as set forth by Habermas (1989) is recalled: disregard of status, common concern and inclusivity. Within the internet, these three criteria are, at least, to some extent adhered to. People

access the internet via virtual identities similar to their own. If individuals' socio-economic status allows it, he or she has the skills needed to access and use the internet and when individuals have access to the necessary network infrastructure, all people can use the internet. The internet does not only allow for private individuals to access it. The mass communication medium is used by online journalists, web-based interest groups and other organisations to explore and use the information available on the internet. These groups are often ignored by mainstream media and the internet thus reinforces the idea that new media can open up new channels of communication and instigate new forms of public discourse and ultimately public opinion (Debatim, 2008).

Even though there are barriers with regards to information available on the internet as well as with regards to the digital divide, individuals and groups have free access to the same information and are free to make the information available. Thus the internet adheres to Habermas' idea that issues of common concern should be addressed in a public sphere. Habermas also realises the idea of inclusivity. When thinking about the internet as a public sphere, it is very important to note that a singular unitary public sphere is rejected on the grounds of plural identities and differences. The internet as public sphere must accommodate individuals belonging to different cultures, from different languages and from different socioeconomic strata and thus the internet needs to be technically, economically, culturally and linguistically accessible to all members of society. Any a priori exclusion in terms of access goes against the institutional criteria of the public sphere as mentioned before. Yet, when the internet is considered as a new public sphere, some level of exclusivity will always be present. This, however, is not different to the bourgeois public sphere where certain groups – such as women and the lower social strata – also were excluded (Habermas, 1989).

For further comparison, the three dimensional conceptualization of the public sphere as described by Dahlgren (2005), which was discussed in chapter two, is recalled. The three dimensions of the public sphere are the structural-, representational- and interpretation dimensions. When cyberspace and the internet are taken into account, the layout is organised and presented in terms of social, economical, cultural, technological, legal as well as web based features. This is in accordance with the structural dimension of the communicative spaces of democratic societies as discussed in the previous chapter. The representational dimension is also evident when referring to the internet. With the omnipresent and increasing penetrating character of the internet, representation becomes very relevant for online contexts of the public sphere. Individuals, interest groups and organisations are represented as information receivers as well as information producers. Finally, the dimension of interaction is also evident. Encounters with the internet are a communicative process of sense-making, interpretation and utilisation of media production. The interaction is also evident between citizens themselves where communication varies from two person conversations to gatherings amongst more individuals. These three dimensions provide not only an analytical starting point for the scope of the public sphere but also for analysing the impact and scope of the internet as a newer public sphere (Dahlgren, 2005).

2.2 Freedom of Speech on the Internet

The Internet has become a key instrument for the exercise of the right to freedom of speech today (Sangsuvan, 2014). Since the Internet is a device or stage which allows people to express, communicate, or provide information, the right to freedom of speech on the Internet must be protected from interference. Recently, the UN Human Rights

Council has passed a landmark resolution supporting freedom of speech on the Internet (see 21st session of the Human Rights Council, 2012).

The Human Rights Council acknowledges that the Internet can be an important tool for developing and for exercising human rights. The principle of freedom of speech under the UN conventions must apply to the Internet, so the right to freedom of speech on the Internet can be protected as traditional media. The Human Rights Council affirmed that:

The same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression, which is applicable regardless of frontiers and through any media of one's choice, in accordance with Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Human Right Council calls upon "all states to promote and facilitate access to the Internet and international cooperation aimed at the development of media and information and communications facilities in all countries." This General Assembly resolution is an important recognition and guideline for the promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights, especially the right to freedom of speech on the Internet. Even though this resolution is non-binding, it may still carry significant moral or political weight and establish political commitment (Sangsuwan, 2014).

2.2.1 Freedom of Speech on Social Media

Social media usually has its own measures and policies for managing or controlling freedom of speech on the Internet (Sangsuwan, 2014). For instance, Google excludes sexually explicit images and videos from search results by using its "SafeSearch" technology (See SafeSearch: turn on or off, Google). Similarly, Bing, Microsoft's

search engine, sets a default search setting that also uses SafeSearch (see block adult content with SafeSearch, Microsoft).

YouTube established the Community Guidelines dealing with speech or expression posted by users. YouTube does not allow users to post pornography or sexually explicit content. Users are not allowed to post any content showing offensive or harmful content such as animal abuse, drug abuse, under-age drinking and smoking, or bomb making. Graphic or gratuitous violence showing someone being physically hurt, attacked, or humiliated cannot be posted on YouTube. Users are not allowed to post shock sites, gross-out videos of accidents, dead bodies, or similar things intended to shock or disgust. Things like predatory behaviour, stalking, threats, harassment, intimidation, privacy invasion, disclosure of personal information, and content encouraging others to commit violent acts are not allowed on YouTube (See About YouTube, *supra* note 163).

However, the Guidelines or prohibitions have not successfully controlled online speech or expression. There are still clips that show violence or contain inappropriate content. There is no international or domestic law controlling freedom of speech in social media. More particularly, hate speech is a vague concept with varying definitions. International law does not define "hate speech;" the definition is based on domestic law (Weber, 2009).

2.3 Social Networking Sites

The transmission into a world where technology has taken a center stage in the mode of information and communication can be traced to the arrival of social networking sites SNS across board (Gladarev & Lonkila, 2012). Social Networking Sites have not

only brought about changes and developments in the human communication system, it has also changed the face, mode and pattern of operation by broadcast and print media organizations (Ertan & Medeni, 2011). For example, broadcast organizations now use SNS in reaching out to a wider and more technologically based audience while on its part, print media organizations use SNS as a form of advertising major headlines and leads of news stories.

Technological developments and most importantly, the emergence of Web 1.0 and thereafter Web 2.0 technologies facilitated effective interpersonal communication as well as the emergence of SNS platforms (Kang, Song, Yoon, Lee, & Park, 2015). This development brought about significant change and improvement in the mode and style of communication and information sharing.

With its various benefits and use, SNS have continued to remain as a platform where people can express themselves as well as propagate a course or fight for their rights (Pinkerton, Young, & Dodds, 2011). Social SNS includes Blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat amongst others. Individuals and organizations in making their voice heard and demands met have used the platforms. Wignall, (2017); further affirms this:

The development of Web 2.0 led to the SNS platform we are more familiar with today, such as Facebook and Twitter. Central to this was the way that communication moved from being asynchronous, where replies could occur months after the initial message, to synchronous, where replies could be near-instantaneous in a conversational manner (p. 22).

The use of SNS has also facilitated online monitoring and friendship of parents and children (Mesch, 2016). As such, parents now have the opportunity of monitoring and looking out for the activities of their children and words on social networking

platforms. However, it has been claimed that SNS facilitate exposure of youths and young adults to unpleasant practices such as drug abuse, cultism, and other anti-social vices (Womer & Bunker, 2010). This is due to the limitless number of people they are exposed to and as well their ability to be carried away because of their level of maturity.

SNS has also enhanced reception and distribution of knowledge as teaching and learning now go on simultaneously on the various platforms (Mesch, 2016). For instance, teachers now have free access to interact and discuss with their students as well as open up discussion from where an issues left out in the classroom can be discussed. This has brought about mobile teaching and learning. Today, SNS has become a part of human life as almost every social activity can take place on the various platforms (Wignall, 2017).

Social Networking Sites have also served as tracking devices as law enforcement agencies use the platforms in clamping down own cybercrimes as well as other individuals who use internet in general as a platform to commit crime (Morselli & Décary-Héту, 2013). For instance, when individuals commit crime, security agencies track their conversations on Social Networking Sites to serve as evidence against them (Yardley & Wilson, 2015).

Social Networking Sites have further promoted political participation and democracy (Fenton & Barassi, 2011). The platforms have created an opportunity for its users to have their say on various national issues as well as commend and condemn government activities according to their perspectives (Miller, Bobkowski, Maliniak, & Rapoport, 2015). Social Networking Sites have also created an opportunity where

citizens can hold their political leaders to account while creating a window where citizens can have one-on-one conversation with their various political representatives (Fenton & Barassi, 2011).

However, SNS have begun to take over the functions and duties of opinion leaders (Turcotte, et. al, 2015). Due to easy and prompt access to information through SNS, various followers no longer need the services of opinion leaders. SNS have now created an opportunity for followers to make decisions on their own. As such, political office holders now strive to use the platform in order to gain direct access to their followers and would-be supporters (Nunes, Ferreira, Sabino de Freitas, & Ramos, 2018). Political actors are also able to predict their chances at elections through various online SNS pools. This establishes further link and creates more understanding of the political temperature in the society (Bode, 2012).

SNS have facilitated the success of many political actors at the pools (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2010). It has helped presidential candidates attain success at different elections and enhanced their public acceptance by the electorates.

The relevance and developments by SNS have not only improved its global use, it has also brought about significant scholarly contributions by researchers in various fields and disciplines (Rasmussen & Ihlen, 2017). Social networking platforms have also provided an opportunity for researchers and scholars alike to interact and exchange knowledge among themselves (Ortega, 2015). Under a common SNS platform, more experienced researchers are able to tutor and mentor younger researchers, thereby providing an opportunity for global sharing and exchange of ideas and knowledge (Ko, 2013). With platforms like Research Gate and Academia.edu, global collaboration by researchers have also been promoted.

Various organizations have used SNS as a means of reaching out to their consumers. This facilitates one-on-one interaction between clients and companies as well as promotes promptness and consumer satisfaction (Chu & Kim, 2011). However, employees also use SNS to gratify certain needs and desires during and after their official duties (Moqbel, Nevo, & Kock, 2013). SNS have also been described as a means of sharing and promoting common ideas (Vandoninck, d'Haenens, De Cock, & Donoso, 2011). The platforms provide opportunity to build a community of their own through groups as well as promote a common cause.

With all its eminent benefits, scholars and users alike have expressed worry over the level of protection and privacy the users of various SNS platforms enjoy (Kelly, Kerr, & Drennan, 2017). As such, privacy has become something to worry about with the use of social networking platforms. Users are not sure of the extent and rate at which their data is shared and used for in unpleasant situations (Hsu, Chih, & Liou, 2015). Health practitioners seek to improve the wellbeing of their patients as well as establish a link between patients and physicians are also using SNS (Cartledge, Miller, & Phillips, 2013). For example, there are now quite a number of medical based social networking sites that primarily seek to educate SNS users about preventive medicine as well as maintaining a healthy life style.

It is important to state that SNS have not only enhanced connectivity among the youths; it has also been accepted as an undisputable communication and information platform by the aged (Loiacono, 2015). This is quite clear with the various online communities that serve different functions and purposes, as such, becoming a convergence place for all and sundry. However, it has also become an avenue for young adults to create an identity for themselves (Livingstone, 2008) (Leng, Suddin,

Muhammad, Ibrahim, & Tamrin, 2011). However, many of the young adults use the platform to promote, or promote themselves in various ways in which they desire. For example, many youths use Facebook to create a personality for themselves, brand their personality and use the platform as a means of marketing themselves and the brand they represent.

2.4 An Overview of Facebook

Facebook is a multimedia of SNS which lets users to receive and send different contents. The platform is one of the most popular SNS among all facets of human dealings (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). For instance, just like other SNS platforms that have gained popular acceptance, Facebook is the only SNS that is quite flexible and easy to understand by both young and old, there by facilitating it wide acceptance. Facebook has become widely accepted in the education sector. It has become a mode of teaching and learning as well as teacher to student interaction. However, the platform has also become a means of gaining access to indirect education (Karmen, 2013). For example, Facebook now has a form of translation to different languages; this has afforded users with low level of education access to the platform at convenience (Caers, et al., 2013).

Facebook began operation in 2004 and since then, the platform has become a reliable and dependent way of sharing or receiving information and most importantly a means of interpersonal or group communication (Ross, et al., 2009). For instance, friends and families use Facebook to keep in touch with another and as well establish or maintain new forms of friendship. Today, Facebook is estimated to have over 2 billion accounts, which indicate its global acceptance (Trauda, Mucha, & Porter, 2012). Apart from countries like China, Iran and North Korea, Facebook is being used in all other

countries and regions in the world (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). This gives the platform a global outreach thereby becoming the toast of advertisers and business owners.

Facebook has become a household name and has continued to maintain its relevance. The platform has established an easy link between its users with just a click of the button. “Facebook requires that anybody who wants to be added as a friend have the relationship confirmed, so Facebook friendships define a network (graph) of reciprocated ties (undirected edges) that connect individual users” (Trauda, Mucha, & Porter, 2012, p. 4165). However, it is important to state that among its numerous features, the easy opportunity Facebook has offered its users to make new friends globally leaves its users stuck to the platform (Caers, et al., 2013). For instance, by typing the name of a particular friend or ally in the search button, Facebook brings up a list of users with exact name and allows the user to go through their profile one after the other so as to identify the correct friend or user.

Facebook also serves as a means of gathering data, sampling opinion, and a way of conducting online quality assurance. For instance, organizations and multi nationals sample the opinion of their clients about the effectiveness of their products and services. Reports have found that an average user uses Facebook for a significant number of hours per day (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). This indicates that the platform is not only widely accepted by the public, it forms a significant part of the activities of the day.

Facebook has also become quite relevant to children even before the attainment of their teenage years (Laura, 2017). Moreover, Students are able to share their activities

on the platform and organize themselves as a group with common goal. Various groups have thereafter continued to exist on the Social networking platform thereafter serving as a means for public outcry, protest and a mode of promoting a common cause or ideology (Andreassen, 2012).

Facebook has also helped individuals present themselves, as they want to be seen by the public (Andreassen, 2012). However, this has promoted fake identification and miss-representation on the social platform. One of the interesting things about Facebook is its integration into other Social Networking Sites as it affords users to navigate from the platform to other SNS (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). For example, news organizations simply use the platform to promote the headline of their news stories after which interested are provided a URL that directs them to other web pages. This has not only improved the traffic such organizations receive on their pages; it has also served as an avenue to sell their contents.

Facebook has also shifted the mode at which mainstream news organizations such as newspapers, radio, television, and magazines disseminate information (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). It has offered these organizations the opportunity to promote their medium and content thereby attracting more viewers, listeners, and readers/subscribers through its wider coverage. This has affected significantly the output and patronage of such technologically oriented and mindful media organizations.

2.4.1 Facebook Policies and Regulation

Policies and reporting section on Facebook provides an overview on the types of things that are not allowed on Facebook. For instance, nudity or other sexually suggestive content, hate speech, credible threats or direct attack on an individual or group, content that contains self- harm or excessive violence, and spam (About Facebook, 2011).

Furthermore, it shows the types of behavior that Facebook identified as abusive which isn't allowed to post on Facebook. For example, posting things that don't follow the Facebook Community Standards (ex: threats, hate speech, graphic violence). Using Facebook to bully, impersonate or harass anyone, and Abusing Facebook features (ex: sending friend requests to many people you don't know). Overusing features could make other people feel uncomfortable or unsafe. As a result, we have limits in place to limit the rate at which you can use features (About Facebook, 2011). However, with all these policies and regulation, this study shows that hate speech and bullying still can be found on Facebook Pages, comments and posts.

2.5 Facebook as a Political Platform

Being a household name, Facebook, has become a key platform used by political office holders and aspirants is creating meaning and perceptions for the electorates (Nam, Lee, & Park, 2015). For instance, many political actors use Facebook to pass various forms of messages which in-turn affects the ideology and perception of voters. Therefore, it can be stated that Facebook has become a platform used to consciously and unconsciously persuade and tilt the mind of the people during electoral campaigns (Portwood-Stacer, 2012).

One of the significant features of Facebook as a political platform is its capability to provide electorates, political associates and political observers the opportunity to form a group where they can discuss, deliberate and clarify other politically oriented issues to other members (Dijck, 2012. P. 141-155). With the aid of Facebook group pages, it has become quite easy to form political coalition and as well group of supporters on the platform. This has facilitated various forms of political activities on and off line.

Significantly, Facebook has been attributed to facilitate some of the world's largest political protests (Valenzuela, Correa, & Zúñiga, 2018). This is based on the power of accessibility and believability. Many of the users believe and adhere to many of what they see on the platform (Jones, Bond, Bakshy, Eckles, & Fowle, 2017). In addition, the platform has provided its users the opportunity to share information and messages they desire to, thereby increasing its coverage. This feature is though common on other platform, but, Facebook has a greater advantage over others based on its flexibility and accessibility.

Being one of the Web 2.0 platforms, Facebook has however facilitated interactionism between government and its people (Soon & Soh, 2014). For example, citizens can gain direct access or interact directly with political office holders through the messaging feature on the platform. Government and political office holders have also used the platform as a means of accounting to the people (Dijck, 2012). This is done through frequent upload of pictures, videos and other multi-media contents on their personal pages thereby serving as a means of informing the people of their daily activities and achievements.

The platform remains a major means of reaching out the people during electoral campaigns (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). Through advertisements of different kinds, political aspirants use the platform to persuade and lure the electorates to their side (Stier, Bleier, Lietz, & Strohmaier, 2018). However, it has also served as a means of political debate and discourse (Elmer, 2012). Political office holders have also used Facebook as a means of seeking contributions from the electorates through comments and votes (Ecker, 2017). For instance, if a legislative bill is being debated upon or about to be passed, political office holders use the platform to seek for opinions and

contributions of the people (Hendriks, Duus, & Ercan, 2016). However, the platform has significantly helped the political office holders clarify issues and persuade their followers (Kreiss, Lawrence, & McGregor, 2018).

Facebook has also heightened the level of political activism, this due to the fact that every member of the Social Network Site community is opportune to free speech. “These instances of political activism point to the growing importance of Facebook as a space where a public can be reached and informed and can enter into a dialogue to discuss issues of common interest and influence political decision-making” (Langlois, Elmer, McKelvey, & Devereaux, 2009, p. 416). It has however, enhanced the concept of public sphere, where issues and opinions are given without any form of deprivation or subjection (Miller P. R., Bobkowski, Maliniak, & Rapoport, 2015).

As much as other mainstream media platforms helps in creating awareness and publicity about political office holders and their programmers, Facebook has remained a platform that is mostly used in direct and interpersonal communication (Larsson & Ihlen, 2015). For example, during the 2010 and 2012 electioneering campaigns, Facebook was reported to have been the most patronised social networking platform. This is as a result of its availability, compatibility and simple use features (Auter & Fine, 2016).

With all its functions and effectiveness, one of the most debated issues about Facebook has been the issue of data protection (Fuchs, 2012). This has remained a serious concern for mostly critical scholars as they complain about the commodification of Facebook users and their data to advertisers and political actors. This is also evident in the recent debate about the infringement of users’ rights with the release of

Facebook users' data to Cambridge Analytical which led to massive manipulation of Facebook users without their consent (Lewis & Pegg, 2018). Though, this is evident that Facebook has significant influence on its users, it is also clear that the platform may somewhat be used against the users' interest by both the operators and political actors alike.

2.6 Hate Speech

No universally accepted definition of the term "hate speech" exists, despite its frequent usage. Though most States have adopted legislation banning expressions amounting to "hate speech", definitions differ slightly when determining what is being banned. Only the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' Recommendation 97(20) on "hate speech" defined it as follows: "the term "hate speech" shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin." In this sense, "hate speech" covers comments which are necessarily directed against a person or a particular group of persons (Weber, 2009).

Conceptualising hate speech, it could be referred to as the use of defamatory, unpleasant, derogatory, and unsolicited words from person to person (Bowman & Bowman, 2016). However, hate speech could be inter-tribal or within ethnical groups (Banks, 2011). Though this happens between groups and congregations, it is a common phenomenon on SNS and most shared within the political sphere. According to Klein, (2012):

Hate speech should be understood as the tactical employment of words, images, and symbols, as well as links, downloads, news threads, conspiracy theories,

politics, and even pop culture, all of which have become the complex machinery of effective inflammatory rhetoric. (p. 428)

Social Networking Sites processes various unique features that have been used positively and negatively by individuals (Erjavec & Kovačič, 2012). One of the unique features that has promoted the concept of hate speech is the ability to remain anonymous, untraceable, or use pseudonyms. For example, users may decide to disguise while throwing shades at other users or political opponents. However, hate speech on Social Networking Sites been taken to another level as users no longer hide their identity whatsoever.

Precisely, hate speech is not only a normal disagreement or hatred, but it is more than that, it includes the expression of “extreme” abhorrence, hatred, detestation that raises a hostile atmosphere appear as persecution, intimidation, anxiety, discrimination, bigotry and violence towards those targeted according to Megan Johnston in her article “The Harm of Hate Speech”. The destructive impacts of hate speech are well notarized and supported by practical evidence and therefore stand as being even much more than a philosophical concern (Johnstone, 2016).

One of the major causes of hate speech in the online media circle is the loss of one party to the other or a strategy used by the opposition party to seek empathy and remain in the political circle after electoral processes (Crowley, 2014). “The recent electoral victories for conservative groups with aggressive online presence have brought the political stakes of digital speech into sharp public focus, unsettling euphoric pronouncements on new media as a radical enabler of citizen participation and open society” (Pohjonen & Udupa, 2017, p. 1173). However, scholars have emphasized that

if the trend of hate speech continues most especially in the political arena, the society will remain un-sanitized and filled with all forms of verbal and non-verbal illicit words most especially in the online circle (Duffy, 2003).

Hate speech has been attributed to affect many individuals and groups negatively (Bilewicz, Soral, Marchlewska, & Winiewski, 2017). This is based on its psychological and emotional effects on the individuals who are being referred to. For instance, physical and mental health can be directly affected those targeted group as a result of being subjected to harassment because of their identity, race or religion in an environment that is antagonistic to their legitimate rights and interests, an environment where they make them feel as inferior and threaten their safety and ability to carry out their daily lives without annoyance. Advocates of speech regulation also agree with this point in which hate speech can have a “Psycho -emotional harm” such as isolation, self-hatred and humiliation feelings (Bennett, 2016). Moreover, a political aspirant might feel uneasy seeing various hate speeches attributed to him on SNS and loose hope of performing up to expectation. However, hate speech is mostly common in the libertarian regimes as authoritarians to not take negative or derogatory comments with ease.

Overtime, one of the major causes of hate speech has been attributed to political, cultural, tribal, and ideological differences by the persons or parties involved (Cammaerts, 2009), however, hate speech has been said to still exist between people who are of the same affiliations. Though the freedom of the media or press and as well freedom of the speech, quite a number of countries have attempted to minimise the use of hate speech among their citizens, thereby placing various forms penalties on such speeches (Kaakinen, et al., 2018). Some countries have labelled hate speech as

defamatory, thereby enabling affected persons to legally sue anyone accused with evidence.

Even with the level at which the use of hate speech has increased within different societies, the use of SNS in recent times has further enhanced the phenomenon thereby increasing the level of conflict in the society (Slagle, 2009). One important factor to note is that hate speech has promoted enmity and demoralised certain groups especially the ones who are seen among the minorities in the society. SNS however, enjoys the influx of individuals from various parts of the world and as such, has witnessed high rate of hate speech on the platform (Meddaugh & Kay, 2009).

The political scene has become quite flooded with the frequent and unsecured use of hate speech (George, 2016). These ranges from derogatory referral to acts of political opponents as well as use of insensitive words to qualify or frame opponents. This has heightened the tension in the political circle and created unease at various platforms and scenes. Sometimes, ordinary discussions have been taken over by supporters of different political parties, thereby hitting up the polity with the use of different forms of hate speech (Chua, 2009).

Various government agencies have reported that Social Networking Sites have encouraged the trend of hate speech, thereby massively increasing the phenomenon online (Ott, 2017). However, hate speech has been attributed to initiating violence in different forms (George, 2014). For instance affected parties may transfer their grievances offline and begin a violent protest. As such, hate speeches are used in promoting unpalatable and despicable acts in the society (Gümüş & Dural, 2012).

Endless arguments around hate speech and freedom of speech or freedom of expression. We can see that the struggle and difficulty with hate speech for liberals is that there is a very strong assumption in favour of free speech whereas hate speech definitely makes numerous harms on its target or victims (Seglow, 2016). Regardless of the indicators that connect and relate hate speech as a crime against minorities, most of the time, countries, especially America and Europe, maintain freedom of expression, the most important political value (Tsesis, 2001).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

In this session, I discuss the theoretical framework for the study which is Uses and Gratification Theory.

2.5.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratification theory came into existence in the 1940s as a mainstream theory in order to investigate how why media audience use the platforms of their choice (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). The uses and gratifications theory provides an in-depth insight into the motivation behind media audience's motivation towards the use of various media platforms (Joo & Sang, 2013). The theory postulates that the media audience seeks to satisfy and fulfil certain needs and wants with a selected media (Florenthal, 2015). For example, a media audience may decide to use Facebook based on the need to seek certain information or because of his urge to participate in a social media debate amongst his political group.

The Uses and Gratification theory has further become quite relevant in media and communication fields based on its close relationship with media and its audience (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973). According to Grellhesl and Punyanunt-Carter (2012), "U&G is favourable to apply to communication studies because it focuses on

the social and psychological factors consumers use in their quest for satisfaction and motivation when engaged in communication via telecommunication” (p. 2176). Again, other researches have re-emphasized that the uses and gratifications theory has come to stay (Gallego, Bueno, & Noyes, 2016).

New technological inventions have continued to create various forms of development in various sectors. The invention of SNS platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat amongst others, the U & G theory has continued to prove its inevitability. For instance, a major number of users of social media seek to gratify certain information, entertainment, and educational needs by using social media (Choi, Fowler, Goh, & Yuan, 2016).

In a study carried out by (Florenthal, 2015), the study sought to inquire about the gratifications received by students whom using social media. Findings indicate that students use Facebook, Twitter and other SNS in seeking information, connecting with their friends and as well serve as a means of expanding their career search. The uses and gratifications theory places the media user as a mediator who decides which media platform is to be used, for what purpose, at what time and for how long (Rui & Stefanone, 2016).

Using the uses and gratifications theory as a template, in a study conducted on the usage of social media platforms by candidates of higher institutions in gratifying their needs and desires. Ifinedo (2016) finds out that a numerous number of internal and external features that have an impact on social media’s uses by these students (Li, Chen, & Nakazawa, 2013). These includes but not limited to cultural, religious, and ethnic background. The U & G theory has a number of psychological and social

alignment as it is closely related to people making decisions that will directly or indirectly affect them. For example, a social media user may seek to use the platform in order to get certain information in order to make a decision on which political party to align with. This decision will significantly affect the life of such individual and his/her allies.

Obviously, uses and gratification theory can be applied on Facebook. Many studies have shown that users use this SNS for gratification. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) have done an investigation and came with a conclusion that users use Facebook to preserve existing relationship and reconnect with old friends. Moreover, Lampe et al. (2006) found that the users such as students use Facebook to stay up to date with their friends in school who are away in distance and to know more about friends they have met in the offline space. In addition, Facebook was used by university students to keep in touch with their classmates and teachers, and to be up to date of all the homework, quizzes, and social events (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

2.5.1 Research into U&G on Hate Speech

A few research conducted using uses and gratification theory for observing hate speech online. For example, a study which have done by Karmen Erjavec (2014) examined what are the motivations for the readers to read online hate speech comment below online news. The results have shown that they read these comments for entertainment, guidance, and for seeking information.

Furthermore, Karazon Kisilu (2014), in his research project “How the Youth used Social Media to Spread Ethnic Hate Speech during the 2013 General Elections”, he argues that the youth used the field of social media in order to air their views by spreading hate speech on different political parties to vote for a particular groups. The

researcher figured out that the purpose that youth use the social media is to gratify the need they want by sharing their opinions, using hashtags or tagging other people to follow up their updates. The literature review conducted indicates that there is no research in the field of hate speech against Muslims and Islam on Facebook.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of a Critical Discourse Analysis Approach which I used to analyze my data. Moreover, this chapter covers the data collection method, procedures of the research, research design, sample and population.

3.1 Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology has been used for the present research and Critical Discourse Analysis approach (CDA) has been used to analyse my data. I used Van Dijk' CDA to help me understand this theory and how to use macro-micro levels to analyse my textual data.

This research aims to find how hate speech against Muslims is used through Facebook. Therefore, the textual analysis including comments and posts such as pictures, headlines, news, statements is carried out on macro and micro levels through key words and themes. I try to discover how hate speech takes over in Facebook platform by analysing themes that detect contents on the highest textual level. Moreover, I try to explore what terms have been used to refer to Muslims by analysing key words and phrases used by the commentators.

According to Van Dijk (2008), CDA has mad a combination between micro (communication, language use, verbal interaction, and discourse) and macro (ascendancy, inequality and partilaity between social groups, and power) level. He

argued that in everyday interaction and experience both micro and macro levels “form a unified whole”. This is the reason why I used CDA to analyze my data which are a combination of micro-macro levels.

3.1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Though there are many definitions and conceptualizations to what Critical Discourse Analysis is, however, it could be somewhat referred to the thematic analysis of texts whereby most common features and elements which include language, words, and qualifiers in texts (Van-Dijk, 2008). For example a CDA could be conducted to bring out emerging themes from the language used by political parties on certain social media platforms like Facebook (Wang, 2016).

CDA has been described as a theoretical process that is applicable to a broad range of disciplines, this ranges from medicine, law, pure sciences, applied sciences, and most importantly communication and media studies (Gellers, 2015). This has facilitated efficient analysis of various forms of texts most especially in the political sphere. “CDA has set itself the goal of looking beyond texts and taking into account institutional and sociocultural contexts. In the analysis of journalistic practices, this task is particularly challenging given the fact that journalism intersects with all fields of society” (Carvalho, 2008, pp. 161-162).

CDA is one of the most popular research approaches that is used in analysing media contents at various levels. The appearance of social media has however increased the scholarly adaptation of CDA in research (Mulderrig, 2012). CDA also focuses on the grammatical use of language in texts, which in most cases influences the context and meaning of the media message (Van Dijk, 2008). For example “CDA scholars share a distinctive concern with the relations between texts and social processes, as well as

with the relations between analysis and the practices analysed” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 162)

CDA is also a strategic approach to unravel and discover some assumptions in text which is in most cases used by political actors (Sikka, 2012). For example, political actors use various words and constructs during political campaigns as well as when political debates are at its peak. With the aid of CDA, researchers are able to break down the discuss and analyse the constructs (Lamb, 2013). CDA provides appropriate analysis to all forms of the texts including those that have been intentionally left as well as those clearly stated (Cooper, Olejniczak, Lenette, & Smedley, 2017).

CDA helps in conducting a thoroughly analysis most especially in the political discourse (Maesele, 2015). As such it provides illumination on various communication approaches and procedure there by establishing a clear focus of meanings (Dell, 2016). The approach has over the years provided a very concise and clear Broadway most especially in communication and media studies (Bhatia, 2016).

In a multi paradigmatic review conducted by Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000), the scholar carries out an analysis of the years of existence and use of the CDA approach. Findings in the study indicates that CDA has become widely used by various scholars in an array of fields such as political science, psychology, education and most importantly communication.

Galasiński and Skowronek (2001), in their research used CDA in analysing political speeches delivered by six different political office holders at various fora. Results from

the study indicates that the speeches of the politicians represents their ideology, personality and their individual identity.

3.1.2 Research into CDA on Hate Speech

A number of research conducted using CDA in order to observe hate speech. One of the study was written by Adisa Rasaq , Patrick Udende , and Abubakar Ibrahim, La'aro Oba (2017), they used CDA to draw a line between hate speech, political statement, and the duty of the media in Nigeria. The use of hate speeches in numerous newspapers analysed displayed that media was used by politicians candidates to strengthen hatred and arouse violence amid political and ethnic groups through the campaigning stages as well as in the daily life.

In addition, an article written by Karmen Erjavec and Melita Kovacic (2012), attempts to contribute to display the features of Internet hate speech by uniting discourse analyses of comments on Slovenian news websites with online in-depth interviews with creators of hate speech comments.

3.2 Research Design

For the present study, the design is a case study. A qualitative methodology has been used. This study observed 373 different Facebook pages, posts, and comments from the beginning of January 2018 until the end of March 2018. The textual samples were analyzed using CDA at macro and micro levels over Facebook.

This study is a case study which observes a particular situation that is hate speech on Facebook against Muslim. The study tries to find that Facebook is a platform for conveying hate speech in its pages, posts, and comments. The study provides examples

from the selected Facebook pages that address the issue of hate speech on social media particularly Facebook.

3.3 Population and Sample

This research is based on observing particular Facebook pages and restricted to the following 11 pages : “Anti- Islam Alliance” which has more than 40,000 likes and followers, “Exposing Islam” which is followed by more than 90,000 users, “Anti Islam- Australia” which has more than 95,000 likes and followers, “Ban Islam & and Shariah Law” has more than 73,000, “Boycott Halal Certification in Australia” followed by more than 93,000 users, and “Stop Islamization of the World” has almost 100,000 likes and followers, “The Independent”, “Daily Mail”, “The New York Times” or related to news channel like “BBC”, “Aj+” have more than 10 million followers from all over the world.

The sample for textual analysis consists of 88 posts and about 373 comments from the pages I mentioned above. The pages that I have chosen, presented hate speech directly and indirectly. Firstly, I examined the pages which shows direct hate towards Muslim by searching on the “search button” from my Facebook page, using the words such as “Ban”, “Anti”, Muslim”, “Islam”, “Boycott” and I chose the pages that have the most followers and likers. Secondly, I tried to observe the pages that I already followed on Facebook, such as “the Independent”, “CNN”, “Daily Mail”, by saving posts related to Muslim after reading the comments of these posts.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The textual analysis including comments and posts such as pictures, headlines, news, statements is carried out on macro (theme) and micro (Key words) levels. Because of the large sample of the text that has to be analysed, I focus on the macro (theme)

characteristics of the intentional plans from those who posted such an items to achieve an aim of hate speech discourse through pages, posts and comments.

I first analysed the macro level (themes) in order to figure out what the pages' post and commentators write about. I classified the textual samples of posts (pictures, news, and headlines) and comments to three themes, the theme of fear of "Islamization", the Assumption that Islam is not a peaceful religion, and the theme of stereotyping Muslim women. Those themes are the mostly shared by the pages and commentators who's their intention is to spread hate speech on Facebook platform.

I used micro level through key words (language use, verbal interaction, discourse) to try to find what terms that have been used in the pages, posts and by the commentators to refer to Muslims. In order to find the hate words or terms that have been used to refer to Muslim and Islam, I chose the words with negative connotation that used continuously by the commentators and then I counted how many times this word has been mentioned.

On the one hand, the anonymity that Facebook gives to its users, makes the process to identify the source of this pages a little bit difficult for me. Some pages were not easy to recognize the country that established those pages and the one who ruled and stand behind them, such as "Anti-Islam Alliance" page and "Exposing Islam". "Stop Islamization of the World" page also cannot easy to know the country but the members of these page should not be lee than 18 years old, according to the "About" section on the page.

On the other hand, some pages were easy to identify the country which the members belong to, for example, “Anti- Islam Australia” and “Boycott Halal Certification in Australia” created in Australia. In addition, “Ban Islam & Shariah Law” page is run by American according to “About” section on its page, besides the profile picture of this page is the American flag.

All the samples that I have been chosen based on the content which have reference to an expression that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, or provoke to abhorrence, violence and discrimination towards Muslims.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

I started collecting data for this study from the 1st of January 2018 until the 30th of March 2018. My procedures went through many stages. Firstly, I started saving posts from the pages I already followed on Facebook which have contents related to Muslim news. Most of these pages are a news pages such as “the Independent”, “Daily Mail”, “CNN”, “BBC”.

Secondly, I started to search about pages which directly refer to Muslims by using the “search” button on my Facebook page. By typing the words such as “Ban”, “Anti”, “Muslim”, “Islam”, “Boycott” I was able to have many suggestion pages related to Anti- Islam pages, then I chose the pages that have the most followers and likers. After picking the pages, I started to take an overlook of the pages by reading the “About” section to discover the aim of these pages and if possible to know the countries those pages belong to.

In addition to that, by the “save” item that Facebook offers for the post, I started saving all the posts I needed and which I have found them linked to my aims and objectives,

then, I started to collect my materials by taking screen shots from my mobile for all the pages, posts, and comments that have a relation to hate speech against Muslim.

Lastly, all the materials that I have been observing and collecting were classified in two sections, the pages that I already followed which have nothing to do with hate speech but a pages related to news and other areas but still you can find on those Facebook's wall an area to spread hate speech toward particular group of people, and the pages which directly indicate hate speech toward Muslims and Islam. Then, the materials were organized through Microsoft Power Point, each page included its post and comments. After organizing materials on Microsoft Power Point, I got a hard copy reserved in a file to enhance my credibility of my study.

In order to find the hate words or terms that have been used to refer to Muslim and Islam, I chose the words with negative connotation that used continuously by the commentators and then I counted how many times this word has been mentioned. This part will be shown in the analysis section.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In order to achieve the aim of this study, I used CDA in my analysis according to Van Dijk by using the two levels of macro (themes) and micro (key words of language use, and discourse). This chapter also show the three main themes I found through the analysis (the fear of Islamization, the assumption that Islam related to violence, and stereotyping women). Lastly, this chapter shows the terms that have negative connotation that were used continuously to refer to Muslims.

4.1 Analysis

As I mentioned above in chapter 3, a qualitative methodology has been used for the present study and critical discourse analysis has been used to analyse my data. I used Van Dijk' CDA to help me understand this theory and how to use macro-micro levels to analyse my textual data. According to Van Dijk (2008), CDA has combined the two levels of micro (communication, language use, verbal interaction, and discourse) and macro (predominance, inequality and partiality between social groups, and power) level. He argued that in everyday interaction and experience both micro and macro level "form a unified whole". This is the reason why I used CDA to analyze my data which are a combination of micro-macro levels.

This study aims to find how hate speech is being used through Facebook. The sample for textual analysis consists of 88 posts and about 373 comments from the 11 pages I mentioned above in chapter 3. The pages that I have chosen presented hate speech

directly and indirectly. Therefore, the textual analysis including comments and posts such as pictures, headlines, news, statements is carried out on macro- micro levels, which is, key words and themes. I try to discover how hate speech takes over in Facebook platform by analysing themes that detect contents on the highest textual level. Moreover, I try to explore what terms have been used to refer to Muslims by analysing key words and phrases used by the commentators.

On the one hand, six pages of what I have been observing were having a direct message to create a platform for hate speech against Islam, pages like “Anti- Islam Alliance”, “Exposing Islam”, “Anti Islam- Australia”, “Ban Islam& and Shariah Law”, “Boycott Halal Certification in Australia”, and “Stop Islamization of the World”. Obviously, from their names and the profile picture and cover photos we can realize that the goal of this pages is to show that Islam or Muslims are not welcomed in their countries or even in this century. Then, when you start scrolling through the pages to see the contents, you can find how their posts shows Muslim in most of the time as a “barbaric”, “backwards” and “terrorists” etc.

On the other hand, the other pages I have observing for my study are pages related to newspapers. For instance, “The Independent”, “Daily Mail”, “The New York Times” or related to news channel like “BBC”, and “Aj+” which belongs to Aljazeera channel. Those kind of pages have nothing to do with spreading hate against any particular group, because their message is just to inform people of what is happening in the world, but still indirectly in some points you can see headlines and comments which lead to prejudice and discrimination and to hatred feelings when it comes to news related to Muslim and Islam.

4.1.1 Macro Level (Themes)

I first analysed the macro level (themes) in order to figure out what the pages' post and commentators write about. I classified the textual samples of posts (pictures, news, and headlines) and comments. Most of the examples that I have been examined showed some common and parallels themes in its content which help me to classify three major themes that I based my analysis on. Religious tension, assumption of violence and stereotype lead to three main themes in my findings. The first theme is "the fear of Islamization of the world", the second one is the assumption that Islam isn't a peaceful religion with relating Islam to violence and "Terrorism", and the third theme is "Muslim women".

4.1.1.1 Fear of "Islamization" of the World

"Anti-Islam Alliance" page which has more than 40,000 likes and followers posted a picture on October 10, 2017 "It feels like Islamabad" this statement can described the fear of "Islamization of Europe", and the idea of invasion Europe by Muslims and destroy their way of life.



Figure 2: A Screen Shot taken from Anti-Islam Page from a Post on October 10, 2017

The fear is totally understandable by me as they want to keep their way of life as it is and maintain their secularity as well, yet the main interception is that Islam promote violence. In a numeral of posts, the page represents Muslim as brutal and violent extremists whose goal and aim to destroy them so they are threatening their safety so they must get rid of them, this clearly can be identified by the uses of images and videos. Using terms such as “extremist” and “terrorist” are used as a way to generate religious and ethnic tensions with an indication referring to the flow of immigrants as a means of creating fear.



Figure 3: A Screen Shot Taken from Anti-Islam Alliance Page from a Post on January 18, 2018

At the same page, a headline posted on 18th January 2018 says “Sweden close to civil war”, the post says that the “Swedish Prime Minister doesn’t rule out military intervention against the escalating crime perpetrated by Muslim gangs in the country”. Clearly, the Muslims in this post were described as a “gangs” who constitute a threat to the security of Swedish People (Anti-Islam Alliance, 2018). So, the comments will be like this:



Figure 4: Selection of Comments Following the Post about Swedish Prime Minister on January 2018, from Anti-Alliance Page, Which Can Be Accessed Via The Page. All Comments Have Been Anonymized.

Typically, determined by panic, anxiety, fear and unawareness or desire of dominance, xenophobic perspective can take on numerous forms in all spheres of life, and show themselves in both language use (bad labels, offensive terms, stereotypes) and bigoted, prejudice and discrimination practices. (Awan, 2014).

This can be shown also from the “Anti-Islam-Australia” page, a page which has more than 95,000 followers and likes. The main message of this page is to get rid of all people who don’t follow “their way of life”, so if you don’t follow what I follow, if you don’t eat what I eat, if you don’t wear what I wear you are not welcome in Australia. Again the fear of “Islamization” appear in this page too. A picture has a statement “Will you help protect the Australian way of life?”, and another picture which says that “sharia law should not even be debatable... you cannot enter a foreign country and set up your own set of laws and regulation that contradict most of the world’s moral stands”, the comments below show how the commenters of the two posts follow the “self” ideology with elimination of the “other”:



Figure 5: Selection of Comments Taken from Anti Islam Australia Page. All Comments Have Been Anonymized.

Immigrants and refugees also didn't get rid of the online hate speech, in particular in this page, a post asking their followers if they would agree with "A ban on Muslim immigration in your country?" a study done by the Australian population research institute in 2017 showed that those who support ban of Muslims immigration are 48% of the Australian, 25% opposed and 27% undecided (Masanauskas, 2017). According to this survey, I can clearly see that this page is a mirror for about half of the Australian who wants to ban Muslims immigration only because they are Muslim. Commenters of this post were similar to the previous one that it is enough for us to accept more Muslim.



Figure 6: A Screen Shot Has Been Taken from Anti-Islam Australia Page



Figure 7: Selection of Comments Taken from the Post I Mentioned Above. All Comments Have Been Anonymized

“Boycott Halal Certification in Australia” also shows a direct message of hate against Islam and Muslim that lead some segments of society to create a page and campaign that aim to prohibit the “Halal food” in Australia. The groups behind this campaign claiming that the certification pushes up prices and their money goes to support and fund “terrorism”.

The movement started with a small group of affiliated anti-halal, anti-Islam and nationalistic groups and now it has more than 93,000 followers which constitute the biggest online group for them (Mann, 2014). “Islamists want bacon banned because it offends them...I say ban Islamist because it offends my bacon” a statement had been written on a picture for bacon and a “Muslim protesters” posted on this page which had almost 3000 like and more than 10,000 shares, the picture was followed by the following comments:



Figure 8: Selection of Comments from “Boycott Halal Certification in Australia”. All Comments Have Been Anonymized

Furthermore, when you look at “Stop Islamization of the World” Facebook page and go to “About” section, you can see the message this page want to deliver for its followers which is “to raise awareness about increased Islamization of the world and to defend freedom of expression for all people”. Does freedom of speech allow you to spread hate speech? What are the limits of freedom of speech?

I tried to find an answers for my questions, one of the article done by Pöyhtäri (2014), in his article, he points to freedom of speech and hate. Firstly, he says that individuals should practice freedom of speech without any restrictions. He adds that if there is a harm that affect person directly, Restrictions defensible in this case, so, in our online use I think it is difficult to apply the “harm principle” in practices. The other point is to understand free speech and its limitation according to speech which causes harm, and different kinds of damages directly or indirectly to its target whether they are individuals or groups (Pöyhtäri, 2014).

Back to the page, there was a picture posted on April 6 2017, defined what Islam is, it says “Islam is the belief that it is perfectly acceptable to rape children, beat your spouse, cut off the heads of disbelievers and throw stones at people faces until they die...all because some deluded bearded dude spoke to a magical being in his head, and told you that it was hiss will”. To write something like this as a “freedom of speech”, make a judgments without any knowledge or any proof that confirm what you post, to harm millions of feeling in the name of “freedom of speech” that must be stopped not only against Muslim but all groups that may feel themselves as a target and give arise to community distribution, turbulence and animosity between different people and societies.

4.1.1.2 The Assumption that Islam is not a Peaceful Religion

The “Exposing Islam” page has a direct message that is “Islam means submission not peace”, this statement can undoubtedly be read on the cover photo of the page which have more than 91,000 followers and likes (see Appendix), and this page has been effectively gathering extensive support for Islamophobic elements they have been sharing on their wall.

In one of its post is a picture for the founder of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg with a sarcastic comment on the picture says “Ban critics of Islam. Gets Islamic state death threats anyway”, here we can see the accompanying text that keeps to express the message of religious hate.



Figure 9: A Screen Shot was Taken from “Exposing Islam” Page Posted on May 13, 2017.

This photo had more than 2000 likes, 186 comments and 1483 share. The hatred comments on this photo again contained terms like “terrorist “Fuck Islam” etc...Pointing to Mark one of the commenter said “This Islamic cock sucker kicked me off for telling the truth about Islam”, another one was asking why he is doing that “to allow the terrorists only to use Facebook to destroy humanity?” and other comments such as “Islam is a disease”, “those people are cancer” and so on (See Figure 9). Clearly, “Exposing Islam” is very important page to understand how those who stand behind this page think. Because as I mentioned above, it has extensive of likers and followers. Obviously, the posts are planned to rise up ethnic, and religious conflict by outraging pressures and tensions with its hate speech they adopt.



Figure 10: Selection of Comments from the Post Mentioned Above on “Exposing Islam “page. All Comments Have Been Anonymized.

Staying at the same page, a “picture” assumed to be for the prophet Mohammed which had 769 like, 224 comments and 755 shares was posted on the wall describing his mission in Islam that was to spread his religion through violence, race and murder, to marry and rape a 9 year old girl and his actions are the example for all Muslims to follow, putting references from Quran and Hadith which explain their lack of understanding of what is Islam.

For a person whose intends to express his hatred toward Islam will find this post as a space not only for criticizing but unfortunately to make and create a prejudice judgment without any knowledge of what they are criticizing. I'm not against to question Islam or to criticize it, because we have the right to question and to have an answers, but there is different between those who are questioning and want to get a logical answer and those who just want to spread hate based on their intolerance against Islam. So, the comments below this post be as following:

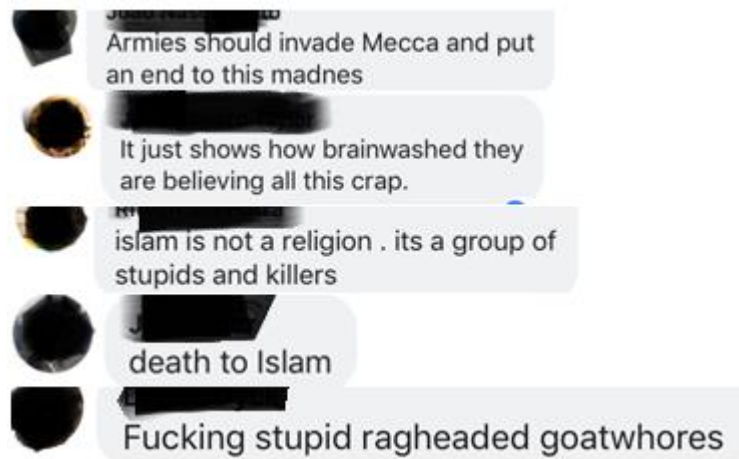


Figure 11: Selection of Comments Taken from Exposing Islam Page. All Comments Have Been Anonymized.

“The independent” Facebook page which includes more than 8 million followers, posted a breaking news on 6th of March that “Rohingya Muslims cannot be returned to Myanmar because of ethnic cleansing, UN says”, when you go deeper with reading the article, you may find nothing that lead you to write a “hatred comment”, on the contrary, the feeling of sorrow for what humanity reached.

According to an article on the Guardian newspaper (2018), at the beginning of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, hate speech blasted on, analysis has exposed, with specialists accusing the social network for generating “chaos” in the country. After

accusing Facebook of playing a main role of spreading hate speech in Myanmar where more than 600,000 Muslims of Rohingya forced to leave to Bangladesh, the researcher Raymond Serrato has observed and analysed about 15,000 posts on Facebook from those who support the nationalist militant “Ma Ba Tha” group.

The analysis which has done by Serrato exhibited that action within the Rohingya group, which embraces 55,000 members, burst with recording a 200% rise in interactions (Safi, 2018). Moreover, Serrato, speaking to Guardians, he added that Facebook helped specific group to mark and determine the conflict in Myanmar, by contrast, Facebook had been used to spread misinformation and hate speech (Safi, 2018).

Likewise the post about Rohingya crisis, Facebook, also, has been accused for violence in many places in the region such as Sri Lanka. Kandy district was a target for Buddhist nationalist fundamentalists to attack Muslim. Harin Fernando, the minister of telecommunication in Sri Lanka said to the Guardian that the government ordered to shut down many social media services including Facebook (Safi, 2018). “Sri Lanka declares state of emergency” a headline of a post publish on the Independent page on March 6 after a violence attack against Muslims in Sri Lanka contains also some of hatred speech. Some of the comments of the two posts I mentioned above (Rohingya and Sri Lanka) were like the following:



Figure 12: Selection of Comments from the Independent Page on March 6 2018, All Comments Have Been Anonymized

Another posts showed the stereotypical Image about Islam in the comments. For example, on one hand, you can see articles which give a positive news or good news toward Islam like an article was about how Quran proves that Islam is a peaceful religion, or an article was about a study that found Islamic prayer reduces pain back.

In addition to previous examples, a breaking news informed that two people dead in France ‘terror attack’, using the word “terror” when Muslims do the action, but in contrast, when it comes to non- Muslim they don’t mention this word, they may say “mental issue” or “bomber” like the post in the same page posted on 22th March “Austin bomber was part on Christian survivalist group”, when you read the article, the word “terrorist” is not mentioned once, so just because he is a “white” “Christian” man he doesn’t have to be called a “terrorist”. Let’s take a look for the comments toward the first three example I mentioned above. Again, some of the comments below related Islam with terrorism, violence and killing acts:



Figure 13: Selection of Posts and Comments from the Independent Facebook Page

Ramadan, the holy month for Muslims, also has been related to violence and terrorism. In everyday of Last Raman “Stop Islamization of the World” page posted pictures that show how many terror attacks have been done in the name of Islam.



Figure 14: Selections of Picture Posted in Ramadan 2017 from “Stop Islamization of the World” Page

“Ramadan Bombathon” was the phrase that this page used in order to show that Muslims and Islam in particular isn’t a peaceful religion that even in their holiest month they are killing and bombing people. This post followed by comments like this:



Figure 15: Selection of Comments from ‘Stop Islamization of the World’ Page, All Comments Have Been Anonymized

4.1.1.3 Theme of Stereotyping Muslim Women

Another issue this study points out is the Muslim women in the eye of Westerner people. Most of the posts which include Muslims women also faced a hatred speech based on stereotyping women in islam as “oppressed”, and the women in Islam are need to be saved from the “oppressor”. A study done by Eero Janson (2011) called “Stereotype that define “us”: the case of Muslim women” highlights the issue of some western countries the hijab has become “the epitome of oppression of Muslim women” and how some of the countries banned such kind of clothes.

The article argues that these regulations are based on two faulty assumption about Islam and particularly Muslim women. Firstly, they assumed that these women are forced to wear it and then they need to be saved. Secondly, those clothes of Muslim

women conflict with the “Western values” and don’t fit with the “civilized life style” (Janson, 2011). This conclusion helped to understand the comments towards any post come with a picture or related to Muslim women especially those who are wearing hijab or niqab, because most of the images that come when they share post related to them have covered women.



Figure 16: The Independent Post

Here are some of Facebook pages’ post that confirm how Muslims women are seen by the Western. Firstly, an article posted by The Independent Facebook page on 5th of February “Debenhams becomes first major department store to sell Hijab”. This article talks about a UK department store to sell hijabs, and how it is good to wide their customers and therefore it is all about money for the founder. Similar to this, “The hijab is now an official part of police uniform in Scotland”, moreover, a post by the same page posted about the fashion week in London and how a “Muslim designer makes history with first ever fashion show to feature hijab in every look”. The comments on these posts were similar:



Figure 17: Selection of Comments from the Independent Facebook Page. All Comments Have Been Anonymized.

Secondly, CNN Facebook page shared a video talked about the new Barbie that wear hijab and the comment also were similar to the previous like “Does it come with a suicide vest also?” referring to hijabi Barbie, “The Symbol of oppression for millions of oppressed women”, “The physical representation of the oppression of millions of women should not be normalized”. BBC’s post also got some of hatred comments towards a video posted about a Chinese hijabi. “You support oppressive Islamic patriarchy”, “She’s apparently happy playing dress up while true Muslim women are abused, raped and murdered by husband and family members, “You look better without hijab, now you look like stupid imitator of medieval Arab culture which is an insult to great Chinese intellectual tradition!”.



Figure 18: Selection of Comments from CNN Page. All Comments Have Been Annonymized

In Daily Mail page which have more than 15 million followers and likes , the things are a little bit different, some of its content you may see an indirect message that it may share Islamophobic posts. For example, a post shared on 15th October 2017 which included a picture for a woman, a headline says “Muslim ‘huntress’ in a hijab teaches her children to SHOOT in Australian bush”, and above the picture a statement was written that she “whispers an Arabic prayers when she pulls the trigger”. “Muslim, “huntress”, “hijab”, “SHOOT”, “Arabic prayer”, using these terms in such to describe legal act for shooting to get meat and feed her children, why is this even a “news”, why even important to know that she is Muslim. Christian and white people hunt too, would it make a news? This article showed how the author tried to portray Muslim negatively and incite hate against them. Here are some of hatred comments toward the post:



Figure 19: Selection of Comments from Daily Mail Page. All Comments Have Been Annonymized

Another post by Daily Mail was about arresting an Afghani asylum seeker for killing his girlfriend. The statement that has been written above the picture “She refused to convert to Islam and wear a Hijab”. As a reader, you will think that if you will not convert to Islam or wear hijab, death is your destiny, knowing that Islam allowed the marriage of non-Muslim. Undoubtedly, what this man has done is contrary to all moral and religious standards but again Daily Mail wanted to show that Islam is the problem and women in Islam are not treated fairly.



Figure 20: Selection of Comments from Daily Mail Page. All Comments Have Been Annonymized

4.1.2 Micro Level (Key Words)

I used micro level through key words (language use, verbal interaction, discourse) to try to find what terms that have been used in the pages, posts and by the commentators to refer to Muslims. In order to find the hate words or terms that have been used to refer to Muslim and Islam, I chose the words with negative connotation that used continuously by the commentators and then I counted how many times this word has been mentioned.

4.1.2.1 Hatred Words

Table 1: Top Words That Have Been Used Continuously With Negative Connotation

Words	Frequency
Fuck	70
Terrorist	50
Stupid/Dump	27
Oppressed	26

Barbaric	16
Backwards	16
Bombers	15
Disgusting/Yuck/Gross	15
Invaders	12
ISIS	11
Evil	11
Sick	10
Shit	9
Pigs	8
Animals	7

4.2 Findings

In the analysis part, a critical discourse analysis have been used for my textual materials of all the Facebook pages, posts, and comments. Most of the materials are having common subject or theme in its contents which led me to make a typology for them. Three major themes of hate speech have been discovered through my observation and analysis which are “the fear of “Islamization”, relating Muslims with violence or “terrorism”, and the stereotypical image of Muslim women.

4.2.1 Findings on the Fear of “Islamization”

Today, Europe is at the top of Islamophobia, with a general tendency to fear the “Islamization” of the European continent through migration and large waves of asylum, which reflect the nationalist tendencies that could turn to violence. A study done by Denis Muller (2016) have shown that the fear of “Islamization” is due to two main reasons. Firstly, the image that Islam is an intolerant religion. From this point of

view, Muslims see that the world have to accept and tolerate them while Muslims show the opposite towards non-Muslim. The second view is that Islam is seen as threat because non-Muslim assume that there is a relation between Muslim and terrorism.

The combination of these two points of views lead to a strong fear about what West might face when they open the borders for the immigrants without thinking about the consequences. And because most of those asylum seekers are Muslims, and Muslims are likened to terrorism, therefore immigrants are equated to terrorism. (Muller, 2016).

The policies of fear mentioned above may be attributed to several factors in the West, including the fear of the unknown, and the ignorance of the religion of the other and the promotion of extremists when talking about Islam. Therefore, we often find that some people in the West mix between Islam and what they call "Islamaization" without distinguishing between the two terms. Some also equate Islam with terrorism, in addition to accusing Muslims of wanting to gradually "Islamize" Western society.



Figure 21: A Screenshot Taken from Anti-Islam Australia Facebook Page

This clearly can be seen through the pages such as “Stop Islamization of the World”, “Anti-Islam Australia, “Boycott Halal Certification in Australian”, and other pages and posts which have direct message to not accept Muslim and their way of life in their own country as Muslim threatening their existence. For instance, the post by “Anti-Islam Australia” page which ask its followers “would you support a ban on Muslim immigration in your country? Yes or no?” in addition, a picture posted by the same page with a statement that “You cannot enter a foreign country and set up your own set of laws and regulations that contradict most of the world’s moral stands”.

Some of the comments have also shown the fear of “Islamization” of their way of life as I discussed in the analysis section, and describing Muslims as “invaders”. For example, “stop bring these scums in our country” (See Appendix A), “Islam is totally incompatible with modern Western civilization” (See Appendix B), “Islam is invading your country and you are doing nothing to stop it!” (See Appendix C), “no immigration

or refugees from Islamic countries” (See Appendix D), “they are INVADERS to DIVIDE and DESTROY!!”, “It is fuckin INVASION!!” (See Appendix E).

4.2.2 Findings on the Assumptions that Islam isn’t a Peaceful Religion

The media, most of the time, presents a false image of reality, and the image that draws the Arabs and Muslims in the Western media often incorrect, biased and stereotyped. After 9/11 Muslims have been accused for all terror attacks that happens in the world in particular in America and Europe. Therefore, drawing an image of Muslims are not peaceful people and label them as a “terrorist”.

West and Lloyd (2017) argues that numerous stories in the different kind of news media have created a linkage between Islam and violence in particular terrorism. This negative media coverage of Muslims is based on the increased prejudice against Muslims and Islam in general. Another concern is that “terrorist” is more likely to describe Muslim rather than non-Muslim or white people even if the action of terror isn’t different.

The conclusion that they have drawn from their study have shown that there is difficulties to have a clear solution for labelling Muslim as a “terrorist” by non-Muslims. Their experiments show that bias and discrimination against Muslims play an important part in the selection of vocabulary. Therefore, the actions are probably considered to be a terrorism when committed by a Muslim while when it comes to white or no-Muslim they will find another terms to describe the action. For example, they may call a person with “mental problems” rather than a “terrorist”.

This point has been confirmed in my examples that I have been analysed. Many of Facebook pages, posts, and comments pointed out to the relation of Muslims and

terrorism. For instance, “Channel 4 News” posted on June 5, 2017 after London Bridge Attack news about what Sadiq Khan, the London Mayor, commented on this terror action. He said “I’m angry and furious that these three men are seeking to justify their actions by using the faith I belong to” and he added that “terrorists’ ideology has no place in Islam” (See Appendix F).

The commentators towards the previous example have shown that “Terrorism” is also related to Khan because he is a Muslim. “Sadiq Khan was a lawyer that defended the 9/11 hijackers. This man is a terrorist” (See Appendix G), “these terrorists believe they are true Muslims, as do all Islamist terrorist” (See Appendix H), “I know Islam is a peaceful religion. It’s just coincidence that those terrorists are Muslim. Bad luck?” (See Appendix I). The word “terrorist” where mentioned 51 times in the comments.

4.2.3 Findings on the Stereotypical Image of Muslim Women

Social Media and media in general has a significant role in creating and shaping opinion for the public, raising awareness and influencing policymakers. The image of the Islamic world, Islam and Muslims as portrayed by Western media is mostly negative, distorted, superficial and stereotypical and often characterized by ignorance. Women constitute one of the social strata in the Muslim world, often represented incorrectly or inadequately in the media, whether in Arab or Islamic countries or abroad.

In the Western media, there is a general perception that women are oppressed in Islam and in Muslim societies as a result of media reports that highlight some negative practices (such as female genital mutilation, honor killings and underage marriages) and because of the laws in some Muslim countries (such as preventing women from driving - previously - and not granting the mother's nationality to children if she is

married someone outside her country, and don't apply penalties for harassment or violence against women), And also because of the extremist views of a small group of Muslims about women and their persecution by so-called terrorist groups, which are widely covered as a majority opinion.

With all the points I mentioned above Western people draw negative image towards Muslim women and put all the blame towards Islam. Without knowing that Islam has nothing to do with the most of the things that I have mentioned. And this is one of our problem in Muslim and Arab countries that we don't convey the real message of Muslim's women in Islam. Therefore, the commentators' points of view is totally understandable by me, but still you can't judge something and blame the whole religion according to some actions that done by particular people or particular country.

This image have been shown through the post by the Facebook pages that I have observed and by the commentators who drew their opinions towards any post that related to Muslim women. For example, when "The Independent" posted about the first fashion show for hijab, some of the commentators accused "The Independent" for promoting "Slavery" (See Appendix J), furthermore, one of the comment was about that this show is celebration for an "emblem of female oppression" (See Appendix K). To conclude, Hijab in most of the comments where a "symbol of oppression", 26 times the word "oppression" where used by the commentators and women are such a "slaves" for their men.

4.2.4 Findings of Hatred Words

In all of the material analyzed, writers of hate speech comments used words with tremendously negative connotations to describe Muslims. Expressions have been used by the commentators in order to label them as "terrorist", "barbaric", "evil" to show

their hatred. Because of the word limitation of this study, I present only those words or terms that have been used continuously. Beside general description such as “backwards”, “animals”, “pigs” “idiot”, and “invaders” the commentators are often used “cancer”, and “disease” to describe Islam, with an intensive use of the word “Fuck” which have been used more than 70 time. More importantly, the phrase “religion of peace” was used 12 times ironically that Islam is not a peaceful religion but the opposite.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains of the summarization of the whole study and give a logical conclusions based on the observations. This chapter covers three main points which are the summary of the study, the conclusion drawn from this study, and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

Nowadays, SNS have become priority in our daily lives and events to become a vital social platform for computer-mediated communication (Lin & Lu, 2011). Boyd and Ellison (2007) claimed that SNS is the space that allows users to create his or her profile, to engage with other users from all over the world, to share images, text, and to join members by groups. Moreover, SNS allows people to express themselves by sharing their opinions, and improve and preserve interactions with others (Lin & Lu, 2011).

In addition, Joinson (2008) in his research article argues that the most noticeable functions of SNS sites are communication and picture sharing. Most of SNS members has a “wall” where users can post messages and photos that are noticeable to friends within the SNS. When you accept friends they can look at the messages and photos and add comments.

Facebook as I mentioned above, is one of those SNS which makes it easy for us to connect with whoever you want and whenever you want. Facebook began operation in 2004 and since then, the platform has become a reliable and dependent way of sharing or receiving information and most importantly a means of interpersonal or group communication (Ross, et al., 2009). It allows us to share and convey our feelings, opinions and beliefs to a large number of audiences, these audiences can be your family, friends, or even anonymous audiences that you don't know in person. Overall, with two billion users, Facebook has become one of the most important SNS (About Facebook, 2011).

The comment box on Facebook post enable the public to show their opinions, their points of view which may later lead to become a debate where two or more users can argue about something published on a particular page. Facebook gives a freedom of speech for its users to talk about whatever they want. With all the features Facebook give for its user to communicate with each other, sometimes these debates or views may turn to be a hate speech targeting a specific group of people which lead to harm those targeted people socially, physically, and also psychologically.

More importantly, research has shown that physical and mental health can be directly affected those targeted group as a result of being subjected to harassment because of their identity, race or religion in an environment that is antagonistic to their legitimate rights and interests, an environment where they make them feel as inferior and threaten their safety and ability to carry out their daily lives without annoyance (Johnstone, 2016). Advocates of speech regulation also agree with this point in which hate speech can have a "Psycho -emotional harm" such as isolation, self-hatred and humiliation feelings (Bennett, 2016).

Waldron (2012) points on the difficulties of limiting speech. However, it is important to give this discussion a great importance because of the great impact of hate speech can be affected the targeted people. The proverb “words kill” can explain how words can harm people. The harm is not limited to specific individuals targeted by radicals or individuals belonging to specific ethnic, race and religious groups. The harm is also generated by those who consider themselves as a superior community that turns a blind eye to hate speech in the name of freedom of speech or freedom of expression (Amos & Elizabeth, 2017).

This study aims to explore how Facebook is used as a platform for hate speech against Muslims and Islam and which terms is also being used to refer to a Muslim by observing and analysing a particular Facebook pages, groups and posts on one hand, and by observing and analysing the comments of the users towards these pages, groups and posts on the other hand.

Data were collected through many stages. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, firstly, I started saving posts from the pages I already followed on Facebook which have contents related to Muslim news. Most of these pages are a news pages such as “the Independent”, “Daily Mail”, “CNN”, “BBC”. The sample for textual analysis consists of 88 posts and about 373 comments from the pages I mentioned above. The pages that I have chosen presented hate speech directly and indirectly.

Secondly, I started to search about pages which directly refer to Muslims by using the “search” button on my Facebook page. By typing the words such as “Ban”, “Anti”, “Muslim”, “Islam”, “Boycott” I was able to have many suggestion pages related to Anti- Islam pages, then I chose the pages that have the most followers and likers. After

picking the pages, I started to take an overlook of the pages by reading the “About” section to discover the aim of these pages and if possible to know the countries those pages belong to.

In addition to that, by the “save” item that Facebook offers for the post, I started saving all the posts I needed and which I have found them linked to my aims and objectives, then, I started to collect my materials by taking screen shots from my mobile for all the pages, posts, and comments that have a relation to hate speech against Muslim.

Lastly, all the materials that I have been observing and collecting were classified in two sections, the pages that I already followed which have nothing to do with hate speech but a pages related to news and other areas but still you can find on those Facebook’s wall an area to spread hate speech toward particular group of people, and the pages which directly indicate hate speech toward Muslims and Islam. Then, the materials were organized through Microsoft Power Point, each page included its post and comments. After organizing materials on Microsoft Power Point, I got a hard copy reserved in a file to enhance my credibility of my study.

A qualitative methodology has been used for the present research and critical discourse analysis has been used to analyse my data. I used Van Dijk’ CDA to help me understand this theory and how to use macro-micro levels to analyse my textual data. According to Van Dijk (2008), CDA has made a combination of the two levelsof micro and macro. Van Dijk argued that in everyday interaction and experience both micro and macro level “form a unified whole” (Schiffirini, et al., 2008). This is the reason why I used CDA to analyze my data which are a combination of micro-macro levels.

Therefore, the textual analysis including comments and posts such as pictures, headlines, news, statements is carried out on macro- micro levels, which is, key words and themes. I try to discover how hate speech takes over in Facebook platform by analysing themes that detect contents on the highest textual level. Furthermore, I try to explore what terms have been used to refer to Muslims by analysing key words and phrases used by the commentators. In order to find the hate words or terms that have been used to refer to Muslim and Islam, I chose the words with negative connotation that used continuously by the commentators and then I counted how many times this word has been mentioned. This part will be shown in the analysis section.

The findings of my study show three major themes of hate speech. The three themes that have been discovered through my observation and analysis are “the fear of “Islamization”, relating Muslims with “terrorism”, and the stereotypical image of Muslim women. Obviously, the fear of Muslims takeover Europe, America, Australia or other countries that pages belong to was a concerning issue to those commentators and publisher of hate speech. Such as pages “Stop Islamization of the World”, “Exposing Islam”, “Anti-Islam Alliance” which have a direct image that Islam is a “cancer” and Muslims are “invaders” who want to take control over the world. As a result of that fear, the study shows how Muslim refugees and immigrants have been viewed on these pages negatively with showing a hostile environment for them.

False assumption that Islam isn’t a peaceful religion, relating Muslims to violence actions as well as labeling them as “terrorist” is also one of the major theme of my study. In every news related to terror attack Muslims and Islam in general were the first to be accused. Precisely, “terrorist” is a term that have been used by the commentator not only for the news related to violence but also for a positive news

related to Muslim. For example, when “The Independent” posted on February 5, 2018 about a study that shows that Islamic prayer reduces back pain, one of the comment was “reduces back pain and increases terrorist thoughts”.

Muslim women also had a part of hate speech in Facebook. The examples that I discussed in my analysis have shown the image of the Muslim woman in the eyes of the West. The image of the oppressed, submissive, and weak woman has captured Western perceptions of Arab women. These perceptions established the limited knowledge of the provisions of the Islamic religion as well as the customs and traditions of Arab societies and conservative Arab Islamic culture in relation to women. Their commentators’ description for Muslim women as “oppressed” have been used more than 25 times in samples that I observed.

Lastly, the findings show the terms that used by the commentators to describe Muslims and in order to complete this aim I counted only those words or terms that have been used continuously with negative connotation in referring to Muslims such as “backwards”, “animals”, “pigs” “idiot”, “barbaric”, “terrorist”, and “invaders”, also the commentators are often used “cancer”, and “disease” to describe Islam, with an intensive use of the word “Fuck” which have been used more than 70 time. The phrase “religion of peace” used ironically to show that Islam doesn’t represent peace.

5.2 Conclusion Drawn from the Study

It should be noted that freedom of speech is a fundamental right that everyone should enjoy, however this study has found that some Facebook pages have been used as a means to promote hate and conflated those principles of free speech with religious and

racial hatred of communities, simply because of the way they dress and what they practice.

While social networks have been known for their democratising potential and are considered important tools for promotion of freedoms, democracy, and human rights, it is important to note that they have also been used to radicalise, exclude, enrage, promote hate and mobilise to ethnic conflict (Munyua 2014). Few studies have taken a uses and gratifications approach to studying the Internet and even fewer have narrowed their focus to look at social media (Eborsole, 2009). As an “active audience” theory, uses and gratifications provides a vantage point from which to look at the ways that audiences respond to the breadth and depth of information that is made available by these new media (Eborsole, 2009). As an active audience I tried to use Facebook not only for entertainment and seeking information but to look for one of the issue that must take inconsideration such as hate speech on Facebook. As a Muslim girl and a student in the Communication and Media Studies field I find myself responsible to show that although Facebook has policies and regulations that prevent such things like nudity or other sexually suggestive content and hate speech, we still can find that Facebook isn’t controlling some content which have hate speech as I showed in my study.

Incitement, violence and hatred, contents have become commonplace on Social Networking Sites especially on Facebook. Some incitement leads to forms of violence and hatred that are not matched by any accountability or prosecution. There is a vital need to give an awareness of the line that divide freedom of expression from hate speech in which users can control how to avoid any kind of engaging in hate speech online in any form which is difficult to contain in the event that it occurs due to the

ease of its rapid spread. In order to reduce hate speech, it is necessary to stand up to legislation and laws that prevent such discourse in societies, which threatens national security and the cohesion of societies.

Hate speech continues to exist as a multifaceted issue and growth of online hate against particularly group such as Muslims, including, abhorrence, bigotry, discrimination, and intimidations there is a necessity to have more depth studies on this issue. With providing a snapshot on the hate speech issue against Muslim in the online space, this study aimed to examine how Facebook is being used as a platform for hate speech against Muslims. The aims of this study have been achieved through examining and observing 88 posts with over 373 comments from different Facebook pages using CDA to analyse my data in a short-term which started in 1st of January 2018 until 30th of March 2018. The findings showed three major themes that have been commonly existed through the materials I collected (the fear of “Islamization”, the assumptions that Islam is not a peaceful religion and stereotyping Muslim women). As a result, those themes lead to create a hostile environment on Facebook which make it a platform for hate speech against Muslim and Islam as well.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

There is a need to use accountability in addressing hate speech on Facebook platform in specific and promoting rights to expand diversity and social integration in various spheres of life. Moreover, maybe a further studies should point out on strengthening the regulation of hate speech and its procedures that possibly will be used to look out on the threats of online hate which made against all people with different background including anti-Muslim abuse.

Studies should have be done on how to Report hate speech when facing any kind of abusing and this kind of report shall be taken in consideration from Facebook as well to establish regulations, penalties and laws to control this phenomenon.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 1st Example on Findings of the Fear of “Islamization”



Appendix B: 2nd Example on Findings of the Fear of “Islamization”



Appendix C: 3rd Example on Findings of the Fear of “Islamization”



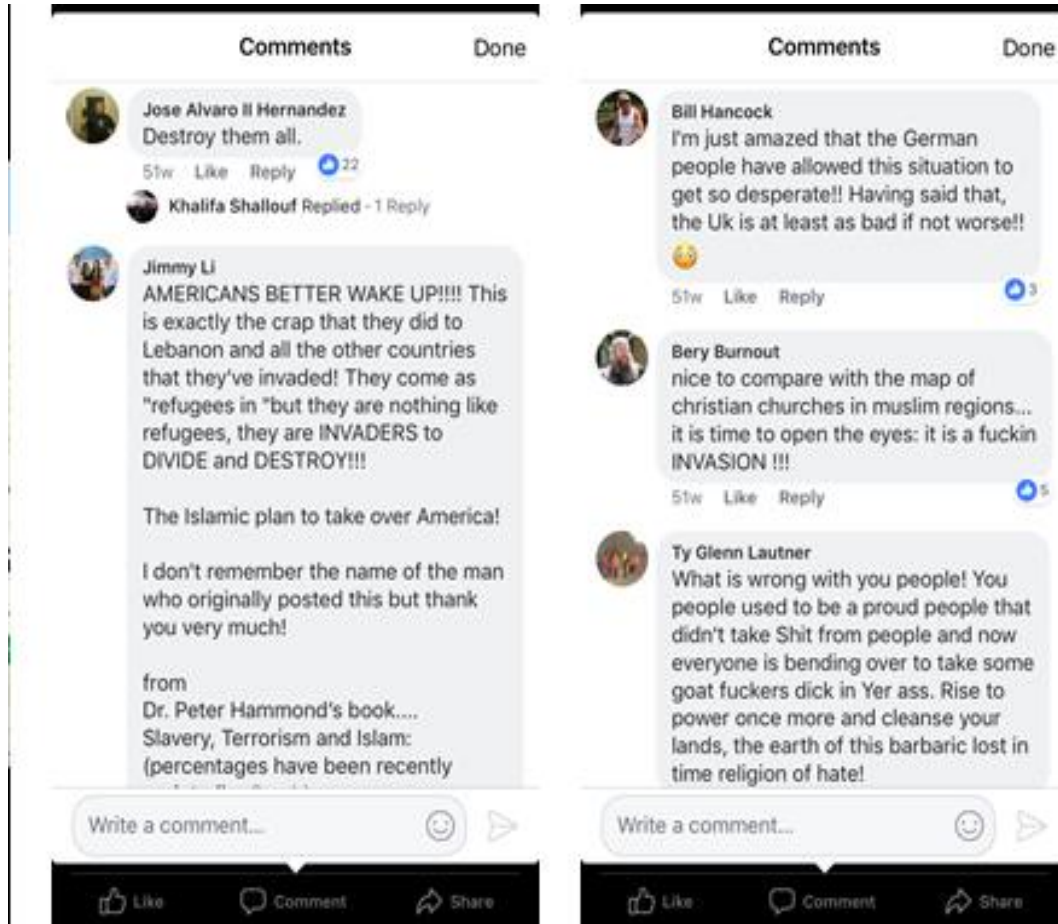
Appendix D: 4th Example on Findings of the Fear of “Islamization”

The screenshot shows a Facebook post titled "Anti Islam - Australia's Post". It features four comments:

- Christine Mary**: Agreed...
1d Like Reply
- Gail Zancanaro**: The question is why are we supporting such evil people ,they all need to go back to where they belong which isn't in our country as they will never fit .And where to they get off that they want things in our country to be changed because they don't like it well all I can say to them BAD LUCK THIS IS OUR COUNTRY .
2d Like Reply 1
- Jeffrey Smith**: and no immigration or refugees from Islamic countries.
2d Like Reply 6
- Colin Smith**: Our government hasn't got the guts to do it.
2d Like Reply

At the bottom, there is a comment input field with the text "Write a comment..." and icons for adding photos, GIFs, emojis, and sharing. Below the input field are navigation icons for home, friends, marketplace, notifications, and a menu.

Appendix E: 5th Example on Findings of the Fear of “Islamization”



Appendix F: 1st Example on the Assumption that Islam isn't Peaceful Religion.



Appendix G: 2nd Example on the Assumption that Islam isn't Peaceful Religion.



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from 'Channel 4 News'. The post has five comments. The comments are as follows:

- Daniel Thomas**: You shouldn't be mayor of London that's how we start off get rid of him
41w Like Reply
- Joe Sheridan**: Sadiq
They belong to the same faith as you and possibly have even prayed at the same mosque.
They kill in the name of Allah and are Muslims.
42w Like Reply 3
- Alex Kennedy**: Sadiq Khan was a lawyer that defended the 9/11 hijackers. This man is a terrorist
41w Like Reply
- Bob Edmondson**: I wish that little squirt Sadiq Khan would go and play on the motorway.
42w Like Reply
- Omar Sharif**: [Comment partially obscured]

At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a text input field with the placeholder 'Write a comment...', a smiley face icon, and a paper plane icon. Below this is a navigation bar with icons for home, friends, marketplace, notifications, and a menu.

Appendix H: 3rd Example on the Assumption that Islam isn't Peaceful Religion.

Unnn well noing a vigil.... thank god.... i was hoping someone would hold a vigil.... for a while i thought the terrorists had won, but we are holding a vigil....whew....
41w Like Reply

Naranan Raman
There are many more Barbarians moving freely in Britain . This Barbarians must be round up and send to back their own country. Before more damage are done this Barbarians in the name of religion. It's the Muslims culture and traditions inherited from middle East Countries.
41w Like Reply

Jeff Nelson
This man cant even tell us where the last 400 english born muslims are that have been let back into the uk after fighting with the brainwashed extremist.
41w Like Reply

Soon Dirband

...have done better but then i people have very short memories
42w Like Reply

William Johnson-Smith
These terrorists believe they are true Muslims, as do all Islamist terrorists.
42w Like Reply

William Johnson-Smith Replied · 2 Replies

Mark Kelly
Yeah and there's plenty more. Anybody on an exstreemist list should be tagged now ! Apologies later.
42w Like Reply

Tom Florrr
Swéta what percentage of syllables does he skip here
42w Like Reply

Hanzalah Khayyam
Trump is trying to weaken sadiq khan's position so that people wont support him and don't listen to him...stupid Trump

Write a comment... Write a comment...

Appendix I: 4th Example on the Assumption that Islam isn't Peaceful Religion.

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from 'Channel 4 News's Post'. The first comment is from Jan Wong, who says, 'Yeah yeah yeah. I know Islam is a peaceful religion. It's just a coincidence that those terrorists are Muslim. Bad luck, huh?'. The second comment is from Jeremy Critchlow, who asks, 'In Christianity, someone who breaks with the core principles of the faith can be ex-communicated. If the actions of Islamic fundamentalists are 'Haram' - or forbidden, why are they not publicly expelled from their religion and from their community? If this was done, those who would seek to divide us would no longer have a credible argument to blame all muslims for the actions of a small minority of fanatics.' Below the comments is a text input field for a new comment, and a navigation bar with icons for home, friends, marketplace, notifications, and a menu.

< Channel 4 News's Post ...

Jan Wong
Yeah yeah yeah. I know Islam is a peaceful religion. It's just a coincidence that those terrorists are Muslim. Bad luck, huh?
42w Like Reply 33

Jan Wong Replied · 17 Replies

Jeremy Critchlow
In Christianity, someone who breaks with the core principles of the faith can be ex-communicated. If the actions of Islamic fundamentalists are 'Haram' - or forbidden, why are they not publicly expelled from their religion and from their community? If this was done, those who would seek to divide us would no longer have a credible argument to blame all muslims for the actions of a small minority of fanatics.
42w Like Reply 23

Chantelle Gallagher Replied · 52 Replies

Siavash Esbati

Write a comment... 🗨️

🏠 👤 🏪 🔔 ☰

Appendix J: 1st Example on Findings of Stereotyping Muslim Women

THE INDEPENDENT 3:43 PM

 The Independent
December 2 · 🌐

Awesome



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK
Muslim designer makes history with first ever fashion show to feature a hijab in every look

Like Comment Share

👍👎👏 12.1K

1,310 shares

 Laplace T. Le
The hijab is a symbol of oppression.

Write a comment...

📄 👤 🏠 🔔 ☰

The Independent's Post

Like Comment Share

👍👎👏 12.1K

1,310 shares

 Laplace T. Le
The hijab is a symbol of oppression. Millions of women are forced to wear the hijab in Islamic majority countries. Whereas here, the freedom to be oppressed is the new liberation. In a misguided attempt at protecting the "oppressed", we have normalized oppression. Ironically, the hijab is a symbol of "empowerment" in a society whose liberated them from a culture of religious oppression. Instead, they made self-oppression a choice and denounced their liberator as the oppressor of their liberty. It is not only ironic, but it is stupid and absurdly sadomasochistic.

16w Like Reply

 Stella Baldoka Replied · 200 Replies

Write a comment...

📄 👤 🏠 🔔 ☰

The Independent's Post

👍👎👏 12.1K

16w Like Reply

 Stella Baldoka Replied · 200 Replies

 Sirem Erkek Noble
Don't promote slavery, Independent. Most women and girls who wear hijab are not wearing it by their choice. They are told to do so by oppressive and bigoted male relatives around them.

16w Like Reply

 Azlina Binte Mohamed Yusoff... · 17 Replies

 Jay Arfa Sharma
The hijab was never a part of any middle-eastern culture. It was enforced on the middle-eastern people at various points in history, during the waves of Arab Islamic invasion from 1000 AD to the 1970s. Now people are just used to it. They've

Write a comment...

📄 👤 🏠 🔔 ☰

Appendix K: 2nd Example on Findings of Stereotyping Muslim Women

