HATE
METER

Hate speech tool for monitoring, analysing
and tackling Anti-Muslim hatred online

REC Action Grant (REC-DISC-AG-2016-04)
24 months (01.02.2018 - 31.01.2020)

Guidelines on the socio-technical requirements of the HATEMETER platform

EC eCrime
ICT, law & criminology

UNIVERSITY
OF TRENTO - Italy

FONDAZIONE
BRUNO KESSLER

UNIVERSITÉ
TOULOUSE 1
CAPITOLE

Teesside
University

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL
ITALIA

STOP HATE UK

CCIF
COLLECTIF CONTRE
L'ISLAMOPHOBIE
EN FRANCE

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is defined as "indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam and Muslims" (Bleich, 2011: 1582), evinced as feelings of anxiety or perceptions of fear and hatred. Additionally, Islamophobia does not merely entail anxious awareness or perceptions rooted in apprehension and contempt, but also discriminatory attitudes and hostile practices through which it is manifested and expressed, such as harassment, verbal and physical abuse as well as hate crimes, perpetrated in both offline and online contexts. In the last decade, Islamophobia has gained momentum through the use of the Internet to spread polemics and anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim discourses to a worldwide audience (Larsson, 2007), along with new media technologies including social media platforms and global digital networks (Horsti, 2017). With the advent of the Internet, online or cyber Islamophobia has seen a large increase, with spaces on the Internet now becoming a platform for the spreading of its rhetoric, in which xenophobic viewpoints and racist attitudes towards Muslims being easily disseminated into public debate (Ekman, 2015). Online Islamophobia takes place primarily through blogs and social media, as well as through traditional media outlets seen online (Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez, 2016). According to Oboler (2016), anti-Muslim hate, much like many other forms of hate, is likely unlikely to remain purely virtual, with online Islamophobia likely to incite religious hatred and xenophobia leading to real world crimes and a rise in political extremism both on the far-right and from the radicalisation of Muslim youth in response to such messages of exclusion. Thus, as Larsson (2007) points out, it is important to question to what extent the Internet is being used to spread and foster anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic opinions in contemporary society.

Project Hatemeter aims at systematising, augmenting and sharing knowledge on anti-Muslim hatred online. We hope to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations in preventing and tackling Islamophobia at EU level by developing and testing an ICT tool (i.e. Hatemeter platform) that automatically monitors and analyses Internet and social media data on anti-Muslim hatred. Such an analysis will produce computer-assisted responses and suggestions on how to support counter-narratives and awareness raising campaigns. More specifically, backed on a strong interdisciplinary effort (criminology, social sciences, computer sciences, statistics, law), the Hatemeter platform will use a combination of natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, and big data analytics/visualisation to:

- identify and systematise in real-time actual "red flags" of Anti-Muslim hate speech and/or possible related threats online (Real-time Identification);
- understand and assess the sets of features and patterns associated with trends of Islamophobia online (In-depth Understanding);
- develop an effective tactical/strategic planning against Anti-Muslim hatred online through the adoption of the innovative Computer Assisted Persuasion (CAP) approach (Tactical/Strategic Response);
- produce an accurate counter-narrative framework for preventing and tackling Islamophobia online, and building knowledge-based and tailored awareness raising campaigns (Counter-Narratives Production).

The Hatemeter platform will be piloted and tested in three NGO/CSOs of EU MSs where the magnitude of the problem is considerable but no systematic responses has been implemented (France, Italy and the United Kingdom), thus enabling Project Hatemeter to address several objectives of the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights "Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe" and the European Agenda on Security (2015). In order to strengthen

cooperation between key actors and to ensure the widest circulation and a long-term impact of project results on future research streams and operational strategies, the project will favour capacity building and training and the sustainability and transferability of the Hatemeter platform among other target stakeholder groups (e.g., law enforcement agents, journalists/media, and civil servants).

The purpose of this document is to draft the socio-technical requirements of the Hatemeter platform. This document explores hate speech and discrimination against Muslims in Italy, France and the United Kingdom in order to understand the phenomenon. The report, firstly, presents an assessment of the state-of-the-art. Specifically, the document discusses hate speech online (and, when necessary, offline) in terms of actors, social networks and activities as well as the wider socio-political context that has favoured the spread of Islamophobic, xenophobic and racist discourses in the aforementioned countries. Moreover, the document covers the tools and techniques that are used or could be used in the fight against Islamophobia online and the strengths and weaknesses of these tools. In addition, the document provides an analysis of data collected by means of quantitative and qualitative techniques such as pilot content analyses (pre-testing) of Internet and social media data (Italy), tailored in-depth interviews (Italy, France and UK) and a focus group (UK).[1] Actual content related to Anti-Muslim hate online in Italy, France and the UK (predefined list of websites and social media profiles, keywords and hashtags) is provided in Annexes 1, 2 and 3, respectively. On the basis of the above sets of data and accounts recommendations from the three contexts are provided. Finally, this document contains the socio-technical specifications of the platform and the design of its overall architecture.

---

[1] Differences in the format the material is presented in this report is due to the differential approach taken by research teams in Italy, France and the UK, decisions to aggregate literature with primary data obtained, as well as differences in the amount of relevant literature per country. It should also be mentioned that because of the (very often linguistically facilitated) interconnections of the far-right in the Anglo-Saxon world, some literature from the US and Australia has been utilised for the UK part.

ITALY

What is known about Islamophobia online in Italy

The idea of public discussion has changed with the birth of the Internet and social media. Erroneous perceptions of reality help the circulation of news that are partially or entirely false (fake news) via the Internet and social media, which can spread messages to millions of people in just a few seconds. Universities and associations of civil society have monitored online political, racial and religious hate. Some elements have become common to hate speech online. For example, social groups (such as Jews and Romani people), which were targeted even before the birth of the Internet, continue to be targeted online with the same insults. The online element of hate speech allows the spread of millions of racist or xenophobic messages as a result of news stories that reawaken hatred.[2] Indeed, a recent study of Islamophobia in Italy recorded several discriminatory articles in newspapers and *'an important increase of instances of hate speech against Islam by Internet-based neofascist and Catholic fundamentalist groups.'*[3] Fake news and inflammatory statements against Muslims are spread on the Internet and through social media platforms.[4] By way of example, Muslims are the fourth most targeted group on Twitter[5] and are part of six groups, including Jews, migrants, homosexuals, women and disabled people, to be targeted on social media platform;[6] migrants and Italian Muslims are often identified as a potential danger and as jihadists. Intolerance against Muslims is higher in Northern areas of Italy and in and around Naples; Italy is also the most 'anti-Muslim' European country after Hungary.[7] 61 per cent of Italians consider migration from Islamic countries to be a menace to the West, 70 per cent of (right-wing) Italians has a negative idea of Muslims, 21 per cent would not want to have Muslims as neighbours and 43 per cent would not want to have a Muslim as a family member.[8] On social media, particularly on Twitter, Italians communicate anti-Islam messages (72.3 per cent) more frequently than 'pro-Islam' ones (4.1 per cent); however only a very tiny minority (1.4 per cent) can be classed as hate speech or dangerous speech. Among the criticisms and attacks of Islam there are many that conceptualise it as a 'violent', 'absolutist', 'anti-democratic' religion that is against and incompatible with Western values.[9] Italians tend to associated Muslims with the following words online: 'terrorista' ('terrorist'), 'jihadista' ('jihadist'), 'beduino' ('Bedouin'), 'abdullah' ('abdullah'), 'tagliagole' ('cutthroats'), 'vu cumprà' ('street pedlar') and 'marocchino' ('Moroccan').[10]

In Italy, previous research ('eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe') suggests that online hatred and discrimination are directed towards one's political opinion (31 per cent), gender identity (29 per cent), skin colour (25 per cent), nationality (22 per cent), religion (18 per cent), sexual orientation (14 per cent) and disabilities (9 per cent).[11]

---

[2] QUBA (2004), *Una bussola per la lotta alle discriminazioni*. See also: Citron, Danielle (2010), *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[3] Alietti, Alfredo and Dario Padovan (2018), 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2017', in: Bayrakli, Enes and Farid Hafez (eds), *European Islamophobia Report 2017*, Instanbul, SETA: 345–59 (346).

[4] Giacalone, Claudia (2017), 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016', in: Bayrakli, Enes and Farid Hafez (eds), *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Instanbul, SETA: 297–319 (298).

[5] Alietti and Padovan, 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2017'.

[6] Vox, Osservatorio Italiano sui Diritti (2018), *La mappa dell'intolleranza*, accessed online at: http://www.voxdiritti.it/ecco-la-nuova-edizione-della-mappa-dellintolleranza.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Malchiodi, Manuela (2016), *L'islam nei social media*, Pavia: Osservatorio di Pavia.

[10] Vox, *La mappa dell'intolleranza*.

[11] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*, Torri di Quartesolo: Research Centre on Security and Crime.

Research conducted by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia has shown that Islamophobia, at least in the sense of discrimination against Muslims *qua* Muslims, leads to the social exclusion of Muslim communities.[12] On a scale ranging from 'very high' to 'low' Italy scores 'low' on governmental restrictions on religion but 'high' on social hostilities involving religion,[13] while most European countries score either 'moderate' or 'low.'[14] Although it might be assumed that this is an issue related to a post-9/11 world, pre-9/11 studies on prejudice demonstrate that some European countries already suffered from discrimination against their Muslim and immigrant populations in the last century,[15] as part of a global Islamophobia trend that takes a transnational character.[16] In comparative terms, people living in Spain (52 per cent), Germany (69 per cent), the United Kingdom (72 per cent) and France (76 per cent) hold more positive views of Muslims than people in Italy (31 per cent).[17] Indeed, in a study exploring prejudice against Muslims in sixteen Western European countries, Italy scores as the sixth most prejudiced country. The findings of this study suggest that people who live in countries with an official religion or a liberal citizenship regime, as well as intergroup contact among their population, are more likely to tolerate Muslims.[18]

Italy is a new immigration country, which experienced the arrival of a larger Muslim population later than many countries in Western Europe. Yet, *'due to the spreading of information about controversial issues in other countries, the controversies surrounding the position of Muslims in society took shorter time to emerge in Italy than in European countries with "older" Muslim populations.'*[19] Importantly, *'Italy is also a destination and transit country for migrants, and its role in the so called refugees' crisis as well as the challenges that the country is facing in managing this situation appear on the public debate almost every day.'*[20] The debate on religious difference was never on the foreground of public discourses until recently, when Islam started becoming both a key theme of public debates on immigration and a negative issue in the media and political worlds,[21] as well as among some public intellectuals (such as academic Giovanni Sartori[22] and journalist Oriana Fallaci[23]). In Italy, 'after September 11, the generalised prejudice against Muslims increased, often reacting, within institutions, in an indirect and legalistic ways.'[24] Ottavia Schmidt di Friedberg identifies:

> Three trends that interact and feed into each other: the first is the visceral and popular trend, incarnated by the *Lega* in the North, while in Latium or Tuscany, it is sometimes linked to soccer clubs. A second one is the secular liberal-reactionary trend represented by some editorialists

[12] Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (2004), *Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.
[13] The other European countries, which score 'high' on social hostilities towards religion, are Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. See: Henne, Peter (2015), *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Centre.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Strabac, Zan and Ola Listhaug (2008), 'Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis of Survey Data from 30 Countries', *Social Science Research*, 37 (1): 268–86.
[16] Morgan, George and Scott Poynting (eds) (2012), *Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral Panic in the West*, Abingdon: Routledge.
[17] Pew Global Attitudes Project (2015), *Faith in European Project Reviving*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Centre.
[18] Kaya, Serdar (2015), 'Islamophobia in Western Europe: A Comparative, Multilevel Study', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 35 (3): 450–65.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 283. See also: Allievi, Stefano (2002), 'Muslims in Italy', in: Leveau, Remy, Mohsen-Finan, Khadija and Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (eds), *New European Identity and Citizenship*, Ashgate: Aldershot, 37–49.
[20] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*, p. 27.
[21] Sciortino, Giuseppe (2002), 'Islamofobia all'italiana', *Polis* 16 (1): 103–23. See also: Associazione Carta di Roma (2017), *Notizie da paura: quinto rapporto Carta di Roma 2017*, Roma: Associazione Carta di Roma; Associazione Carta di Roma (2016), *Notizie oltre i muri: quarto rapporto Carta di Roma 2016*, Roma: Associazione Carta di Roma.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Cousin, Bruno and Tommaso Vitale (2008), 'Le condizioni di espressione dell'islamofobia: Oriana, un caso italiano. Come è nato il "fenomeno Fallaci" sui nostri giornali', *RESET* 105: 84-86.
[24] Schmidt di Friedberg, Ottavia (n.d.), *Building the enemy: Islamophobia in Italy*.

and political scientists. The last one is the Catholic-Crusade trend, headed by some editorialists and by some exponents of the local Church.[25]

Nowadays, hate speech is on the rise and, with it, xenophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Semitic and racist messages, particularly since 2016 and as a result of both the humanitarian crisis that has led immigrants to European shores and terrorist attacks.[26] Alongside politics, the media and the Internet, Islamophobia is present in education and in the workplace.[27]

Moreover, the political and cultural debate in Italy is increasingly coloured by xenophobic and racist contents due to the economic crisis and immigration-related issues. For the past twenty years, there has been a circularity and reciprocal influence among the political / institutional, media and social spheres. The radical right[28] has been part of government for many years and this has provided media exposure and legitimation. Political language and content between the radical right and other political forces have mixed and expanded the influence of smaller, radical political groups. The lack of a critical take of the Italian past as a fascist and colonialist country has prevented the formation of discourses that firmly condemn such a past. The target groups for online hatred in Italy tend to be migrants in general: hatred is associated with ideas that postulate that immigration policies are economically and socially unbearable. Islamophobia becomes particularly noticeable insofar as migrants are popularly linked with Muslims and Muslims are then linked with terrorists. Anti-Semitism and anti-Romanyism are also phenomena that have existed for a long time. While anti-Semitism includes diffuse prejudice and stereotypes with less explicit racism, anti-Romanyism features clear racism both in media and public discourses and in policies about Romani people (including instances of violent actions). *Lega Nord* (today known as Lega), *CasaPound*, *Forza Nuova* and the network *Resistenza Nazionale* are the groups that offer more material to civil organisations.[29] This finding is in line with the fact that intolerance towards Muslims (and Jews) is highly correlated with authoritarianism and ethnocentrism.[30]

There is an increasing connection between alternative information websites, social networks and traditional mass media (especially newspapers): social networks facilitate quick and easy movements of information on hate news between alternative information websites and traditional mass media and viceversa. 'Hate preachers' tend to be individuals, rather than groups and the use of social networks has replaced their use of websites and blogs: social networks have a better capacity to convey messages, while open platforms make individuals responsible for the content of their messages. Right-wing groups tend to be numerous, small and very fragmented: social networks help such small organisations to arise and to gain influence and visibility well beyond their limited resources, including national and international networking.[31]

Therefore, both politicians and the mass media are responsible for the diffusion of online hate speech. The former embed hate speech in their propaganda[32] and in large political and social areas. Their actions normalise and legitimise racism in the public discourse. The latter utilise rhetorical strategies that do not align with the ethical principles of journalism: in particular, they often link immigration with

---

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Bortone and Cerquozzi (2017), 'L'hate speech al tempo di internet'.

[27] Giacalone, 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016'.

[28] Rivera, Annamaria (2004), 'Rapporto sulla violenza ed i crimini razzisti in Italia', *National Focal Point – Italy*; Belluati, Marinella and Silvia Genetti (n.d.), *Odiare a parole. Gli hate speech nella discussione parlamentare*.

[29] Giovannetti, Monia and Chiara Minicucci (2015), 'L'hate speech nei new social media: percezioni, esperienze, approcci, reazioni e risposte dei giovani utilizzatori e dei professionisti', Relazione al convegno *Hate speech e libertà di espressione*; Scaramella, Carla (2016), *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media. Criticità, strategie e pratiche d'intervento*.

[30] Padovan, Dario and Alfredo Alietti (2012), 'The Racialization of Public Discourse', *European Societies* 14 (2): 186-202.

[31] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media*.

[32] For example, during the electoral period. See: Amnesty International Italia (2018), *Conta fino a 10. Barometro dell'odio in campagna elettorale*, Roma: Amnesty International Italia.

crime and do not always check the reliability of their sources. Within this context, social networks facilitate transversal and 'from the bottom' communication, make individual actions and behaviours immediately public, promote a sense of anonymity and the possibility to remain unpunished for one's hateful content and help messages, which would not normally appear in real life, be conveyed online.[33]

Compared to other European countries, particularly the United Kingdom and France, where a sustained migration of Muslims dates far back in the past, Italy is a relatively understudied *locus* for the life experiences of Muslims (see Table 1 at the end of this section), whose presence has been estimated[34] one million people. Similarly, in Italy the issue of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, including their online mutations,[35] has not received much attention from the academic community and civil society. Thanks to research conducted in the United Kingdom (see also section on UK in this report), it is well-known that cyber-hate is perpetrated by a variety of offenders, such as: the *trawler*, who goes through people's Twitter accounts and specifically target Muslims; the *apprentice*, who is new to Twitter but targets Muslims with the help of experienced online abusers; the *disseminator*, who tweets messages and pictures of online hate that target Muslims; the *impersonator*, who uses a fake account, profile and image to target Muslims; the *accessory*, who joins others' conversations on Twitter to target vulnerable Muslims; the *reactive*, who starts an online hate campaign after a major incident (for example, a terrorist attack) or immigration-related issues and target that particular group and individuals (in this case, Muslims); the *mover*, who changes his/her Twitter account to target Muslims from a different profile; the *professional*, who has many followers on Twitter and launches major online hate campaigns against Muslims because of their affiliation with Islam.[36]

Besides online Islamophobia being an understudied topic in Italy, it must be added that *religious* discrimination against Muslims *qua* Muslims is often conflated with *ethnic* discrimination, given the fact that available studies have predominantly focused on racism towards ethnic, rather than religious, minorities.[37]

Existing research raises concerns over prejudice against Muslims (and Jews) within Italian society.[38] It highlights the presence of racialised and xenophobic narratives against Muslims, Romani people, Romanians, asylum seekers and, more generally, immigrants in Italian political discourses at both local and national levels. By way of example, the political party Lega Nord in the past proposed laws seeking to impose tight restrictions on the building of mosques and to ban the *burqa* in public. It stresses the persistence of sensationalistic news stories negatively portraying Muslims and asylum seekers. It demonstrates that society at large holds prejudice against Muslims: telling examples are victimisation surveys (which found evidence that non-EU citizens and Muslims are the most victimised people in Italy),[39] violent actions against mosques or Islamic cultural centres and the fact that one third of the Italian population would prefer not to have a mosque built close to their homes. The distortion of facts

---

[33] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*

[34] Ufficio per la Promozione delle Parità di Trattamento e la Rimozione delle Discriminazioni Fondate sulla Razza o sull'Origine Etnica (2012), *Razzismo e xenofobia in Italia: rapporto del Consiglio d'Europa e osservazioni delle Nazioni Unite*, Roma: Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali.

[35] The problems of drawing a line between online and offline Islamophobia is also an issue, as it is – for example – when making distinction between offline versus online violent radicalisation. See: Szmania, Susan and Phelix Fincher (2017), 'Countering Violent Extremism Online and Offline', *Criminology and Public Policy*, January.

[36] Awan, Imran (2014), 'Islamophobia and Twitter: A Typology of Online Hate Against Muslims on Social Media', *Policy and Internet*, 6 (2): 133–50.

[37] This problem is also documented in major studies on Muslim communities in other European countries. See for example: Bonino, Stefano (2016), *Muslims in Scotland: The Making of Community in a Post-9/11 World*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

[38] Ufficio per la Promozione delle Parità di Trattamento e la Rimozione delle Discriminazioni Fondate sulla Razza o sull'Origine Etnica (2012), *Razzismo e xenofobia in Italia*; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2012), *ECRI Report on Italy (fourth monitoring cycle)*, Strasbourg: ECRI Secretariat.

[39] Andrisani, Paola and Grazia Naletto (2009), 'Cronache di ordinario razzismo', in: Grazia Naletto (ed.), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, Roma: Manifestolibri, pp. 146–52.

regarding the refugee crisis by political leaders and the media is compounded by stereotypes and prejudice against Muslims, for example when reporting terrorist attacks.[40]

In the political realm, previous research ('PRISM: Preventing, Inhibiting and Redressing Hate Speech in New Media') demonstrates that some political parties have been active in fomenting online hatred: Lega Nord, CasaPound Italia and Forza Nuova are the main organisations involved online. Lega Nord averaged 2 posts per hour on Facebook and Twitter, was particularly active in the latter and featured its leader, Matteo Salvini, post an average of 11 times on Facebook every day. Casa Pound was also active on Facebook with 1/2 posts every day. Forza Nuova was more active on Facebook with 2/3 posts every day.[41] On social media, particularly on Twitter, anti-Islam messages (72.3 per cent) are way more frequent than 'pro-Islam' ones (4.1 per cent), however only a very tiny minority (1.4 per cent) can be classed as hate speech or dangerous speech. Among the criticisms and attacks of Islam there are many that conceptualise it as a violent, absolutist, anti-democratic religion that is against and incompatible with Western values.[42]

Moreover, the United Nations mentions the existence of dangerous prejudice against immigrants in Italy, especially as originating from politics and the media.[43] Political statements that are discriminatory and racist towards Muslims, such as undue generalisations, hate and violence instigation and limitations of religious freedoms, are telling examples. The securitisation of 'Muslimness' has also entered political and public debates, particularly regarding notions that Muslims, or symbols of Muslimness (for example, the *burqa*), are associated with potential security issues. The mass media have an important role in shaping representations of reality. In particular, the Internet and social networks amplify this role, providing the media with quicker and easier ways to maintain the lead on mainstream information. The internet offers immediacy, pervasiveness, amplification, replicability, social validation and persistence of certain messages. Social networks offer a polycentric proliferation of hate speeches and promote the diffusion of demagogic and propagandistic messages. Importantly, the online and the offline worlds are increasingly connected and the impact that one generates on the other is often underestimated (this is the so-called 'prejudice of the digital dualism'). [44]

There is also the risk that current representations of Islam and Muslimness do not grasp the complexities of the Muslim population in Italy and the dynamism of the Muslim world. These issues mean that the priorities to be dealt with when opening spaces for dialogue with Muslim communities have become areas of *cultural urgency* across right-wing and left-wing governments. At the same time, there is no agreement between the Italian State and the Muslim communities living in the country. There are two main reasons. First, Islam is plural and, therefore, lacks a unifying voice due to being a religion shaped by dynamic processes among places, contexts, collective actors and state dimensions. Muslim organisations that the Italian State accepts as interlocutors do not represent the whole Muslim community; on the contrary, they simply represent the most visible and powerful organisations that have managed to negotiate their position in society with the Italian State. Secondly, the Italian State has recognised Muslim communities mostly in terms of religious difference. Cultural differences are conceived as more problematic. In addition, polls have shown that over half of the Italian population considers the migration and integration of Muslims in Italy to be more troublesome than the migration and integration of people from non-Muslim countries. Muslims are seen as carriers of social, cultural and religious differences that are more visible than others due to their 'distance' from the rest of the

---

[40] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*.
[41] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*
[42] Malchiodi, *L'islam nei social media.*
[43] Osservatorio sulle Discriminazioni (2010), *Rapporto 2010*, Mantova: Osservatorio sulle Discriminazioni.
[44] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*

population. This distance is perceived to be mostly emerging from Muslim communities than from governmental and socio-political stances.[45]

Previous research has studied young people's experience of online hate speech. Young people tend to use Facebook as their preferred social media, mostly to communicate with friends (not necessarily their real-life friends), get to know new people and be informed. Few of them use Twitter. Their experience of online hate speech is one of being witnesses (rather than victims) of offensive or hate comments, which are particularly widespread in forums and online discussion groups. Hate comments usually target migrants, especially Muslims and blacks, and homosexuals. People are considered to have more freedoms to express hate comments online rather than in real life. Hate speech is very widespread on social networks but not necessarily among young people only. Among the twenty interviewees of this previous research,[46] only a quarter of people attempted to contrast hate comments in online discussions; many people considered their attempts as worthless and inefficient, therefore they tended to ignore online hate speech. They know how Facebook policies work but only two people warned the social media platform of the hate content (in just one case the webpage was shut down). Nobody ever reported the issue to law enforcement agencies. They barely know other channels through which they could report hate speech and many wonder what the limit between hate speech and freedom of expression is.[47]

---

[45] Russospena, Maurizia (2009), 'L'uso strumentale delle differenze religiose: l'Islam nelle retoriche pubbliche', in: Grazia Naletto (ed.), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, Roma: Manifestolibri, pp. 37–46.
[46] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*
[47] *Ibid.*

Table 1 – Overview of the research on (online and offline) hate speech and Islamophobia in Italy

	Online	Offline
Research on hate speech in Italy	• Bortone and Cerquozzi (2017), *L'hate speech al tempo di internet* • *PRISM: Preventing, Inhibiting and Redressing Hate Speech in New Media* • eMORE (n.d.), *Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe*	• De Bellis and Marini (2014), *Razzismo, intolleranza e discriminazione: repertorio delle principali organizzazioni e dei relativi strumenti giuridici ed operativi* • European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2012), *ECRI Report on Italy (fourth monitoring cycle)* • Naletto (ed.) (2009), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia* • Ufficio per la Promozione delle Parità di Trattamento e la Rimozione delle Discriminazioni Fondate sulla Razza o sull'Origine Etnica (2012), *Razzismo e xenofobia in Italia: rapporto del Consiglio d'Europa e osservazioni delle Nazioni Unite* • Associazione Carta di Roma (2016), *Notizie oltre i muri: quarto rapporto Carta di Roma 2016* • Associazione Carta di Roma (2017), *Notizie da paura: quinto rapporto Carta di Roma 2017*
Research on Islamophobia in Italy	• Giacalone (2017), *Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016* • Alietti and Padovan (2018), *Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2017*	• Sciortino (2002), *Islamofobia all'italiana* • Alietti and Padovan (2010), *Il razzismo come legame sociale nella società dell'eccezione giuridica. Alcune note su anti-semitismo e anti-islamismo in Italia dopo l'11 settembre* • Corrao e Violante (2018), *L'Islam non è terrorismo* • Giacalone (2017), *Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016* • Alietti and Padovan (2018), *Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2017* • Di Friedberg (n.d.), *Building the enemy: Islamophobia in Italy*

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Tools and techniques in the fight against Islamophobia online

Monitoring tools

In Italy, there are no tools designed to specifically combat Islamophobia (see Table 2 at the end of this section). Nevertheless, among the wider online tools that exist today in Italy in the fight against hate speech, an important one is 'the Intolerance Map'. The Italian NGO VOX – Osservatorio sui Diritti – in partnership with universities in Rome, Milan, and Bari has for three consecutive years drafted a map to identify discriminatory and intolerant messages posted on Twitter in Italy and targeting women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI people, and religious minorities. The mapping exercise is 'sentiment-based': it consists of identifying the use of specific terms and how often they are 'virally' shared. Specifically, a software has been developed by the University of Bari – Department of Computer Science – through Social Network Analytics and Sentiment Analysis, which uses artificial intelligence algorithms to understand the semantics of the text and to both identify and extract specific content on Twitter.[48] Moreover, a hate barometer was developed by Amnesty International Italy during the electoral campaign in 2018 that extracts manually the content of Facebook and Twitter pages of political candidates.[49]

There are also a few ongoing projects that seek to develop monitoring tools. Project 'REACT' ('Respect and Equality: Acting and Communicating Together') is coordinated by Associazione Arci (Italy) and aims to: collect qualitative and quantitative evidence of online hate speech and counter narratives' effective examples; identify and share among key actors positive actions to counter hate speech; facilitate reporting and enhance transparency of counter-narratives; and promote media literacy and spread counter-narratives among young people. The 'European Observatory for Illegal Hate Speech Online and Fake News', coordinated by the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement Association (France) and involving the Italian organisation S.O.S. Razzismo Italia, seeks: to complement existing efforts of monitoring the reporting process of hate speech on social media platforms by gathering and making comparable data from a greater geographical scope, including countries that need particular attention in the context of cyber hate and that have so far not been addressed; to enhance the capacity of online hate speech testing within European civil society by fostering knowledge transfer and the exchange of best practices; to disseminate and discuss empirical evidence of hate speech online in order to raise public awareness on the issue and to create cross-sectoral coalitions in order to fight this phenomenon more effectively. The website Hatebase (www.hatebase.org) is a world platform built to assist government agencies, NGOs, research organisations and other philanthropic individuals and groups use hate speech as a predictor for regional violence; it provides the world's largest online repository of structured, multilingual, usage-based hate speech.

Educational tools

Some projects developed specific educational tools in the fight against hate speech. For instance, Project 'PRISM: Preventing, Inhibiting and Redressing Hate Speech in New Media'[50] developed an educational toolkit (efficient strategies and awareness practices) aimed at teachers in order to both increase the existing awareness of the various types of hate incitement within new media and promote a better use of language that can lead to new ways of using the Internet. Project 'PROXI: Online Project against Xenophobia and Intolerance in Digital Media' developed a course to analyse xenophobia and intolerance in digital media from the perspective of human rights. Project 'BRICkS: Building Respect on the Internet by Combating Hate Speech' developed media education modules in four countries (Italy,

---

[48] Vox, *La mappa dell'intolleranza*. See also: https://www.uniba.it/ricerca/dipartimenti/informatica/notizie-eventi/eventi/la-mappa-dellintolleranza

[49] Amnesty International Italia (2018), *Conta fino a 10.*

[50] Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*

Belgium, Germany and Czech Republic) to raise awareness about combating online hate speech and discrimination against migrants and minorities. Project 'Media against Hate' sought to increase the capacities of journalists, civil society organisations and vulnerable groups to fight hate speech and organised workshops for European journalists.

Currently, there are some ongoing research projects that aim to develop other tools or research in education. For instance, 'Silence Hate', a project coordinated by the Italian organisation COSPE ('Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti' - Italy) seeks to combat and prevent online hate speech against migrants and refugees by developing new and creative counter-narratives. Project 'Words are Stones', coordinated by the Istituto Europeo per lo Sviluppo Socio-Economico (Italy) seeks to: engage with the target group in order to develop competences and tools to take action for human rights in the online world; and motivate young people to discuss and act against (online) hate speech and thus create a network of 100 human rights activists against racism and discrimination.

Legal, political and social techniques

There are also legal, political and social techniques that could be used in the fight against Islamophobia in Italy (see Table 2 at the end of this section). Previous research highlights that all institutional, political and social actors should be involved in combating online Islamophobia and hate speech via awareness campaigns, projects and other similar tools. They should and could refrain from getting involved in hate rhetoric, stereotypes and prejudice, instead both work to ensure that hate speech does not infect political discourses and condemn all episodes of hate speech. Other tools that are recommended is utilising peer pressure measures (such as temporarily suspending someone from his/her political party) or considering as an aggravating circumstance the fact that hate speech comes from a political and/or institutional person. Regional and national Associations of Journalists should and could be involved in awareness campaigns, projects and so on in order to ensure that they uphold to the ethical and deontological codes of their profession.[51]

The Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali ('National Department against Racial Discrimination') should have their work strengthened by ensuring that they have full independence both in practice and in law. Further funding should and could be provided for education and awareness public campaigns. Providers should also demonstrate more responsibility and work with such actors. Normative and juridical tools could be utilised more frequently and effectively: therefore, it is important to spread knowledge among actors that can use them. Penal sanctions are an important tool but just one to be potentially used in a context where all social actors should be involved in a cultural, political and ethical battle to help society combat online Islamophobia from within.[52]

Other recommendations that previous research suggests are to stimulate multi-agency and multi-level intervention and projects among stakeholders (public administration, equality bodies, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, universities, research organisations, civil society and so on) at both local and national levels to better craft a shared strategy to prevent and combat online hate speech. Reinforcing cooperation between law enforcement agencies and safeguard associations, increasing networking, lobbying and advocacy activities among different actors in civil society and providing further funding for awareness raising and educational campaigns for law enforcement agencies and the judiciary (including joint workshops) should and could be utilised as tools to combat online hate speech and Islamophobia. At the European and transnational level, there should and could be harmonisation of

---

[51] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*
[52] *Ibid.*

criminal legislation among European countries in order to increase legislative and judicial cooperation. Further collaboration with providers of social media platform would also be an important tool.[53]

A legal obligation to combat hate crime and hate speech[54] makes it mandatory for governments worldwide to have in place and develop appropriate legislation. Importantly, 'in 2017, Italy adopted new legislation prohibiting cyber-bullying that can be used in cases of related to the incitement of hatred online towards single individuals, on various protected grounds. Italian legislation also contains administrative offences on the defamation of religion (which in 1999 replaced pecuniary criminal sanctions).'[55] Hate speech in Italy is criminalised on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.[56] However, in Italy the criminalisation of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism and homophobia risks impinging on people's freedoms of expression and speech.[57] In a country where sovereignty is in people's hands, freedoms of expression and speech are a feature of democracy. In Italy, freedoms of expression and speech are inscribed in the Constitution and, for example, jurisprudence supports the value of information plurality, particularly within the mass media. Transnational sources such as Article 10.1 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union also support the right to freedom of expression and information. Italy is an 'open' rather than a 'protected' democracy, insofar as it is intolerant of intolerants, but consider intolerant people only those who resort to violence rather than those who express violent ideas.[58]

Constitutionalist Andrea Pugiotto suggests that prevention should be utilised to fight hate speeches that are homophobic, xenophobic, anti-semitic, Islamophobic, etc. in nature. For example, he proposes to introduce positive actions of formation and information rather than penal repression and to employ diversionary sanctions such as community work rather than stronger sanctions. He also suggests that new crimes of expression would clash with Article 33, first 'comma' of the Italian constitution, which gives special protection to freedoms of historical and scientific research. By way of example, this protection has allowed: politician and academic Rocco Buttiglione to hold a conference on the 'immoral and against nature' dimension of homosexuality; various historians to give speeches in denial of the gas chambers during World War II; and the publication of a sociological study that theorises the superiority of heterosexuality. However, on a balance of rights, the right to freedom of expression can be circumscribed if and when other rights, goods and interests of a constitutional nature need to be preserved. In fact, there are intrinsic limitations to the right to freedom of expression in terms of an ideal public order, human dignity, the principle of equality, international obligations and those instances when ideas become actions.[59] Lastly, messages and actions that are of a racist, xenophobic, homophobic and sexist nature tend to be stigmatised but there is no agreement on both why they should be stigmatised and why they should be combated through criminal law.[60]

The 'Mancino Law' contains urgent measures against racial, ethnic and religious discrimination – here potentially including Islamophobia. Furthermore, 'the Legislative Decrees n. 215 and 216 of 9 July 2003, implemented respectively the EU Directive 2000/43/EC on Racial Equality and the so-called

---

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries.*

[55] Article 19 (2018), *Responding to 'Hate Speech': Comparative Overview of Six EU Countries*, London: Article 19, p. 23.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Pugiotto, Andrea (2012), 'Le parole sono pietre? I discorsi di odio e la libertà di espressione nel diritto costituzionale', Relazione al V Convegno Nazionale dell'Avvocatura per i diritti LGBT-Rete Lenford, *Omofobia, Transfobia e Diritto Penale*. See Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media.'

[58] Pugiotto, 'Le parole sono pietre?'

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Gometz, Gianmarco (2017), 'L'odio proibito: la repressione giuridica dello hate speech', *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale* (32): 1-39.

"occupational" Directive 2000/78/EC.'[61] The Italian Criminal Code has provisions against crimes based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion and gender, as well as members of linguistic minorities and those with disabilities.[62] Previous research highlights that

> the so-called "Legge Reale", as modified by Law 205/1993 (known as "Legge Mancino") and by Law no. 85/2006 (law on thought crimes), punishes those who propagandize ideas founded on racial or ethnic superiority or hate, or instigate someone to commit, or themselves commit, acts of discrimination for reasons of race, ethnicity, nationality or religion; those who, in every way, instigate someone to commit, or themselves commit, violence or acts which induce to violence for reasons of race, ethnicity, nationality or religion; those who take part or support organizations, associations, movements or groups which are aimed at subverting the socio-economic order. The new aggravating circumstance provided for by art. 3 of the above-mentioned law is also fundamental, and states that "anyone who commits offences punishable with a penalty other than life imprisonment for discrimination or ethnic, national, racial or religious hatred purposes, or with a view to encouraging the activities of organizations, associations, movements or groups pursuing the same purposes, shall be liable to a penalty increased up to one half.[63]

In jurisprudence, there have been a few cases of ethnic and racial discrimination in which courts have recognised online associations as 'criminal conspiracy aimed at inciting to hatred, racist propaganda and violence against ethnic or religious minorities,'[64] even though there was no physical interaction. Injuries aggravated by discriminatory reasons, incitement to violence and aggravated defamation both online and in person have also been recorded.[65] At the same time, even when law enforcement agencies are inactive in responding to hatred and discrimination, independent authorities and civil society have sometimes taken the lead.[66]

---

[61] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*, p. 41.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*

Table 2 – Overview of the research on tools and the legal, political and social techniques against hate speech and/or Islamophobia in Italy

	Hate speech and/or Islamophobia
Monitoring tools	- Vox (2018), *La mappa dell'intolleranza* - Amnesty International Italia (2018), *Conta fino a 10. Barometro dell'odio in campagna elettorale*, Roma: Amnesty International Italia - Project React - The European Observatory for Illegal Hate Speech Online and Fake News - Hatebase
Educational tools	- Project PRISM - Project 'PROXI' - Project 'BRICkS' - Project 'Media against Hate' - Project 'Words are Stones' - Project 'Silence Hate'
Legal, political and social techniques	- Pugiotto, (2012), *Le parole sono pietre? I discorsi di odio e la libertà di espressione nel diritto costituzionale* - Gometz (2017), *L'odio proibito: la repressione giuridica dello hate speech* - Giovannetti and Minicucci (2015), *L'hate speech nei new social media* - eMORE (n.d.), *Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe* *Italian legislation (e.g. Mancino Law, Legislative Decrees n. 215 and 216 of 9 July 2003; Article 33 of the Constitution; etc.)* *European Union legislation and directives (e.g. ECHR; Fundamental Rights of the EU; EU directives on Racial Equality; etc.)*

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Strengths and Weaknesses of the tools

These tools are either yet to be developed (for example, the projects examined above) or have not been fully implemented. Laws on freedom of religion and against online racisms are wanting and 'there have been only secondary and fragmented initiatives.'[67] Reporting and detecting hate crimes is problematic. Previous research highlights that in Italy hate crime appears to be experienced less than hate speech. However, 'the low rate is probably related to lack of detection and / or recording of hate episodes with a criminal relevance.'[68] The lack of clear legal definitions of hate speech and hate crime problematise the fight against Islamophobia (which is not well delineated in the legal context) both at the national and at the European level. At the same time, the landscape of hate speech in the digital environment is complex; this makes comparison among European countries difficult to undertake. Moreover, the legislative framework is challenging, as certain categories tend to be excluded from the Mancino Law of 1993. This becomes particularly problematic when discriminatory actions against Muslims intersect with other factors, for example gender and sexuality. Italy is yet to ratify the Additional Protocol of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime and this makes it difficult for law enforcement agencies to combat Islamophobia online.[69]

Cyber-hate is even more problematic to combat when we consider the multifaceted partnership approach that it would require, including national online cyber hate strategies that should be developed for law enforcement agencies and civil society to effectively tackle the issue.[70] The profile of 'hate preachers' is also more heterogeneous compared to the past: therefore, they are rarely sanctioned in a context that lacks shared values against racism.[71]

Among the other weaknesses of the existing tools it should be noted that law enforcement agencies make available tools and channels (for example, a dedicated email address and a 'Commissariato' online) for online warnings but these are not very well known or used. Third Part reporting is not available. Warnings to social media supervisors are often inefficient as there are tolerant policies of self-regulation. According to the postal police, anonymity online is an illusion as investigatory activities lead to the identification of users; however, websites are often hosted on foreign websites and servers, therefore there are problems with both accessing data and shutting down some webpages.[72]

There is a clear lack of sensitivity over hate speech, particularly among law enforcements agencies and judiciary operators; some laws tend not to be applied at all times, investigations on hate crimes are considered not to be a priority for the police, and the bureaucratic and judiciary timeframes for action are too long compared to the quickness of the Internet. Italian laws are limited: a website can overcome the issue of being shut down by using anonymous proxies in foreign countries and, therefore, becoming visible and active again (e.g. Stormfront). Advocacy activities and networks are not developed enough in tackling hate speech within civil society. Importantly, young people tend to have their own definitions of hate speech, but do not receive information on the phenomenon or on awareness raising campaigns (for example, at school or university, in the workplace or through the mass media). Therefore, young people should be better involved in the fight against hate speech and, in particular, teachers should educate them in better utilising social media platform. Schools are a key place where more work should

---

[67] Giacalone, 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016'.

[68] eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*, p. 23.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Awan (2014), 'Islamophobia and Twitter.'

[71] Giovannetti and Minicucci, 'L'hate speech nei new social media'; Scaramella, *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media.*

[72] *Ibid.*

be conducted in raising awareness of online hate speech and where young people should be educated to make better use of the Internet.[73]

The cultural and political landscape is also particularly challenging, insofar as racism and xenophobia are everyday features of Italian society: therefore, working on the Internet alone will not help fight online hate speech. The Internet has become part of real life in a circular process of reciprocal contamination and alimentation. Hence, it has become impossible to combat online hate speech without working on the wider socio-political context,[74] which has seen the failure of antiracism in combating racism, xenophobia and religious discrimination in the real world.[75]

Islamophobia online in Italy: a pilot content analysis

In order to create a better understanding of online anti-Muslim hatred, preliminary data on Islamophobia online was gathered and analysed (pre-testing) through content analysis techniques. The final goal is to develop a first dataset containing e.g., online contents related to anti-Muslim hate speech, a predefined list of websites and social media profiles, keywords and hashtags, which will be used to define the socio-technical requirements of the Hatemeter platform. In particular, this section is developed as follows: methodology, keywords and hashtags adopted to reach the content, identification of the most influencing profiles and groups active on social media platforms, and a preliminary content analysis of the posts/tweets collected.

Methodology

The first phase of the research consisted in a period of web exploration involving ethnographic observation of Facebook and Twitter accounts of political parties considered active from past research in fomenting online hatred: Lega Nord (now known as Lega), CasaPound Italia and Forza Nuova accounts were monitored as well as those of their political representatives. The posts/tweets/comments related to hate speech were saved in the database as well as the comments of their followers. Then, the following tools available on the Internet were utilised to extract the online content related to anti-Muslim discourse: NodeXL,[76] Netlytic[77] and Brand24.[78] Initially two simple keywords were used: 'islamici' and 'musulmani'. These two keywords mean Muslims in Italian. After extracting the content, the researcher manually selected those posts/tweets/comments related to hate speech against Muslim communities and found other relevant keywords and hashtags associated to the phenomenon. In order to identify top hashtags and the influencers most active in fomenting Islamophobia, together with those found via virtual ethnography, the tool Hashtagify.me was used.[79]

---

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Alietti, Alfredo and Dario Padovan (2010), 'Il razzismo come legame sociale nella società dell'eccezione giuridica. Alcune note su anti-semitismo e anti-islamismo in Italia dopo l'11 settembre', *Rapporto della ricerca 'Permanenza e metamorfosi delle forme del pregiudizio: antisemitismo e islamofobia dopo l'11 settembre'.*

[76] NodeXL is a free and open-source network analysis and visualisation software package for Microsoft Excel that includes access to social media network data importers, advanced network metrics, and automation. It was used mainly to select Tweets.

[77] Netlytic is a community-supported text and social networks analyser that can automatically summarize and discover social networks from online conversations on social media sites. It is made by researchers for researchers, no programming/API skills is required. Is was used mainly to select Tweets, Facebook posts of politicians and the comments of their followers concerning those posts, and YouTube comments of video related to Muslim communities in Italy.

[78] Brand24 is social media monitoring tool that offers instant access to mentions about keywords or hashtags one is interested in. It was used mainly to select Facebook posts.

[79] Hashtagify.me is a free hashtag discovery tool that helps identify the most popular hashtags used on Twitter and on Instagram, unearth the influencers who are using those hashtags, and understand usage trends regarding those hashtags.

Moreover, Followerwonk[80] was utilised to track influencers on Twitter and analyse their bios and the number of followers they can reach.

From March until June 2018 just over 2.000 posts/tweets/comments were collected in an Excel database.[81] Specifically, 1.172 tweets, 490 Facebook posts, 324 YouTube comments and 17 comments on other online platforms[82] were collected. Subsequently, the content of data collected were analysed via QDA Miner[83] and WordStat[84] software. With the former software the content of web records was analysed qualitatively, identified themes and patterns. The latter content produced statistical information on posts/tweets/comments collected such as word frequencies, similarity indexes, dendrograms and word clouds.

Keywords and hashtags

As underlined above, in the exploratory phase just two 'neutral' keywords were used to identify online content related to Islamophobia: 'islamici' and 'musulmani'. This approach allows the researcher to find other keywords and hashtags specifically associated to a negative discourse on Muslims communities without steering the research to a particular topic or theme. Below, one can find the most popular keywords and hashtags that alone worked well in detecting online anti-Muslim hate speech (Table 3).

Table 3 - Keywords/hashtags used during the collection of social media data

Keywords/hashtags (IT)	Keywords/hashtags (translated in EN)
'islamizzazione'	'islamisation'
'musulmerda'	'Muslim + shit'
'afro-islamici'	'afro-Muslims'
#Noislamizzazione	#Noislamisation
#NoIslam	#NoIslam
#NoMoschee	#NoMosques
#STOPIslam	#STOPIslam
#Eurabia	#Eurabia
#Europastan	#Europastan
#Banislam	#BanIslam
#Bansharia	#Bansharia
#Banmuslims	#BanMuslims
#StopMuslim	#StopMuslim
#NoAllaMoschea	**#Notomosques**
#IononsonoMusulmano	**#ImnotaMuslim**
#EuropaCristianamaiMusulmana	**#EuropeChristianneverMuslim**
#NoItaliaIslamica	**#NoIslamicItaly**

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter. Note: the last few words highlighted in bold are not common but could become so in the future

---

[80] With Followerwonk, the researcher can enter the Twitter handle of any user and get a range of in-depth data, including the most common bio keywords of their followers, most active hours of their audience, and mapped location data.

[81] 86 web elements were drawn from the database of Amnesty International to which the researchers are grateful.

[82] Google+, Instagram, websites.

[83] QDA Miner is an easy-to-use qualitative data analysis software package for coding, annotating, retrieving and analysing small and large collections of documents and images.

[84] WordStat is a content analysis and text mining add-on module of QDA Miner. It allows to categorise the content using user defined dictionaries; classify documents using Naïve-Bayes or k-nearest neighbour algorithms applied either on words or concepts; extract automatic topic using first order (word co-occurrences) or second order (co-occurrence profiles) hierarchical clustering and multidimensional scaling; correspondence analysis in order to identify words or concepts (or content categories) associated with any categorical meta-data associated with documents.

Even if these keywords/hashtags are efficient in detecting posts/tweets/comments on Islamophobia in Italy, there are others combined with one other or associated with the "neutral" keywords 'islamici' and 'musulmani' that increase the likelihood of detecting online hate speech. There are some topics (see also the next section) in which it is possible to aggregate this kind of keywords/hashtags. Specifically, they revolve around the following concepts:

1) **Terrorism**: #Isis; #Terrorismo (#Terrorism); #Terroristi (#Terrorists); #Fondamentalisti (#Fundamentalists); #Jihadisti (#Jihadists); #Jihad; #Sicurezza (#Security); #AllahAkbar; #Attentati (#TerroristAttacks); #Bastardi (#Bastards); #Guerra (#War); #Fratelli (#Brotherhood, meant for Muslim Brotherhood, one of the most important international Islamist organisation with a political approach to Islam); mention of some of the cities/countries in which a terrorist attack happened, such as: #Parigi (#Paris), #Germania (#Germany); #Münster; #Francia (#France); #Belgio (#Belgium).

2) **Religion**: #Islam; #Sharia; #Corano (#Quran); #Maometto (#Mohammed, often associated with the #hashtags #Pedofilo – #Paedophile or #Pedofilia – #Paedophilia, as accused by the haters of having married a child); #Halal; #Islam; #Moschee (#Mosques); #AsiaBibi (a Pakistani Christian woman, who was convicted of blasphemy by a Pakistani court and received a sentence to death by hanging in 2010); #Ramadan; #Halal. Frequently these hashtags are counterposed to #Cristiani (#Christians); #Cattolici (#Catholics); #Cristianesimo (#Christianity); or are associated to the thought of the journalist Oriana Fallaci: #Fallaci; #OrianaFallaci; #LaRabbiaelOrgoglio (#TheRageAndThePride).

3) **Invasion**: #Stopinvasione (#Stopinvasion), #Invasione (#Invasion); #Invasori (#Invaders); #Violenza (#Violence); #Sangue (#Blood); #Carneficina (#Bloodbath); #TolleranzaZero (#ZeroTolerance); #Sottomissione (#Submission); #Guerracivile (#Civicwar).

4) **Social integration**: #Cittadinanza (#Citizenship); #Integrazione (#Integration); #NoIusSoli; #figli (#Sons, referring to the "second generation"); #NoIntegrazione (#NoIntegraton); #Giovanimusulmani (#YoungMuslims); #Cultura (#Culture).

5) **Immigration**: #Migranti (#Migrants); #Espulsi (#Expelled); #Accoglienza (#Hospitality); #Clandestini (#IllegalImigrants); #Africani (#Africans); #Africa; #Tuttiacasa (#EverybodyGoBacktotheirCountriesofOrigin); #Stopimmigrazione (#StopImmigration); #Blocconavale (#NavalBlockade); #Risorse (#Resources, meant to migrants; it was an expression coined by the centre-right in contrast to a statement of former President of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini); #Chiudiamoiporti (#Closetheports); #Richiedentiasilo (#AsylumSeekers); #Sbarchi (#Landings); #Profughi (#Refugees).

6) **National/European identity**: #DefendEurope; #NoEurabia; #Civiltà (#Civilization); #Italia (#Italy); #Italiani (#Italians); #Patria (#Homeland); #EU; #Europa (#Europe); #Frontiere (#Borders); #Patriotiditalia (#ItalianPatriots); #Primalanostragente (#FirtsOurPeople); #Italiasovrana (#ItalySovereign); #Occidente (#West).

7) **Multiple victims target group**: *centre-left coalition* (#Comunisti – #Communists; #Buonisti – #BleedingHearts; #Sinistrabuonista – #BleedingHeartLiberals; #Buonismooccidentale – #WesternBleedingHearted; #PD – #DemocraticParty; #NOPD – #NODemocraticParty; #Pdioti – expression combined by the words PD, Democratic Party and Idiots; #Sinistri – it is a pun, which means both people of the Left and evil; #Noboldrini; #Boldrini). *Women condition* (#Donne -

#Women; #Burqa; #Burka; #Niqab; #Violentare – #Rape; #Hosposatounmusulmano – #Muslimhusbandrocks, used for an online campaign in response to an article of an Italian newspaper "Libero", appeared after the terrorist attack in London in June 2017, that led its front page with the headline 'The Italian bastard' referring to one of the attackers, son of an Italian woman and a Moroccan man.[85] Indeed, haters use this hashtag in a negative way, to target both Muslim men and Italian women). *The Pope* (accused by haters of supporting migrants and Islam): #Bergoglio; #Papa – #ThePope; #Papafrancesco – #FrancescoThePope; #JorgeBergoglio. *Non-governmental organisations* (#ONG). *Social minority groups* (#Rom – #Gypsy; #Negri – #Niggers; #Ebrei – #Jews; #Latinos; #Bangla; #China; #Filippini – #Filipinos).

Moreover, the combination of the words 'islamici' or 'musulmani' with keywords/hashtags associated to some particular political parties or politicians of the centre-right coalition (see also the section on influencers) can help to find anti-Muslim online hate speech: for instance, #Salvini; #SalviniPremier; #iostoconsalvini (#IamwithSalvini); #SalviniNonMollare (#SalviniDon'tGiveUp); #Lega; #casapound; #centrodestra (Center-RightCoalition); #fratelliditalia.

Finally, some of the posts/tweets/comments can be associated to a particular event occurred in Italy or in Europe whose responsibility is generalised to Muslim communities by haters. For instance, the case of Pamela Mastropietro (#Pamela; #Macerata; #PamelaMastropietro), a 18-year-old woman from Rome murdered and dismembered by Nigerian drug dealers in Macerata (Italy). The murder caused extreme public outrage, anger and anti-immigrant sentiments to the point that in an act of revenge six African immigrants were injured in a drive-by shooting incident by a local resident. For instance, also the campaign launch in the United Kingdom (#FreeTommyRobinson) in favour of Stephen Christopher Lennon, known by the pseudonym Tommy Robinson, an English far-right activist who co-founded and served as spokesman and leader of the English Defence League. In May 2018, Robinson began serving a 10-month prison sentence for contempt of court after publishing a Facebook live video of defendants entering a law court, contrary to a court order preventing the reporting of specific trials while proceedings are ongoing (referring to a child sex abuse trial involved several man associated to Muslim communities by haters). Lastly, online hate speech in Italy can turn to the social situation in other European countries where Muslims communities are present in a consistent number and, for this reason, these countries are considered by haters to be 'submitted' to Muslim culture and already 'under invasion': #Svezia (#Sweden); #UK; #Finlandia (#Finland); #Olanda (#TheNetherlands); #Danimarca (#Denmark).

The influencers

As already underlined, Lega, CasaPound and Forza Nuova are the political groups, together with other centre-right parties, such as Fratelli d'Italia (formerly, Alleanza Nazionale), which offer more material to haters for their online (and offline) speeches. Moreover, the research activities collected several negative comments as Facebook posts o Tweets posted by politicians such as, for instance, Matteo Salvini (Lega, Deputy Prime Minister of Italy and Minister of the Interior), Lorenzo Fontana (Lega, Minister of Family and Disability), Giorgia Meloni (Fratelli d'Italia, served also as Minister of Youth in Silvio Berlusconi's fourth government and president of Young Italy, the youth section of The People of Freedom – a former centre-right political party in Italy), Daniela Santanchè (Fratelli d'Italia, she was Undersecretary to the Minister of Platform Accomplishment from 2010 to 2011 during Berlusconi's IV Cabinet). The research activities also monitored the Facebook page and the Twitter account of Magdi

---

[85] The last sentence of the article states, "Women, do not marry Muslim men. Do not make sons with an imam. If you are lucky you will be slaves. If you are not, you will generate terrorists."

Allam, an Egyptian-born Italian journalist and politician, noted for his criticism of Islamic extremism and for his articles on the relationship between Western culture and the Islamic world.

Below are some examples of the online negative discourses to Muslim communities found in the pages and twitter accounts of these public figures.

"Un terzo dei giovani musulmani di Francia a favore delle stragi islamiste". A proposito di "integrazione" … Europa, abbiamo un problema. Chi tace è complice ["A third of young Muslims in France is in favor of Islamist massacres". Concerning "integration" … Europe, we have a problem: those who are silent are accomplices] (Matteo Salvini Tweet)

Terroristi islamici arrestati e scarcerati, gente che va, ammazza e ritorna… CONTROLLI dei confini ed ESPULSIONI dei clandestini, spero di avere presto il potere di farlo [Islamic terrorists arrested and released, people going, killing and returning … CONTROL of the borders and EXPULSION of illegal immigrants, I hope I will soon have the power to do this] (Matteo Salvini Facebook Post)

Chi si vergogna del Crocefisso, del Presepe, chi vorrebbe rimuovere le festività cristiane è complice di quegli islamici radicali che vorrebbero conquistarci [whoever is ashamed of the Crucifix or the nativity scene, who wants to cancel Christian holidays is an accomplice of those radical Muslims who would like to conquer us] (Lorenzo Fontana Facebook post)

A Sesto Fiorentino (Firenze) una nuova moschea sorgerà sul terreno della curia di Firenze. In un'Europa in cui centinaia di chiese stanno lasciando il posto a luoghi di culto islamici, ogni metro quadrato ceduto all'Islam è un pezzo della nostra storia che viene rinnegato. Così l'Occidente svende la sua identità e si prepara all'islamizzazione! [In Sesto Fiorentino (Florence) a new mosque will rise on the ground of the curia of Florence. In Europe where hundreds of churches are giving way to Islamic places of worship, every square meter handed down to Islam is a piece of our history that is denied. Thus the West sells its identity and prepares itself for Islamization!] (Lorenzo Fontana Facebook post)

Il #fondamentalismo islamico ci ha dichiarato guerra e noi abbiamo il dovere di reagire. #Dacca #BangladeshAttack [Islamic #fundamentalism has declared war on us and we have a duty to react. #Dacca #BangladeshAttack] (Giorgia Meloni Tweet)

In una nostra #scuola, la #maestra sostituisce la parola #Gesù con #Perù nella canzone di #Natale, per non offendere i bambini #islamici! Questa insegnante va radiata subito da tutte le scuole d'#Italia perché è una pessima maestra e una pessima italiana [In one of our #schools, the #teacher replaces the word #Jesus with #Perù in the song of #Christmas, in order not to offend #Islamic children! This teacher must be robbed right away from all the schools of #Italy because she is a very bad teacher and a very bad Italian] (Daniela Santanchè Facebook post)

Santanchè: Commissione Affari Costituzionali respinge una mia proposta di legge per impedire l'islamizzazione dell'Italia, evidentemente c'è chi vuole per gli islamici privilegi speciali [Santanchè: Constitutional Affairs Commission rejects my bill to prevent the Islamisation of Italy, evidently there are those who want special privileges for Muslims] (Daniela Santanchè Facebook post)

Cari amici, ad oggi l'islam non è una religione riconosciuta dallo Stato perché non ottempera all'articolo 8 della nostra Costituzione. Se fossimo uno stato di diritto che si rispetti, in Italia non dovrebbe esserci neppure una moschea. Eppure, anche in Umbria ci si prodiga per concedere agli islamici sempre più moschee. La verità è che l'islam ci fa paura [Dear friends, to this day, Islam is not a religion recognised by the State because it does not comply with Article 8 of our Constitution. If we were a self-respecting state of law, in Italy there should not even be a mosque. And yet, even in Umbria we are striving to give Muslims more and more mosques. The truth is that Islam scares us] (Magdi Allam Facebook post)

Siamo sotto ricatto e se non avremo il coraggio di reagire saremo totalmente sopraffatti. Ma non solo Israele, ma tutti noi [We are under blackmail and if we do not have the courage to react we will be totally overwhelmed. Not only Israel, but all of us] (Facebook comment to Magdi Allam's post)

Beyond these political and public figures, known previously for their anti-Muslims statements, research found other accounts (especially on Twitter) particularly active in broadcasting hate speeches against Muslims (and, in general, against minorities). The following are the most relevant examples:

Name: Italia nel caos
Account(s): https://twitter.com/italia_nel_caos; https://www.facebook.com/Italia_nel_caos-462923797407151/
Twitter Bio: #IAmWithSalvini! He represents our future! This is really the #GovernmentofChange!
Twitter Follower: 14.600 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Name: Resistenza Nazionale
Account(s): https://twitter.com/resistnazionale
Twitter Bio: Resistenza nazionale tries to join those who want to defend Italy and Europe from the immigrant invasion
Twitter Follower: 3.021 (6th July 2018)
Other link: http://www.resistenzanazionale.com/

Name: VoxNewsInfo
Account(s): Recently suspended by Twitter
Twitter Bio: --
Twitter Follower: --
Other link: https://voxnews.info/

Name: No Islam No Sinistri
Account(s): https://twitter.com/NOislam3
Twitter Bio: You UnFW me, I too * SALVINIsta always * Anti-Communist * Anti-Islamic * PATRIOT * ɪᴛ * Islam dictatorship INCOMPATIBLE with Western liberties * Block the idiots!
Twitter Follower: 3.484 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Name: James the Bond
Account(s): https://twitter.com/IAmJamesTheBond?protected_redirect=true
Twitter Bio: My name is James, James the Bond. – "If the terrorists are not Muslims, then the Inquisition was not Catholic". Prof. Jerry Coyne
Twitter Follower: 3.308 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Name: Joker__Reloaded
Account(s): https://twitter.com/Joker__Reloaded
Twitter Bio: Italian, identity, sovereignty, social right. Censored with @The_Joker_IT
Twitter Follower: 866 (6th July 2018)
Other link: https://gab.ai/The_Joker_IT; https://vk.com/the_joker_it

Finally, using Followerwonk it has been possible to track other influencers on Twitter, and analyse those accounts in which there are bios with the words "anti-musulmano" ("anti-Muslims") "islamici" ("Muslims") "musulmani" ("Muslims"). Below are some accounts active online in disseminating hatred towards Muslim communities in Italy.

Name: Simone Pizzini
Account(s): https://twitter.com/teppuz
Twitter Bio: always to the right! I would like Left-wing bleeding hearts all under the ground for a better world! Muslims are well on the poles as Vlad the impaler did
Twitter Follower: 1.868 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Name: NOUENOEURONOISLAM
Account(s): https://twitter.com/antipartigiano
Twitter Bio: Away from Euro away from the EU and go away Muslims from Italy!!! Proudly anti-partisan!!!
Twitter Follower: 650 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Name: L'infedele
Account(s): https://twitter.com/infedele
Twitter Bio: I'm DX and if you don't like it, please immediately de-follow me. I hate the SX radicals and I don't want Islamic Bedouins in Italy. I have no mercy for those useless beasts.
Twitter Follower: 917 (6th July 2018)
Other link: --

Social media content

This section presents the analysis of the content of the almost 2.000 posts/tweets/comments collected during the research activities. First, an exploratory analysis was conducted in terms of word cloud and word frequency; second, a cluster analysis of all meaningful words was carried out using proximity analysis[86] in order to highlight the content inside each topic that was qualitatively identified (terrorism, religion, invasion, social integration, migration, and national/European identity). Finally, the analysis of social media content ends with a part concerning multiple victims' target group and the last one dedicated to the dehumanising adjectives frequently associated to Muslim communities in online hate speeches. Several examples of the posts/tweets/comments collected will be provided.

---

[86] Proximity analysis provides the number of times a given keyword co-occurs with another one (CO-OCCURS). Meaningful words are chosen by looking at firstly the posts/tweets/comments collected during the research activities (qualitative approach), then at word cloud and word frequencies (quantitative approach). The analysis provides the above-chance frequent occurrence in a text corpus of two terms alongside each other in a certain order. These are the so-called co-occurrences. For the proximity table the analysis was performed on words associated in the same paragraph. The Jaccard's coefficient is a statistical measure used to compare the similarity and diversity of sample sets. It is computed from a fourfold table as a/(a+b+c) where a represents cases where both items occur, and b and c represent cases where one item is found but not the other. In this coefficient, equal weight is given to matches and non-matches. See Provalis Research (2014), *WordStat 7. User's guide*, accessed online at: http://provalisresearch.com/ Documents/WordStat7.pdf

Figure 1 - Word cloud of posts/tweets/comments related to online hate speech anti-Muslims

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Some features of anti-Muslim online hate speech can be highlighted by analysing the word clouds of the social media content collected during the research activities, selecting the first and the most frequent 150 words that appear in the posts/tweets/comments (for obvious reasons the words 'islamici' and 'musulmani' were eliminated from the frequency count).

Online hate speech against Muslims communities seems to be restricted to some specific topics that emerged also during the exploratory analysis via virtual ethnography, in particular on religion, terrorism, immigration issues and, especially, irregular migrants, integration, and national/European identity. In this very first analysis the theme that had emerged during virtual ethnography concerning 'invasion' was missing, but it will present in the next part on proximity and co-occurrences analysis. By reading the next pages it will be clear how the themes identified are not self-explanatory but are strictly connected to one other. As shown in Table 4 the word *religion* is frequently associated with the following keywords: Islam, Quran, peace, violence, God, Muhammed and death.

Table 4 - Co-occurrences among the word RELIGION and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Islam	56	0,152	• • • • • • • •
Corano (Quran)	29	0,136	• • • • • • •
Pace (Peace)	20	0,127	• • • • • •
Violenza (Violence)	17	0,100	• • • • •
Dio (God)	14	0,080	• • • •
Maometto (Mohammed)	14	0,076	• • • •
Morte (Death)	13	0,073	• • • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Below are some clear examples of the posts/tweets/comments collected and where it is possible to see the association of the keywords and the religion issue.

> Possono dirci che a fomentare i terroristi islamici siano i soldi, la politica, le tensioni nel mondo arabo, il conflitto palestinese, ecc. Ma, alla radice, c'è sempre e solo il **CORANO**, e la **RELIGIONE** che ad esso si ispira, coi suoi messaggi di odio e **VIOLENZA** spietata [They can tell us that stirring up Islamic terrorists are money, politics, tensions in the Arab world, the Palestinian conflict, etc. But at the roots, there is always and only the QURAN, and the RELIGION that is inspired by it, with its messages of hatred and ruthless VIOLENCE] (Tweets)
>
> L'**ISLAM** è una **RELIGIONE** che predica **VIOLENZA**, incita all' omicidio verso chi non lo accetta, consente matrimoni di adulti con bambine dai 9 anni in su etc. Tutte queste cose le fece il Profeta quindi sono legali. Gli osservanti islamici in Europa, in Africa, in America, nella penisola indiana etc. ci hanno già dimostrato ampiamente cosa intendono con la parola **PACE** [Islam is a RELIGION that preaches VIOLENCE, incites to homicide of those who do not accept it, allows marriages of adults with children aged 9 and etc. All these things were done by their Prophet, so they are legal. Muslims in Europe, Africa, America, the Indian peninsula etc. have already well demonstrated what they mean with the word PEACE] (Facebook post)
>
> Hahahaha. **RELIGIONE** di **PACE**. Cosa dice il **CORANO**, versetto 4-34??? e il versetto 9-111?? L'**ISLAM** è una ideologia di **MORTE**. SANGUINARIA. IL **CORANO** È EVIDENZA DI QUESTO [Hahahaha. RELIGION of PEACE. What does the Quran say, verses 4-34 ??? and verse 9-111?? ISLAM is an ideology of DEATH. BLOODY. THE QURAN IS EVIDENCE OF THIS] (YouTube comment]

The word *terrorism* is associated with several keywords such as Isis, community, money, Imam, places, law, ritual, problem, police, front, Paris (Table 5). Below are some posts/tweets/comments examples.

Table 5 - Co-occurrences among the word TERRORISM and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Isis	8	0,091	• • • • •
Comunità (Community)	5	0,083	• • • •
Soldi (Money)	6	0,080	• • • •
Imam	5	0,070	• • • •
Luoghi (Places)	4	0,068	• • •
Legge (Law)	6	0,061	• • •
Culto (Cult)	4	0,059	• • •
Problema (Problem)	5	0,058	• • •
Polizia (Police)	3	0,053	• • •
Fronte (Front)	3	0,052	• • •
Parigi (Paris)	3	0,050	• • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

"Non siamo contro nessuna religione ma contro l'islamizzazione progressiva dell'Italia" … "le moschee non sono **LUOGHI** di **CULTO**, ma **LUOGHI** dove si incita spesso al **TERRORISMO**" … "con i finti migranti sbarcano spesso anche terroristi, una vergogna un vero scandalo" ["We are not against any religion but against the progressive Islamisation of Italy" … "mosques are not PLACES of CULT, but PLACES where they often incite to TERRORISM" … "with the fake migrants often land also terrorists, a shame and a real scandal] (Facebook post)

Attenti agli islamici. Hanno **SOLDI**, fanno figli, vogliono sostituire la loro **LEGGE** alla nostra. Sono già per questo una presenza eversiva nel nostro Paese. Poi fanno da incubatrice al **TERRORISMO** [Beware of Muslims. They have MONEY, they have children, they want to replace our LAW with theirs. For this reason, they are already a subversive presence in our country. Moreover they act as an incubator for TERRORISM] (Tweet)

Una soluzione drastica contro il **TERRORISMO** ci sarebbe, ma purtroppo siamo dominati dal buonismo. Attacco islamico a **PARIGI** al grido Allah Akbar, ira di Giorgia Meloni "ennesimo attacco vigliacco dell'ISIS. Tolleranza zero ed espulsione immediata" [A drastic solution against TERRORISM would be there, but unfortunately we are dominated by bleeding hearts. Islamic attack in PARIS screaming Allah Akbar, wrath of Giorgia Meloni "yet another cowardly attack on ISIS. Zero tolerance and immediate expulsion"] (Facebook post)

Concerning the word *invasion* from Table 6 we can see that the associated keywords are illegal migrants, Islamic, future, front, continuum, ius soli, islamisation. Below are some posts/tweets/comments examples.

Table 6 - Co-occurrences among the word INVASION and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Clandestini (illegal migrants)	11	0,082	• • • •
Islamica (Islamic)	8	0,079	• • • •
Futuro (future)	5	0,071	• • • •
Fronte (front)	4	0,067	• • •
Continua (continuum)	4	0,066	• • •
Ius (ius soli)	4	0,060	• • •
Islamizzazione (Islamisation)	5	0,050	• • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Raccogliamo l'appello dell'unico Leader che si batte per il nostro **FUTURO** e per quello dei nostri figli. Con MATTEO SALVINI per vincere oggi. Per mandare a casa i ladri ed i mascalzoni al Governo. Per bloccare la Legge sullo **IUS soli**. Per sbarrare le nostre frontiere di **FRONTE** all'**INVASIONE ISLAMICA** [We gather the appeal to the only Leader who fights for our FUTURE and for that of our children. With MATTEO SALVINI to win today. To send back home the thieves and rascals of the government. To block the Law on the IUS soli. To block our borders against ISLAMIC INVASION] (Facebook post)

La crescente e aggressiva **ISLAMIZZAZIONE** sta distruggendo le basi della nostra identità, della nostra cultura, della nostra storia di guerre per arginare l'**INVASIONE ISLAMICA**, della nostra stessa civiltà maturata nei secoli. Fermiamo l'**ISLAMIZZAZIONE**, ORA, o ne saremo travolti [Growing and aggressive ISLAMISATION is destroying the foundations of our identity, our culture, our history of wars to block the ISLAMIC INVASION of our own civilization matured over the centuries. Stop ISLAMISATION, NOW, or we will be overwhelmed] (Tweet)

Due mesi buttati nel cesso votazioni per cosa? Nel frattempo, l'**INVASIONE** di **CLANDESTINI** africani e musulmani **CONTINUA.** FATE SCHIFO TUTTI QUANTI [Two months thrown into the voting process for what? Meanwhile, the INVASION of African and Muslim CONTINUES. YOU ARE ALL DISGUSTING] (Tweet)

As shown in Table 7 the word *integration* is more associated to keywords as France, politic, living. Below are some examples of the posts/tweets/comments collected on this issue.

Table 7 - Co-occurrences among the word INTEGRATION and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Francia (France)	5	0,056	• • •
Politica (politics)	5	0,056	• • •
Vivere (living)	5	0,050	• • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

STATUA COPERTA PER RISPETTO A ISLAM? ALTRO CHE **INTEGRAZIONE**. INTEGRAZIONE, da parte di chi arriva in Italia e vuole **VIVERE** qui, significa accettare le nostre regole, il nostro modo di **VIVERE**, non imporre cambiamenti o censure. La vicenda della statua di Epaminonda coperta per un convegno, nel savonese, per non turbare le associazioni islamiche presenti rappresenta l'ennesima e preoccupante dimostrazione che in Italia ormai ci stiamo sottomettendo alle imposizioni dell'integralismo islamico, ci stiamo genuflettendo. Ma perché? [A STATUE COVERED FOR RESPECT OF ISLAM? OTHER THAN INTEGRATION. INTEGRATION, by those who arrive in Italy and want to LIVE here, means accepting our rules, our way of living, not imposing changes or censorship. The story of the statue of Epaminondas covered for a conference, in Savona, in order not to upset the Islamic associations present there is yet another and worrying demonstration that in Italy we are submitting to the impositions of Islamic fundamentalism, we are genuflecting. But why?] (Facebook post)

Purtroppo, con gli islamici l'**INTEGRAZIONE** è un'utopia, loro vivono d'accordo al corano fuori e dentro il proprio paese, io farei una legge per evitare che vadano mai in **POLITICA** se non vogliamo che finisca male per tutti in un futuro non molto lontano [Unfortunately, Muslims INTEGRATION is a utopia, they live according to the Quran outside and inside their own country, I would make a law to prevent them from ever going into POLITICS if we do not want it to end badly for everyone in the near future] (Tweet)

Il risultato della grossolana menzogna dell'**INTEGRAZIONE**. Gli islamici non si integrano affatto, perché non lo vogliono. Costruiscono "comunità" che riproducono i modi di **VIVERE**, usi, costumi, tradizioni, leggi dei loro paesi di origine, e conquistano via via il territorio [The result of the gross lie of INTEGRATION. Muslims do not integrate at all, because they do not want it. They build "communities" that reproduce the ways of living, customs, traditions, laws of their origin countries, and gradually conquer our territory] (Tweet)

Finally, Table 8 and Table 9 show the co-occurrences among the word immigration and identity. Research found that the keywords associated to these words are, in some cases, overlapping as, for instance, the words 'defend', 'immigration' and 'identity'. For this reason, the examples of online hate speech anti-Muslims under these words are presented together.

Table 8 - Co-occurrences among the word IMMIGRATION and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Difendere (defending)	10	0,135	• • • • • • •
Sicurezza (security)	7	0,106	• • • • •
Confini (borders)	7	0,103	• • • • •
Identità (identity)	6	0,087	• • • •
Islamizzazione (Islamisation)	8	0,080	• • • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Table 9 - Co-occurrences among the word IDENTITY and the content of social media data

Keyword	Co-Occurs	Jaccard	Strength
Difendere (Defending)	8	0,163	• • • • • • • •
Cristiana (Christian)	5	0,116	• • • • • •
Immigrazione (Immigration)	6	0,087	• • • •
Forza (Strength)	3	0,071	• • • •
Cultura (Culture)	8	0,071	• • • •

Source: University of Trento elaboration – Project Hatemeter

Ci battiamo per **DIFENDERE** la sovranità del popolo italiano, proteggere le frontiere contro l'**IMMIGRAZIONE** clandestina e indiscriminata, **DIFENDERE** la nostra **IDENTITÀ** dall'avanzata dell'islamismo [We are fighting to DEFEND the sovereignty of the Italian people, to protect the borders against illegal and indiscriminate IMMIGRATION, TO DEFEND our IDENTITY from the advance of Islamism] (YouTube comment)

L'**IMMIGRAZIONE** islamica produce radicalizzazione incontrollata in Europa e rappresenta un problema alla **SICUREZZA**. Con Fratelli d'Italia al governo diremo basta all'**IMMIGRAZIONE** di chi non rispetta la nostra cultura e la nostra **IDENTITÀ**. #VotaGiorgiaMeloni [Islamic IMMIGRATION produces uncontrolled radicalization in Europe and represents a SECURITY problem. With Fratelli d'Italia in the government we will say enough to IMMIGRATION that does not respect our culture and our IDENTITY. #VotaGiorgiaMeloni] (Facebook post)

DIFENDERE l'**IDENTITÀ CRISTIANA** di un popolo, se non torniamo a farlo, non possiamo lamentarci, quando arrivano gli islamici e aprono le moschee da tutte le parti e lo fanno in maniera orgogliosa, poi noi ci lamentiamo di questi fatti qua, noi dobbiamo rivendicare con **FORZA** la nostra **IDENTITÀ** …. [DEFEND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY of a community, if we do not return to it, we cannot complain when Muslims arrive and open mosques everywhere and do it in a proud manner, then we complain about these facts, we must STRENGTHEN our IDENTITY] (Facebook post)

DIFENDERE nostra **IDENTITÀ** e nostra **CULTURA** minacciata da **IMMIGRAZIONE** senza controllo [DEFEND our IDENTITY and our CULTURE threatened by uncontrolled IMMIGRATION] (Facebook post)

The final part of this section shows some examples of multiple victims' target group found during the collection of social media data. In fact, several posts/tweets/comments do not address their hatred only to the Muslim communities, rather to different individuals, social categories and institutions. The most relevant one involved are the *centre-left coalition, women's condition, the Pope, non-governmental organisations* and *social minority groups*.

A mio parere esiste un Progetto per sottomettere il popolo italiano senza fare guerre! Basta una continua invasione e il gioco è fatto! Mentre i politici giocano alla corsa verso la poltrona! E il silenzio della Chiesa avrà delle facili conseguenze quando si vedranno le chiese vuote e le moschee piene! Ci hanno svenduto all'islam, e come diceva la Fallaci, tra poco nascerà l'EURABIA! Con la Sinistra, e suoi derivati, che pensa di avere più potere con il Paese diventato islamico! [n my opinion there is a Project to subjugate the Italian people without making wars! Just a continuous invasion and it is done! While politicians play the race to power! And the silence of the Church will have easy consequences when you see empty churches and full mosques! They sold us to Islam, and as Fallaci said, EURABIA will soon be born! With the Left, and its derivatives, which think to have more power with the country that has become Muslim!]

Verrà il giorno in cui i mussulmani islamizzeranno il Pd se ancora non ci sono riusciti sono sulla buona strada [The day will come when Muslims will Islamise the Democratic Party. If they have not yet succeeded, they are on their way] (Facebook post)

Dietro un musulmano di successo c'è sempre un troione nostrano [Behind a successful Muslim there is always a local whore] (Facebook post)

#hosposatounmusulmano e sono infelice, schiava, picchiata. E me lo merito.. [#Muslimhusbandrocks and I'm unhappy, slave, beaten. And I deserve it ..] (Facebook post)

Dovunque vadano, i Musulmani praticanti dimostrano chiaramente la loro "non-integrabilità", alla faccia di Pidioti, Mentecattocomunisti, #Buonisti e Chiesa Cattolica con il Papa in testa!!! [Wherever they go, practicing Muslims clearly demonstrate their "impossibility to integrate" in the face of Pidioti, Mentecattocomunisti, #Buonisti and the Catholic Church with the Pope at their head!!!] (Tweet)

Dobbiamo dire che anche la chiesa si sta sgretolando con un Papa che non crede neanche lui in dio. Che vede le persecuzioni dei cristiani e conforta gli islamici anzi ne porta in Italia dove i religiosi mangiano aiutando i clandestini mussulmani a scapito dei cristiani fedeli [We must say that the church is crumbling with a Pope who does not even believe in God. Who sees the persecution of Christians and comforts the Muslims and takes them to Italy where religious people "eat" helping the Muslim immigrants to the detriment of faithful Christians] (Tweet)

A quanto pare le #ONG immigrazioniste se la stanno facendo sotto... bene... ma non basta, devono avere il terrore di far entrare altri clandestini parassiti afro-islamici [Apparently the immigrationist #ONGs are doing it under ... well done... but it's not enough, they must fear to bring in other illegal African-Islamic parasites] (Tweet)

#ROM E #ISLAMICI sono...come il #LUPO..."perde il pelo ma non il vizio"...Ossia, come il lupo non diventerà mai domestico, così questi non si INTEGRERANNO MAI [#GYPSIES AND #MUSLIMS are ... like the #WOLF ... "loses its hair but not any vice" ... That is, as the wolf will never become domestic, so these will NEVER NEVER INTEGRATE] (Tweet)

Se mai servisse è ennesima dimostrazione che @c_appendino @Mov5Stelle sono CONTRO POPOLO ITALIANO AUTOCTONO SOVRANO e pro-islamici, clandestini, rom, africani, iussoli e stranieri criminali liberi impuniti.... bravi grillini continuate a votare piddigrillini [If ever needed is yet another demonstration that @c_appendino @Mov5Stelle are AGAINST ITALIAN PEOPLE AUTOCHTHONOUS SOVEREIGN and pro-Islamic, clandestine, Rome, Africans, Iussoli and foreigners free criminals unpunished .... good Grillini continue to vote piddigrillini] (Tweet)

Basta africani basta arabi basta islamici basta asiatici basta sudamericani. ...... E anche rom e delinquenti dell'Est....da subito!! [Enough Africans enough Arabs enough Islamic enough Asian enough South Americans. ...... And also enough Romans and offenders from the East .... immediately!] (Tweet)

Finally, haters frequently use dehumanising adjectives or negative nicknames in their discourse associated with Muslim communities. The most common are: merde (shit), bastardi (bastards) belve (beasts), animali (animals), risorse (resources), cammelli (camels), beduini (Bedouins).

Sala e Maiorino pensano a fare il pranzo con queste merde di musulmani … Milano: islamici tentano di uccidere operai italiani perché lavorano durante Ramadan [Sala and Maiorino think to have lunch with these shitty Muslims … Milan: Muslims try to kill Italian workers because they work during Ramadan] (Tweet)

I musulmani bastardi erano nell'antichità e bastardi sono nel presente…. [Muslims were bastard in the far past and are bastards nowadays ….] (Tweet)

La Belva Islamica protetta per 4 mesi dall'Islam moderato del suo quartiere. Dobbiamo ancora credere che vogliono essere integrati? [An Islamic Beast protected for 4 months by the moderate Islam of his neighborhood. Do we still have to believe that they want to be integrated?] (Facebook post)

I #musulmani sono come le #serpi, subdoli e inaffidabili, perché non esiste #integrazione. Il #buonismooccidentale condurrà alla fine della nostra #civiltà. Bisogna schiacciare la testa dei viscidi animali, altro che mantenerli e comprenderli [#Muslims are like #snakes, shifty and unreliable, because #integration does not exist. Western #bleeding heart sentiments will lead to the end of our #civilization. We have to crush the head of the slimy animals, instead of keeping and understanding them.] (Tweet)

Queste sarebbero le risorse che tanto difendono i deficienti del PD e le famose anime belle della sinistra buonista filo immigrati islamici questa è la crudele risposta di chi si illude di integrare il naziislamismo che odia l'occidente ma non può farne a meno per non morire di fame [These would be the resources that defend the idiots of the Democratic party and the famous beautiful souls of the bleeding heart, pro Muslim immigrants' Left, this is the cruel response of those who delude themselves to integrate nazi-Islamism that hates the West but cannot do without unless they die of hunger] (Tweet)

Ma quant'è bello il multiculturalismo e la società multirazziale con i cammelli islamici e i primati mangia banane! [How beautiful multiculturalism and multiracial society is with Islamic camels and primates eating bananas!] (Tweet)

E questi sono gli immondi che la SX vuole in Italia Europa PROIBIRE PARTITI ISLAMICI e via tutti i beduini dall'Italia [And these are the disgusting people that the Left wants in Italy and in Europe. PROHIBIT ISLAMIC PARTIES and away all the Bedouins from Italy] (Tweet)

Summary of the main points identified during the in-depth interviews in Italy[87]

- In Italy there are problems when trying to catalogue data on hate crimes and hate speech incidents. Official data collected by police forces are held within a database called 'Sistema Di Indagine' (SDI). It is a national database and contains data based on the criminal law that was violated. Hence, police investigations have to follow criminal legislation. Legislation in terms of racial, ethnic, national and religious discrimination is set by Article 604bis of the Penal Code (formerly, it was set by the 'Legge Reale', Article 3 of 654 Law of 1975). OSCAD is the Osservatorio per la Sicurezza contro gli Atti Discriminatori (Observatory for Security Against Acts of Discrimination) and have no data on Islamophobic hate crimes and speeches. The reason for this problem is that if there is no legal coverage of a particular discriminatory ground, police have no way to know how many anti-Muslim crimes are committed every year. There is no close cooperation between Italian police and NGOs, unlike Great Britain where police forces have a memorandum with an NGO called TellMAMA, which measures anti-Muslim attacks.

- Anti-Muslim sentiments intersect with xenophobic sentiments, such as anti-migrant ones and this is evidence also by the Associazione Carta di Roma's latest report. Moreover, there tends to be an association between migrant boats and terrorism. Other associations are between migrants and crime, and migrants and diseases. This speaks of the multi-factorial nature of discrimination.

- Nowadays, Roma people, refugees and Muslims are the most hated groups.

- The religious element tends to be the most targeted in anti-Muslim hate speech incidents. For instance, mosques and spaces for prayer evidence a higher negative association with Islam.

- The perception is that there is hatred springing from certain political parties and the mass media. On social media, anti-Muslim hatred is perceived to be very high, to be increasing and to be particularly linked with terrorist attacks. However, anti-Muslim discrimination seems to be lower than in other European countries that experienced Islamist terrorist attacks.

- Facebook is one of the most problematic social media networks in terms of anti-Muslim hate speech but it stands in a difficult position. Censorship could be an extreme measure, while stigmatising hate speech a more moderate position.

- Islamic organisations (UCOII) blame the media and social networks for double standards when dealing with anti-Muslim sentiments. By way of example, the President of UCOII Izzeddin Elzir had his Facebook page blocked for posting pictures of nuns on a beach in response to the French Prime Minister's hardening stances against the veil in public.

- Hatred is meaner online than offline because the online world offers anonymity and 'protection' to hateful content.

- Muslims do not report hatred to avoid giving visibility to haters, because they do not know that they have a right to do so and because of a lack of a 'reporting culture'.

---

[87] Six experts in different fields related to anti-Muslim discrimination and hate speech were interviewed and their identity is anonymous for confidentiality reasons. They work at: University of Reading; Municipality of Turin; Associazione Carta di Roma; the Observatory for Security Against Acts of Discrimination; Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche (UCOII) in Italia; and COSPE.

- Reactions to hatred are different and range from expressing grievances to reacting in a violent fashion.

- A study on online hate speech after the homicide case in Fermo, when a far-right man assassinated a Nigerian person, found that there were just a few significant negative tweets but these increase when mainstream media acted as an echo-chamber, thus giving resonance to the hashtag 'io sto con Amedeo' (meaning: 'I support Amedeo', the killer).

- Words such as 'musulmano', 'islamico', 'islam', 'terrorista', 'imam' and associated words such as 'barconi' should be monitored.

- Exposing hate speech and engaging with haters to steer their ideas towards more moderate stances could be used as strategies to deal with Islamophobic people. Similarly, ignoring online hate speech could work in avoiding to inciting hatred.

- Providers and social media platforms should moderate online content.

- Counter-narratives can and should include irony as a weapon to challenge Islamophobia online.

- Online groups are very mobile and easily transition from one website or one Facebook webpage to another.

- Italy lacks 'Muslim neighbourhoods' (although it has ghettos based on a shared ethnicity) as in Great Britain and France, therefore there is not a feeling of being 'invaded' by Muslims.

- There are conspiracy theories about Muslims that remind of similar theories that were directed against Jews in the 1920s.

- Recommendations for counter-narratives include having psychological expertise.

- There are several monitoring campaigns such as the European Council's 'no hate speech'.

- The Catholic Church under the leadership of Pope Francis has managed to take forward inter-religious dialogue between Christianity and other faiths (including Islam).

FRANCE

What is known about Islamophobia online in France

Context

Before the French digital wave of harassing Tweets denouncing Islam or the fake news on Facebook mocking the veil, anti-Muslim rhetoric has been embedded in French society for centuries, dating back to at least 16th century literature. Yet, the role of Muslims in France has more recently become a major topic of political debates particularly in the most accessible of communication tools – the internet. Following the terrorist attacks in Toulouse in 2012 and then in Paris in 2015, these online public discussions have only become more heated. Panic over Islamic fundamentalists has led some columnists, intellectuals and politicians to directly oppose Islam[88]. Even researchers have described this as a "Muslim problem" in France.[89] [90] Debates have played out in a variety of media formats, but a growing concern is the role of online media that can more easily cross the line into hate speech. But to understand online hate speech against Muslims in France, it is essential to unpack the history and laws in this context.

The colonial history between France and the Muslim region of northern Africa, particularly Algeria, continues to create tension. As it was worldwide, French colonialism was built on both economic exploitation and racial oppression, based on a belief of racial superiority. In addition to economic inequality, what remains in France today is frequent discrimination against anyone who shows any characteristic that might be related to North African population, in terms of their look, their name,[91] their culture or their religion.[92]

Hatred against Muslims is often called "Islamophobia" in France. According to Hajjat and Mohammed's foundational book,[93] Islamophobia is discrimination against anyone because of their Islamic religion or supposed religion (including any marker as culture, skin color or even fashion). It also essentialises people or a population to their religion, which means the erasing of all personality traits, class, activities, ideology, etc. and, instead, defining people only by their faith. These scholars also found that *Islamophobie* was first used around 1910, by *administrateurs-éthnologues* working in the French colonies, to describe the French politics toward Muslims in the African colonial territories. These *administrateurs-éthnologues* were opposed to the difference in treatment between Muslims and other colonised people (Jews or Animists), as it could have a negative effect on the colonial empire stability.[94]

---

[88] See the *tribune* published in Le Figaro on the 19 March 2018 : L'appel des 100 intellectuels contre le séparatisme islamiste. http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/societe/2018/03/19/31003-20180319ARTFIG00299-l-appel-des-100-intellectuels-contre-le-separatisme-islamiste.php

[89] Geisser V. (2003) La nouvelle Islamophobie, La découverte. http://www.editionsladecouverte.fr/catalogue/index-La_nouvelle_islamophobie-9782707140609.html

[90] A review on this question was wrote by the sociologist Marwane Mohammed: Mohammed,M. (2014) « Un nouveau champ de recherche », *Sociologie*, N° 1, vol. 5. http://journals.openedition.org/sociologie/2108

[91] Cediey, E. & Foroni, C. (ISM-CORUM) (2006) Les Discriminations à raison de « l'origine » dans les embauches en France Une enquête nationale par tests de discrimination selon la méthode du BIT. Genève, Bureau international du Travail. http://ses.ens-lyon.fr/ses/fichiers/testing2discriminationembauche.pdf

[92] CNCDH (2017) Rapport sur la lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie. http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/rapport-2017-sur-la-lutte-contre-le-racisme-lantisemitisme-et-la-xenophobie

[93] Hajjat, A., Mohammed, M. (2016). Islamophobie: Comment les élites françaises fabriquent le « problème musulman ». Paris: La Découverte.

[94] Thomson, A. (2005) «L'Europe des Lumières et le monde musulman. Une alterité ambiguë», *Cromohs*, 10, p. 1-11. http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/10_2005/thomson_islam.html

---

The growing acceptance of 20th century Islamophobia has its roots in the growth of the far-right in France. Simultaneously with an economic decline in the manufacturing sector, there has been an uptick in far-right speeches that associate many societal problems with the presence of immigrant populations from Northern Africa. Although these speeches have had more and more significance since the mid-1990s, a milestone was reached in 2002 when the party of the National Front (FN) became an important political force by reaching the second round of the presidential election. The FN then saw its anti-immigrant speech broadcast by the media and thus legitimised.[95] This encouraged other politicians to follow suit and stereotype immigrants as the cause of many societal problems. The recent terrorist attacks, which were claimed by groups that espouse Islam, have only accelerated this stereotypical association. Despite the many calls not to connect murderous extremists to the global Muslim population, the media and politicians frequently make these shortcuts.

Yet, it would seem that French laws would limit this type of hate speech, particularly online. First, article 24 of the Law of 29 July 1881[96] (modified in 2012), on *liberté de la presse* (media freedom), states that discrimination, hate and violence based on origin, ethnicity, nation, race or religion is forbidden:

> *"Ceux qui, par l'un des moyens énoncés à l'article 23, auront provoqué à la discrimination, à la haine ou à la violence à l'égard d'une personne ou d'un groupe de personnes à raison de leur origine ou de leur appartenance ou de leur non-appartenance à une ethnie, une nation, une race ou une religion déterminée, seront punis d'un an d'emprisonnement et de 45 000 euros d'amende ou de l'une de ces deux peines seulement."*

Another part of the same law[97] specifies the different types of hate speech that are punishable. It includes speaking in public, writing in public venues but also writing anything exposed to the public by electronic or digital means:

> *"[...] soit par des discours, cris ou menaces proférés dans des lieux ou réunions publics, soit par des écrits, imprimés, dessins, gravures, peintures, emblèmes, images ou tout autre support de l'écrit, de la parole ou de l'image vendus ou distribués, mis en vente ou exposés dans des lieux ou réunions publics, soit par des placards ou des affiches exposés au regard du public, soit par tout moyen de communication au public par voie électronique [...]"*

Yet for those who might claim that some digital forums are private, another part of the Penal Code (article R624-3[98]) states that discrimination even in a non-public space due to origin, ethnicity, nation, race or religion is prohibited:

> *"La diffamation non publique commise envers une personne ou un groupe de personnes à raison de leur origine ou de leur appartenance ou de leur non-appartenance, vraie ou*

---

supposée, à une ethnie, une nation, une race ou une religion déterminée est punie de l'amende prévue pour les contraventions de la 4e classe."

Put together, both direct hate speech (insults, threats, etc.) or indirect hate speech (incitement to hate speech), directed against any person because of their religion or origin, are illegal in France, both publicly and privately. All technical means of expression are covered by the law, including digital content.

On the surface, then, it appears as if French law is on the side of fighting against online hate speech against Muslims. However, another law, perhaps more embedded in French society, complicates this assumption: *laïcité*.[99] [100] [101] This foundational French secularism law is a cornerstone of the country's public policy and is an essential part of citizenship tests. Yet its interpretation is not without controversy. First adopted in 1905, some interpretations of *laïcité* relegate religious beliefs to the private sphere, limiting the expression of religious practices in the public sphere, far beyond the law which simply prohibits conspicuous signs within public institutions, such as in schools or government offices. It is also culturally frowned upon to carry signs that may be associated with religion or to declare one's religious practice in any public space, such as a conference, a festival or any event that might receive media coverage. This tension is even more pronounced when it comes to a person showing or declaring a religious affiliation during a televised debate or an interview. As a result, any type of religious sign, even if it is not accompanied by religious speech, can be interpreted as proselytising. It is even difficult for people adorned with religious symbols to simply walk on the street freely.[102] This phenomenon is amplified for Muslims, especially for women wearing hijab who are the most visually identifiable population religion-wise.

More than the legal challenges in protecting Muslims from hate speech, there are also scholarly objections. Researchers analysing anti-Muslim discrimination, whether offline or online, have legal constraints. There exists a law that prohibits any study based on racial criteria and also prevents large-scale survey questions on religious practice. This challenge, however, does not prevent people from making assumptions about the number of Muslims in France, which is often over-estimated. According to a survey conducted in 2016,[103] those polled estimated that 31% of the population is Muslim but the true figure is only 7.5%. By the end of 2017, Muslims in France are projected to comprise about 5.7 million or 8.8% of the total population, yet some far-right websites claim that the number is as high as 20 million.[104]

The last official data aggregated by the French government on the number of practitioners of different religions date back to the census of 1872, during the Third Republic, before the secularism law.[105] The

---

[99] Baubérot J. (2012), *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, Paris, La Découverte.

[100] Michel Fabre, « Sens et usages contemporains de la laïcité », *Éducation et socialisation* [En ligne], 46 | 2017, mis en ligne le 01 décembre 2017, consulté le 29 juillet 2018. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/edso/2754 ; DOI : 10.4000/edso.2754

[101] Amiraux, V. (2015). Après le 7 janvier 2015, quelle place pour le citoyen musulman en contexte libéral sécularisé ?. *Multitudes*, 59,(2), 83-93. doi:10.3917/mult.059.0083.

[102] Baehr P. & Gordon D. (2013), « From the headscarf to the burqa: the role of social theorists in shaping laws against the veil », *Economy and Society,* vol. 42, n° 2, pp. 249-280. DOI : 10.1080/03085147.2012.718620

[103] Duffy B. (2016) Perceptions are not reality: what the world gets wrong, Ipsos Mori. https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-what-world-gets-wrong

[104] Banet, R. & Fauchet, B. (2018) 20 millions de musulmans en France ? Ils sont environ 4 fois moins, selon les estimations les plus sérieuses, AFP. https://factuel.afp.com/20-millions-de-musulmans-en-france-ils-sont-environ-4-fois-moins-selon-les-estimations-les-plus

[105] Dargent, C. (2009). L'État et la difficile saisie statistique de la religion : l'exemple des protestants dans les recensements en France au XIXe siècle. *Population*, vol. 64,(1), 215-232. doi:10.3917/popu.901.0215.

collection of personal information on religious opinions is prohibited by the law "informatique et libertés," passed in 1978. According to this law, one cannot collect or process any personal data that show, directly or indirectly, one's racial origins or ethnicity, as well as political, philosophical or religious opinions. Failure to respect this prohibition is punishable by Article 226-19 of the Penal Code, leading to five years' imprisonment and a 300,000 euro fine.[106] According to a decision from the *Conseil Constitutionnel,* which modified this law in 2007, researchers are able to collect data on ethnicity and religious opinions, but only if they obtain the authorization of the *Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés* (CNIL).[107]

Yet, a scholarly understanding of Islamophobia remains challenging. The use of data on ethnicity and religion divide researchers, anti-racist associations and politicians. Some argue that this so called "statistiques ethniques" can be used in a discriminatory way to validate racist theories, whereas others argue it is needed to verify the facts and help in the fight against racism. For instance, online debates flourished after the mayor of Bézier was sued for gathering data on students' religions in the different schools of the city.[108] The exact same debate, on what position should be adopted and whether it is racist or anti-racist, applies for the use of the word "race" and categories such as "racisés" (racialised) and "blanc" (white).[109] [110]

In the summer of 2017, the word "race" was even removed from the French constitution's *Article 1*, as it was viewed a racist tool. The constitution previously mentioned that France ensures equality before the law of all citizens without distinction of origin, race or religion. It had been the only place where "race" was mentioned in the constitution, yet it has now been erased, with the word "sex" being added instead.[111] [112] Although the question is divisive across academia and the general public, the vote among politicians was unanimous.

Islamophobic acts

To better track anti-Muslim hate speech, it is essential to know what exactly to examine, and a first step is to understand what has been happening offline. Islamophobic acts in France are prevalent, according to the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (FPES), which showed that in 2017: [113]

---

[106] Code pénal - Article 226-19. LegiFrance.
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000026268247&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006070719
[107] Conseil constitutionnel (2007) Loi relative à la maîtrise de l'immigration, à l'intégration et à l'asile.
http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/2007/2007-557-dc/decision-n-2007-557-dc-du-15-novembre-2007.1183.html
[108] A recent volume, edited by Devriendt, Monte and Sandré, and published in *Mots, Les langages du politique,* has detailed the history of the complexity of these issues. Roucate, D. (2015) Quatre questions sur les statistiques ethniques. LeMonde.fr
https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/05/06/quatre-questions-sur-les-statistiques-ethniques_4628874_4355770.html
[109] Devriendt, E., Monte, M. & Sandré, M. (eds)(2018) Dire ou ne pas dire la « race » en France aujourd'hui. Mots, Les langages du politique, ENS Editions. DOI: 10.4000/mots.23025
[110] This modification, however, has yet to be seen on the official French government website. Simon, P. (2008). Les statistiques, les sciences sociales françaises et les rapports sociaux ethniques et de « race ». *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. 49,(1), 153-162. doi:10.3917/rfs.491.0153.
[111] Europe 1 (2018) Constitution française : l'Assemblée supprime le mot "race", interdit la "distinction de sexe"
http://www.europe1.fr/politique/constitution-francaise-lassemblee-supprime-le-mot-race-interdit-la-distinction-de-sexe-3708722
[112] Libération (2018) Supprimer le mot «race» de la Constitution: oui, mais...
http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2018/07/10/supprimer-le-mot-race-de-la-constitution-oui-mais_1665506
[113] Bayrakli, E. & Hafez, F., (Eds) (2017) European Islamophobia Report, SETA. http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/France.pdf

- During the national presidential elections in France, Islamophobia was omnipresent not only in the campaign of the right-wing National Front but also in an array of other candidates' campaigns;
- 121 Islamophobic incidents were reported;
- 19 Muslim places of worship were closed by the government; 749 individuals were placed under house arrest; over 4,500 police raids were conducted; and the list of individuals under government surveillance has reached 25,000.

Yet the numbers do not always match. For example, SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research) reiterated the French government numbers of 121 acts in 2017, 185 in 2016 and 429 in 2017.[114] On the other hand, the *Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France* (CCIF) report found a dramatically higher number of incidents: 446 acts in 2017, 580 in 2016 and 905 in 2015.[115] Even though both counts used a different method and different sources, both reported a decrease of Islamophobia between 2015 and 2016 and then a slower decrease between 2016 and 2017. Still, the CCIF noted that the number of Islamophobic acts is approximately back to its 2012 level.

However, an issue in this decline is that hate crimes against Muslim are underestimated, according to a European report from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE), [116] which points to a variety of reasons:

- "The victims' potential isolation or proximity to the perpetrator;"
- "Lack of trust in the authorities, due to fears that their claim will not be taken seriously or that they will be victimised again by police officers;"
- The absence of guidelines to recognise what a hate crime against Muslims is;
- The division of anti-Muslim hate crimes between different categories of crimes in the official statistics which prevent proper evaluation of their number: "anti-muslim hate crimes are broadly categorised as anti-religious hate crimes or conflated with anti-Arab or anti-migrant hate crimes."

So, it is possible as a hypothesis that as anti-Muslim hatred increases throughout society, especially in the media, the reporting of harassment may actually decrease. In turn, there could be a resigned social acceptance of being a victim of Islamophobia in specific neighborhoods where youths are confronted daily by the police and may not want to report harassment to those same police officers. In addition, to determine these numbers, the French government only relies on the cases which were reported to police or *gendarmerie* and then ended in the hands of justice; whereas CCIF data rely on victim reports which could be undertaken by various means, such as phone, internet or email. Yet, according to the National Observatory against Islamophobia, in the two-week period immediately following the Paris attacks in early January, 2015, 128 Islamophobic incidents happened, nearly as many as occurred for all of the previous year (133).

At the same time, organised threats of anti-Muslim hatred in France has reached unprecedented proportions recently. Less than a year after ten far-right activists were arrested in France for planning

---

[114] Ministère de l'Intérieur (2018) Bilan 2017 des actes racistes, antisémites, antimusulmans et antichrétiens. https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministre/Communiques/Bilan-2017-des-actes-racistes-antisemites-antimusulmans-et-antichretiens
[115] CCIF (2018) Rapport sur l'Islamophobie pendant l'année 2017 : dates, chiffres et questions. http://www.islamophobie.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ccif-rapport-2018.pdf
[116] Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2018) Hate crime against Muslims, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. https://www.osce.org/odihr/373441

attacks against politicians and mosques,[117] in June 2018, another ten members of a far-right wing network, called AFO (*Action des forces opérationnelles*), were arrested for planning attacks against Muslims.[118] [119] According to various media sources, their goal was to attack and kill "radical imams, Islamist detainees after their release from prison or veiled women, chosen at random on the street". This group declares that their goal is to "combattre le péril Islamique" ("fight the Islamist danger"). The main target for all of these attacks, whether reported or not, are women. According to the 2018 report of the CCIF,[120] 69% of Islamophobic acts target women, often resulting in a temporary work disability. This important proportion of hate crimes against Muslim women more generally requires greater investigation, particularly online.

Islamophobia and Social Media in France

To contextualise the best approaches towards analysing anti-Muslim online hate speech, we conducted in-depth interviews with NGOs in France who have some involvement with this issue. We also as began online observations of content. Because of the French context described above, we are charting new territory and are at preliminary stages of research. However, from these initial qualitative approaches, we found two main forms and online targets of Islamophobic hate speech in France. The first is hate speech, based on prejudices associated with Muslims or people of North African descent and culture, but not targeted toward any individual. These affect all Muslims, who spend time on social networks and witness these hate messages, but random individuals who begin to take part in a discussion can also then be directly targeted. Second are cyberbullying campaigns targeting publicly known and recognised Muslim personalities or any person who have been exposed in the media as Muslim. They include a range of high-profile people in France, from journalists to athletes who can be identified as Muslim (in terms of physical appearance, name, and for women, those wearing a hijab).

According to our in-depth interviews, the recurring mechanism of the second type of online harassment undertakes the following path: a religious sign visible in the media is associated with a willingness of its bearer to proselytise; proselytism for the Muslim religion is associated with extremist branches; these extremist branches are then associated with the jihadists, and finally with ISIS and terrorist attacks. This distinction made between exhibiting a religious sign and being an accomplice of terrorism or even worse, a terrorist leader, has severe repercussions. They are then targeted with accusations, harassment, threats and insults. These targets may be activists but can also simply be people who share information about Muslims. Muslims or supposed Muslims supporters who have been identified as an enemy or a threat by one of the major organised Islamophobic networks can be harassed on daily basis. Any declaration of faith for Islam, or wearing of a distinctive symbol as a veil, can lead to surveillance by one of the Islamophobic networks. This surveillance includes analysis of all past and future online actions of the targeted victim. Each of their posts or any general daily activity can be interpreted as a possible reconciliation with terrorist enterprises or participation in a fantasised conquest of France by Islam.

---

[117] Le Parisien (2017) Ultra-droite : 10 arrestations, un projet d'attentat contre des mosquées et des politiques. http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/dix-hommes-soupconnes-de-preparer-des-attentats-anti-musulmans-arretes-17-10-2017-7338018.php

[118] Soullier, L. & Vincent, E. (2018) Soupçons d'attentats contre des musulmans : dix membres de l'ultradroite mis en examen, Le Monde. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2018/06/28/derriere-le-groupuscule-afo-la-menace-d-une-radicalisation-violente-de-l-extreme-droite_5322275_3224.html

[119] Samson, V. (2018) Arrestation de dix hommes liés à l'ultradroite soupçonnés de préparer des attentats contre des musulmans, Le Figaro. http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2018/06/24/01016-20180624ARTFIG00185-arrestation-de-dix-hommes-soupconnes-de-preparer-des-attentats-contre-des-musulmans.php

[120] CCIF (2018) Rapport sur l'Islamophobie pendant l'année 2017 : dates, chiffres et questions. http://www.islamophobie.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ccif-rapport-2018.pdf

---

After being identified by a group, the victims can be pursued relentlessly by comments under their profiles, publications or by private messages. The original messages that point out a future target for the Islamophobic groups are often addressed publicly, for instance on Twitter, and are often simultaneously ambiguous and sophisticated. Among the personalities or groups that have been the center of controversial debate on Twitter, just in the few last year include Mennel Ibtessim;[121] [122] Lallab, a Muslim feminist organisation in France;[123] [124] Rokhaya Diallo;[125] Maryam Pougetoux;[126] [127] and Médine.[128] [129] [130] [131]

This type of harassment campaign is usually launched by so-called influencers on social media, who then pass the hatred baton on to media personalities (including intellectuals, columnists, journalists, politicians) to project the message. Sometimes, a campaign is inspired by one of these same media personalities first, which then gives rise to an online harassment campaign. Thus, there are iterative and mutual influences between traditional media and the internet. Once launched, these campaigns are followed by hundreds of anonymous contacts, which are part of the networks of these influencers. It is then followed by the sharing of profiles, publications, re-tweets, but also subtle or hateful comments, and finally, private messages addressed to the victim. The more available private information there is, the more hate speech can be violent and uninhibited. The perpetrators can use insults, they can show that they know private information, such as one's home address or the victim's real name, which can even lead to death threats.

Sometimes, widespread stereotypes can provoke insults or accusations of terrorism by escalating a bad joke into concrete threats. This is common in comment sections of news websites or blogs, as well as Facebook, Reddit or YouTube often following the sharing of a news article or video. This type of hate speech is frequent when the information involves a known Muslim personality or reports news related to the actions of ISIS (such as terrorist attacks, trials and jihadism). Sometimes this hate speech may be perpetuated by young Internet users or "trolls," without any political or concrete objective.

In effect, online hate speech does not derive from a group of individuals posting random or spontaneous original thoughts on Twitter, Facebook or Reddit. They are often linked from stories in mainstream media, such as TV, newspapers and radio. Whether or not these linked stories are "fake news" or from traditional versus politicised media does not take away from how this news content is

---

[121] https://www.marianne.net/medias/voice-la-candidate-mennel-se-retire-devant-la-polemique-sur-ses-tweets-apres-les-attentats

[122] https://www.bondyblog.fr/opinions/billet-dhumeur/mennel-quitte-the-voice-une-polemique-symptomatique-des-obsessions-identitaires-de-notre-pays/

[123] https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Laicite/Lallab-association-musulmane-feministe-coeur-dune-controverse-2017-08-24-1200871703

[124] http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2017/08/23/stop-au-cyberharcelement-islamophobe-contre-l-association-lallab_1591443

[125] https://www.rtl.fr/actu/politique/pourquoi-rokhaya-diallo-a-t-elle-ete-ecartee-du-conseil-national-du-numerique-7791447394

[126] https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Laicite/LUnef-critiquee-responsable-voilee-2018-05-22-1200940792

[127] http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2018/05/27/maryam-pougetoux-symbole-de-la-confusion-de-la-classe-politique-et-des-medias-a-l-egard-de-l-islam_1654525

[128] http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/culture/2018/06/11/31006-20180611ARTFIG00093-pas-de-concert-au-bataclan-pour-medine.php

[129] https://www.bondyblog.fr/opinions/billet-dhumeur/medine-maryam-rokhaya-mennel-montrez-patte-blanche-ou-taisez-vous/

[130] https://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/les-invites-de-mediapart/article/200618/medine-au-bataclan-l-ordre-public-contre-la-democratie?utm_source=20180621

[131] http://www.liberation.fr/checknews/2018/06/11/bataclan-quelles-sont-les-paroles-de-medine-qui-ont-cree-la-polemique_1658212

According to information gathered from respondents and online observations, three main types of online harassers have emerged in France:

- First, extreme right groups in France, or the *Fachosphère*, includes political parties, other official groups as well as other individuals. The most well-known groups are: FN (now renamed as *Rassemblement National*), *Egalité et Reconciliation*, and *Génération Identitaire*. Their discourse relates many societal problems to immigration and *choc des cultures* (cultural clash). They often demand that people whose culture cannot bend to their own cultural reference should be expelled from France. The *Fachosphère*'s argument is for the common good, including for their target populations, often Muslims, who would supposedly benefit, as well from their peace of mind if they choose to leave France or if they adopt French culture.

- The second group is comprised of certain members of the conservative right who espouse *Catholicism*. Their speeches defy the presence of Muslims in public space on the pretext that they must respect the historical right to govern and to speak in public held by Judeo-Christian white culture.

- Finally, the third network is made up of *laïcistes* (secularist claimants), who are generally politically affiliated with a left-wing party, such as the Parti Socialiste (PS). The best-known movement is *Printemps Républicain.* This group claims an extreme interpretation of secularism such that no sign or religious claim should be tolerated in the public space, extended not only to institutions but to the streets and media spaces. This group has the most sophisticated discourse of the three groups, in which hate speech is subtle when existent. However, their whistle-blowing campaigns aim to target Muslim personalities in order to totally silence them, whatever they may be: feminist activists, anti-racists or simple citizen who want to be a reflection of success in society for French Muslims.

Observations of social media exchanges of anti-Muslim hate speech revealed more than a confrontation between racists and anti-racists. For instance, online controversies have ensued between secularist groups and anti-racist activists, who defended the need of words like "*racisés,*" so they can identify the group of victims of systematic racism in France. The secularists then argued with these activists. More specifically, the secularists accuse them of emphasising the differences between people using skin color, religion or culture, when, they claimed, there should be no need to do so. Many actors in the secularist group have Twitter accounts with retweets without any explicit hate speech. One of the most classic tactics used in this inter-group fight is to quote the "influencers" of the other side and discredit them with witty and sophisticated language. Yet it remains to be seen if this approach stops hate speech with any of the groups.

NGO representatives who work with Muslim targets on a regular basis described the extreme psychological toll that online harassment brings, yet these acts are difficult to prevent and even harder to bring to justice, particularly when some people do not want to discuss it (or discuss further). Most of the people who were harassed, they said, simply shut down their social media accounts or stopped checking them, even after blocking hundreds of harassers. It should be noted that the interviewees had

---

[132] Beauregard, M. (2015), Le traitement discursif de l'islam et des musulmans dans les médias : analyse critique des chroniques de Richard Martineau, UQÀM.
https://archipel.uqam.ca/8103/1/M14090.pdf
[133] http://www.liberation.fr/ecrans/2012/10/31/le-point-et-l-express-sans-gene-avec-l-islam_960161

no example of an effective method to stop harassment or to make the perpetrator think twice about doing it again, nor they could suggest any idea to do so.

Tools and techniques in the fight against Islamophobia online

In this section, we will review some projects and tools that may be relevant to monitoring or preventing online Islamophobia in France. Although there are several European and French projects, we did not find any specific tools to tackle Islamophobia with French social media and only one platform that has been developed to do so. This platform and its performance will be presented at the end of this section. The first group is the Idpi (*idées, pratiques, innovations*), association which has made a monthly assessment online hate content for one and a half years[134] (from June 2016 to January 2018). This initiative, called the "Baromètre mensuel des manifestations de haine en ligne," combines a quantitative and qualitative approach, and it has been evaluating the evolution of hate speech. Each month the Idpi lists millions of tweets and samples a random selection (around 3000, depending on the month) to study expression of hate. These tweets are manually coded according to five types: "anti-haine" (tweet condemning hatred), "neutre" (no expression of hate), "racisme ordinaire" (expression propagating stereotypes on a particular population, without insult), "propos haineux" (insults or hateful expression), "détournement" (re-use of a hashtag to attack a specific population). In addition to this typology, a label specifying the target population is assigned to each hateful tweet, for example: homophobic, anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish or anti-Christian. Both categorisations allow to create chronological charts highlighting the evolution of hateful expressions according to the different news and to compare them with the general conversations on the potentially polarising subjects. Finally, each monthly report includes qualitative and contextual analyses. The form of these reports is similar to the annual report conducted by CCIF on Islamophobia, which also includes a calendar with a summary of the main controversial topics and events. Both can be very useful and complementary to follow hate speech evolution.

To give a few numbers: in the month of June 2016, Idpi collected 390,408 tweets, including 69,601 tweets with expressions of hate and 121,041 tweets with discriminating stereotypes; in the month of December 2017, they collected 2,117,051 tweets, including 273,673 tweets with expressions of hate and 627,379 with discriminating stereotypes.

In Europe, at least four other projects on online hate speech have been conducted in recent years with different goals and different methods:[135]

- The "No Hate Speech Watch" created by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.[136] It is an online database for monitoring and sharing information on online hate speech that targets youth in Europe. The sources are a panel of blogs and tweets, and hate speech is reported by volunteers. It includes an update of data categories according to current trends.
- The International Legal Research Group on Online Hate Speech, a program launched by ELSA (European Law Students' Association). Research groups in 42 countries conducted comparative analyses of hate speech online. The results, compiled in a 471-page report,[137] includes comparisons of the legal approaches, as well as discussions on the effectiveness of different

---

[134] Idpi (2018) Baromètre mensuel des manifestations de la haine en ligne, janvier 2018.
http://www.idpi.fr/actualites/barometre-mensuel-des-manifestations-de-la-haine-en-ligne-janvier-2018/
[135] Idpi (2018) Hate Speech sur Internet, benchmark international.
http://www.idpi.fr/actualites/gouvernance/hate-speech-sur-internet-benchmark-international-2/
[136] https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign.
[137] https://files.elsa.org/AA/Final_Report_OHS_Final.pdf

methods and uses of legislative tools to fight online hate speech. A section of the report focuses in detail on French law to evaluate what can be done to fight online hate speech.

- The Human Rights Online project led by INACH (International Network Against Cyber Hate).[138] This project has several goals including "networking and connecting organisations," "monitoring hate and discrimination on the Internet," "raising awareness," "identifying dynamics to analyse cyberhate', and "removing hate content."

Finally, in France, on March 2018, the French government decided to take more involvement in the fight against online hate speech and launch their own program, "Luttons ensemble contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme sur internet."[139] This "mission" aims to reinforce the existing legal arsenal against hate speech in order to make it more effective. The claim of the French government is that if *liberté d'expression* (freedom of speech) in France is non-negotiable, it needs to be framed: one cannot hold discriminatory remarks or insults of a racist nature in the public space. French law already ensures this in the street, and as the internet is considered a public space, what is intolerable in the street should also be intolerable online. They first launched an online audit and released an alert video to demonstrate the importance of online hate speech by reproducing hateful comments on big placards, carried by people in the street.[140] This new online mission is part of the DILCRAH (*Délégation Interministérielle à la Lutte Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Haine anti-LGBT*)[141].

In 2015, the previous government commissioned the *Renaissance Numérique* think tank to contribute to the mission "Engagement Citoyen et Appartenance Républicaine," ordered by French President, François Hollande.[142] In its proposal, *Renaissance Numérique* presented a citizen platform of counter-narratives that could be used to respond to racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic online speech. That proposal later evolved into 'Seriously',[143] a platform to help social media users debunk fake news and respond to hate speech by helping them find the right information to do so. To use the website, one needs to copy/paste the hate speech sentence they want to answer to on the website, and then select one of the following categories: Anti-Muslim, Antisemitism, Fake-news, LGBT-phobia, Racism, Sexism, Xenophobia. With the Seriously platform, a collection of diagrams contain factual sentences and their sources on the subject. One can then select the ones that are considered useful. Here are examples of the anti-Muslim hatred alternative statements:

> *"Muslims and terrorism. Don't conflate them!"*
> *"Terrorism is not Islam."*

Following these statements there exists data to prove counter-narratives. Then, the platform provides advice, such as suggesting that one later discusses with the original poster the topic more in-depth or to ask the original poster for more details. Finally, they offer a list of links to academic or other verified documents, awareness raising campaigns and videos.[144] [145] At the end of the process, one can see a summary of all the points made.

---

138 http://www.inach.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/INACH_HumanRightsOnline.pdf
139 http://stoplahainesurinternet.fr/
140 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UotdpoWK2Xs
141 https://www.gouvernement.fr/dilcrah
142 http://www.renaissancenumerique.org/publications/contre-discours-une-plateforme-pour-recreer-un-lien-citoyen-canaliser-et-contrer-les-discours-haineux-grace-au-numerique
143 https://www.seriously.ong/
144 https://www.seriously.ong/resource/120/contre-les-prejuges-antimusulmans-proposez-ce-remede
145 http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/les_essentiels_-_rapport_racisme_2015_page_a_page.pdf

On the academic research front in France, we did not find any user tools to fight hate speech on social media, yet some important theoretical work has been done by the French academics in Natural Language Processing that could be useful in order to develop such a tool. For instance, the DEFT 2017 (défi fouille de texte = information retrieval challenge), a part of the biggest French Natural Language Processing (NLP) conference followed a worldwide trend by focusing on developing tools for emotion detection on Twitter. This conference challenge was composed by three tasks with an increasing level of complexity. The first one was to analyse polarity of non-figurative tweets (putting a label of emotion/opinion as "objective, positive, negative or mixed"), the second one to detect figurative language ("irony, sarcasm, humor, nothing") and the third one to analyse the polarity of non-figurative and figurative tweets. Twelve French research teams were involved in this competition, and the "results show that the presence of figurative devices make sentiment analysis of tweets much more complex." In other words, the challenge of detecting criticism of Islamophobia may prove to be a challenge in online tools.

Strength and Weaknesses of the Tools

All of these projects on understanding and assessing online hate have made strides in combatting the problem at hand. First, many of the organizations that track this content offer flexibility and nuance in approaching online hate speech. For instance, Idpi have been able to handle large bodies of data while still managing to adapt to current trends and events. This will be helpful in our efforts to analyse data with constant news cycles and dynamic political changes, including unforeseen terrorist attacks, which tend to heighten anti-Muslim rhetoric.

And given that the Idpi, in particular, has generated large data sets while also sampling for targeted analysis, they could be a useful model for both collecting and analysing social media data, given the various ways that Muslims are targeted, especially women. In fact, focusing on gender variation in hate speech, especially that a response tool could vary based on gender, is a critical area for analysis.

A strength of the ELSA is that it offers distinctions on legal variations across countries, which could prove beneficial for understanding how both the speech itself and the reactions to it might vary in each of the partner countries in this analysis. France's distinct history and laws demonstrate this distinction. In addition, the INACH in particular has a track record of connecting various organisations around human rights, and given that France, compared to partners in the UK and Italy, does not have these connections across organisations, this could be a useful model for combatting hate speech online. On a more in-country basis, the projects demonstrate that regional differences might vary, as they tracked social media posts based on region and France has particular regions where the far-right has been particularly popular, so Muslims in those areas might be more at risk.

Many of these important measures of online hate speech, though, have not gone as far as intervention, though many have offered policy or other recommendations. Some have gone as far as tools to stop the hate. For instance, Muslim advocates not only recommend counter-narratives but also looking at how to do so with more than one platform. Online harassment has no platform boundaries and perpetrators will flock toward those that allow them to do so. As a result, platform flexibility of measurement and responses to online hate speech would go a long way.

Regarding the one French platform to address online hate speech - set up by *Renaissance Numérique*, it's main strength is that it is a didactic tool. Users are driven to question themselves on the best type of arguments for them to respond to the hate speech messages. The same process applies when they

must work out the best form of media (video, graph, image, text) to support their argument and to choose a strategy to talk to the original poster (being friendly, being factual, being naive, etc.). This will also lead the victims to learn more about the subject of the hate or controversy. Then it could develop and improve their ability to counter online hate speech on their own in the future and to produce their own counter-narratives. The platform's graphic and visual elements, as well as the facts, are easily accessible by other users as well, so it could have a positive impact on third parties, who were not involved in the discussion in the first place.

This platform also contains a whole set of strategies that can be tried, potentially helping the user to learn how to adapt to any individual poster. Another good point is that the database contains information on many different topics, such as anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, sexism, xenophobia, but also a specific section against misinformation. This could be useful to deal with intersectional hate speech.

The main weakness of the platform proposed by *Renaissance Numérique* is that the resources do not adapt directly to the precise hate speech message for which the user needs an answer, but rather to the generic category. Then, the users must select their own method of response and the type of position to adopt against the hate propagator (being kind, being offensive, being naive, etc.), even if they have no idea what the best way is to make their counter-speech efficient. This makes the platform difficult to use for someone who is not already accustomed to the debates on social media. As a result, teaching while responding is an important recommendation.

Summary of the main points identified during the in-depth interviews in France

General

- Islamophobia is everywhere in French society: on the internet, on the street, in the schools (law against the veil in classroom), in health care (some are treated differently for stereotypical consideration based on origins - Arabic and black women are seen as better able to bear pain), when looking for work, etc.

- Islamophobia takes multiple forms.

- Racism is part of a coherent narration which is followed by some individuals who are sometimes among the political or scientific elite.

- The main goal of Islamophobia is to silence Muslims.

- Bringing the harassment of Muslim people to justice cost a lot of money and is time-consuming.

- Many Muslims do not know about the organisations fighting Islamophobia and do not know their rights, so they are not reporting the attacks or the hate speech. This leads to a significant dark figure of Islamophobia.

Nature of Online Harassment

- Most of the time, Islamophobic groups just share information about Muslim activists without any comment to prevent accusations of racism. Or they use subtle language.

- Those who have the letter "Nun" (ن) in their Twitter name are usually people supporting the Christians of the Middle-East, and many of them are Islamophobic because they are against ISIS and think a lot of French Muslims are pro-ISIS.

- Harassment is often taking the form of raids, following a more or less organised talk in the Islamophobic groups. Islamophobia is basically triggered by anyone who shows themselves in public and speaking about any subject, even non-political, while being identified as a Muslim. For example: a woman making YouTube videos about beauty/fashion, or just people expressing themselves on a political, not religious related, topic but while wearing a veil (e.g. Maryam Pougetoux).

- Once a famous person is known as Muslim in French society, they are always under online surveillance of Islamophobic groups, which are happy to find any information on their private life (e.g. Mennel Ibtessim or Tarik Rammadan).

- Muslim women targeted by Islamophobic groups online can easily be victims of misogyny, revenge porn, diffusion of their private photos, their private information or their home address. They also receive a lot of private messages, death threats or pictures of beheaded women (accusations of supporting ISIS).

- On the internet, people feel invincible because they are anonymous, and they can even be viewed as heroes or martyrs to the eyes of their groups or networks if they are confronted and if their account is deleted.

- News articles containing fake news accusing a Muslim association to be an extremist group exist online. Once an association is suspected to be related to extremists, their rights to employ someone or to benefit from all the usual state help is jeopardised.

- Every time there is a news media controversy including a Muslim women, other Muslim women or associations of Muslims can be harassed again as they are essentialised and all considered as the same.

- Sometimes government leaders or journalists say things that validate an online harassment campaign.

- On social media, Islamophobia is concentrated around the fight between the secularist group and the so called "Islam-politique" group (note that "Islam-politique" is a right-wing label, not the definition they give to themselves).

- Far-right activists are not necessarily the origin of Islamophobia, as they just use the fact that Islamophobia is tolerable and that comes from regular political discourse including that of the French government. Asking Facebook and Twitter to fight Islamophobia themselves and accusing isolated and extremist people to be the hate speech perpetrators, is actually not helping the real fight of deconstruction of societal Islamophobia.

Results of Online Harassment

- Cyber harassment can result in victims suffering from burn-out, anxiety, depression, suicide attempts, and all the same post-traumatic effects then can follow a sexual aggression. Symptoms exhibited by victims include crying, feeling stuck, being hyperactive, vomiting, going into a trance, etc.

- Shame often prevents harassed people to ask for help, including their family. Victims often shut down their social media accounts and become isolated.

- An important consequence of online harassment is that being only offline nowadays cannot be considered as a good solution since everyone needs to use social media for their personal, professional and associative activities.

Responses to Online Harassment

- An association tried to work with Facebook and Twitter, but they said they already do their best. These platform companies need to track IP addresses and ban them instead of just deleting the accounts.

- To report someone, you need to identify with your official ids, and it can be difficult, then if you succeed, they just delete the tweet and it doesn't help much because the person continues to have an influence on social media. Sometimes, the account is deleted but the person can create a new one, and people who have been deleted by Twitter are considered as heroes or martyrs by the other people of the same community, so that is not effective in the end.

- There was some success in tackling online hate speech in the past, particularly when the victim was a famous person if there is a racist or sexist speech involved, but never when there is Islamophobic speech.

- To contest Islamophobia on the internet, we need political discourses to prevent hate speech and promote peace between people of different religions. We need a societal change to recognise better the victims and a political help because it is now too hard to fight while Islamophobia is legitimised by society.

UNITED KINGDOM

What is known about Islamophobia online in the UK

Online Actors

The Internet has afforded opportunities for like-minded individuals to locate each other and bypass traditional mass media gatekeepers, resulting in a huge number of online communities appearing into exist below and across national communities with varied social, political, religious or commercial raisons d'être (Kohl, 2018). This is particularly acute when observing social media platforms with multifarious groups, subgroups and networks (Kohl, 2018). According to some academics, the less involved face-to-face contact, the greater likelihood exists for individuals to admit to socially undesirable behaviour, to which online spaces appear to allow for a greater sense of security (Allen, 2014). On this point, it would seem that this sense of security gives space for some to be more open with their discriminatory and prejudicial views (Allen, 2014). Furthermore, online spaces have been noted to continually invert and blur the boundaries between the private and public, in which content which may have been typically restricted to privatised spaces, now encroaches public, online spaces. As such, online spaces create environments of "social disruption" where what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable, private and public, legitimate and illegitimate become progressively obscured distinctions (Allen, 2014: 2). Consequently, the Internet and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become a popular sphere for online hate, partly due to their accessibility and the anonymity they offer for perpetrators who use it to intimidate, harass, and bully others (Christopherson, 2007). Advantageously, individuals are empowered to join online communities that reinforce and potentially justify their ideas and attitudes, yet remain physically separate from communities of hate, along with being provided openings for prejudices to rise to the surface and for anger and frustrations to be vented (Jacks and Adler, 2015).

The Internet has been utilised by far-right groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) and Britain First, who have used the web to create and establish a public presence, being successful in using social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to disseminate further online hate and intolerance toward people of Muslim faith (Barlow and Awan, 2016). Indeed, it has been noted that the EDL, described as an "Islamophobic new social movement" (Copsey, 2010: 5), was one of the first far-right movements to make extensive use of social media, being proactive in exploiting the virtual environment and using worldwide events to incite hatred towards Islam and Muslims (Awan and Zempi, 2015). Analysing data from the Islamophobia monitoring project *Tell MAMA* (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), Copsey *et al.,* (2013) found that the majority of incidents of anti-Muslim hate crime reported were online incidents and "300 – 69 percent – of these online cases reported a link to the far-right" (p. 21), specifically the EDL and British National Party (BNP). Of the online incidents that reported a link to the far right however, it was the EDL, rather than the BNP that was named in 49 percent of such cases, signifying that the EDL is the far-right organisation most active on the Internet in terms of circulating anti-Muslim sentiments (Copsey *et al.,* 2013). In addition, Copsey *et al.,* (2013) also discovered that most of the online hate reported to *Tell MAMA* was committed by males, comprising of 321 incidents, whereas women were responsible for 78 incidents, constituting 18 percent of the online incidents reported, with 18 of these cases reporting a link with the EDL.

In their large-scale online research study for the British-based think tank group *Demos*, Bartlett and Litter (2011) sought to uncover data concerning EDL supporters in terms of their demographics,

involvement in EDL activity, political attitudes and social views. Bartlett and Littler (2011) found that the social media platform Facebook was the most popular mode of communication amongst EDL supporters, as well as their central communicative and organisational tool used to disperse the group's information and coordination of their 'real world' activities. Concerning demographics, based on the EDL's Facebook membership (at the time of the study) nationally 72 percent of supporters are under 30, with 36 percent are aged between 16 and 20, and 28 percent being over 30, demonstrating that the organisation is discernibly a 'young' movement. Regarding gender, overall 81 percent of the EDL's Facebook membership is male and 19 percent is female (Bartlett and Littler, 2011). Moreover, 41 percent of supporters claimed to have joined the EDL due to their views on Islam, with some directing abuse at all Muslims whereas others made more nuanced criticisms by condemning 'political Islam' and 'Muslim extremists' (Bartlett and Litter, 2011).

In a study by Brindle (2016) which he examined two corpora to analyse discourses produced by the EDL's group leaders on their official website and on the official EDL Facebook page by group supporters, produced similar findings. Brindle (2016) observed that in the former corpus, EDL group leaders focused on the opposition to extremism within Islam, whilst in the latter corpus, EDL supporters constructed Islam and Muslims as a threat to their position in society and their way of life, with no effort made to differentiate between radical and non-radical forms of Islam, to which the religion was viewed as being in fundamental conflict with 'Englishness'. As such, Brindle's (2016) findings suggest that the EDL is an organisation that is opposed all forms of Islam and immigration of Muslims to the UK, which stands in contrast with the organisation's mission statement which declares that the aim of the EDL is to oppose forms of radical Islam in the UK. Likewise, an investigation of active users on an online EDL message board undertaken by Cleland *et al.*, (2017) revealed that the existence of several threads operating within a broader theme of Islamophobia in which posters discussed Muslims as socially and culturally problematic and Islam as the opposite to British values and identity, and a key cause of social decline in the UK. Moreover, many posts across the message board were found to be replete with openly racist language directed towards Muslims and Islam, concerning perceived cultural differences that deemed Muslims to be cultural outsiders and a threat to British culture. A significant finding of the research was that at no point was racist language challenged on the message board; rather it was mutually supported by other users, with such uncontested behaviour providing important evidence to dispute the EDL's claim of being an anti-racist organisation (Cleland *et al.,* 2017).

In his examination of anti-Muslim hate crime on the social media platform Twitter, in which 500 tweets from 100 different Twitter users was analysed as well as inspecting the language used to depict Muslims in a negative light, Awan (2014) constructed a typology consisting of eight different people identified as cyber trolls, that is, people who use social networking sites to actively engaged in a sustained campaign of hate against Muslims. These are:

- the *trawler* (a person who has gone through other people's Twitter accounts to specifically target people with a Muslim connection);
- the *apprentice* (someone who is fairly new to Twitter but nonetheless has begun to target people with the help of more experienced online abusers);
- the *disseminator* (someone who has tweeted about and retweeted messages, pictures, and documents of online hate which are specifically targeting Muslims);
- the *impersonator* (a person who is using a fake profile, account, and images to target individuals);
- the *accessory* (a person who is joining in with other people's conversations via Twitter to target 'visible' Muslims);

- the *reactive* (a person who following a major incident, such as the Woolwich attack, will begin an online campaign targeting actual and perceived Muslims);
- the *mover* (someone who regularly changes their Twitter account in order to continue targeting someone from a different profile); and, finally,
- the *professional* (a person who has a huge number of people following on Twitter and regardless of consequences, he/she will launch a major campaign of hate against Muslims; this person is also likely to have multiple Twitter accounts which are all aimed at targeting Muslims) (Awan, 2014: 143).

In a more recent study, Awan (2016) conducted research focusing on Islamophobia on Facebook. Awan (2016) created a typology of five offender behaviour characteristics based on the themes that emerged from examining 100 different Facebook pages, comments and posts, in which 494 instances of specific anti-Muslim hate speech was discovered. These five types which encompass perpetrators who have been engaged with Facebook as a means to target Muslim communities with online hate are:

- the *Opportunistic* (someone using Facebook to create a posts and comments of hate directed against Muslim communities after a particular incident. In particular, these individuals are using Facebook to post offline threats and promote violence);
- the *Deceptive* (someone creating fear through the use of posts which are specifically related to false events in order to intensify the Islamophobic hate comments online. For example, a number of people were attempting to capitalise on false stories with links to incidents such as Peppa Pig and Halal meat);
- *Fantasists* (someone using Facebook webpages to fantasise over Muslim deaths and consequences with respect to Muslim events. In particular, these individuals have blurred the lines between reality and fiction and are making direct threats against Muslim communities);
- *Producers* (people who use and promote racist images and videos which are used as a means to create a climate of fear, anti-Muslim hate and hostility. These individuals are closely linked to the distributors); and, finally,
- *Distributors* (people who use social media and Facebook in order to distribute messages of online hate through posts, likes, images, videos and comments on Facebook). Awan (2016) found that the majority of people involved in these acts were males (805) and females (20%). A number of the individuals were predominantly based in the UK (43%), however there were also a number of online users who were identified as being from the United States (37%) and Australia (20%). Additionally, Awan (2016) identified that a number of comments and posts revealed individuals with direct links to organisations such as Britain First and the EDL.

Ekman's (2015) exploration of online Islamophobia identified that the key actors participating in the online Islamophobic milieu were counter-jihadists, as part of a wider counter-jihadist network that prescribes to the right of the political spectrum. In analysing several prolific Islamophobic websites and blogs, Ekman (2015) found that counter-jihadists utilised discursive strategies to disseminate theories of an ongoing Islamic colonisation of the West, whereby discursively, Islam and Muslims living in the West are deemed as the most prominent threat to 'inner security' and 'Western values'. However, as Ekman (2015) points out, the counter-jihad is not an organisation; rather, it is better understood as a political strategy that is used and interpreted slightly differently by actors in various political and geographical contexts. As such, the character of the network is fluid and its structure depends on how actions, practices and discourses are situated in time and space and how these relate to specific political events and processes. In this sense, whilst actors within the network may share common ideological views on Islam and Muslims, they also possess different political goals. Ekman (2015)

argues that counter-jihadists should not be observed as an isolated political phenomenon pertaining only to the marginalised far right. Instead, they should be viewed as the more visible actors within a larger community of actors. In addition, the discursive strategies deployed on the online network by counter-jihadists do not originate from a political and societal vacuum, but are nourished from already established media representations of Muslims and from mainstream political discourses. The objective of counter-jihadists, who are situated at the far flank of politics is to push the limits of what is considered acceptable public speech about Muslims. In doing so, counter-jihadists can facilitate more space within political decision– and policymaking for political actors that are hostile to Islam and Muslims, which explains the connection between counter-jihadist bloggers and populist right-wing parties across Europe (Ekman, 2015). On this issue, Islamophobic narratives intersect with more general anti-immigration views in contemporary politics, fuelling xenophobia and racism aimed towards people associated with Islam. Ekman (2015) affirms that the *politics of fear* manufactured by counter-jihadists on web pages and blogs is reflected in the increasing use of violence against European Muslims, where incidents of violence, such as street marches carried out by organisations such as the EDL in the UK feed from the Islamophobic online discourses distributed by leading counter-jihadists.

Social Networks and Activities

Monitoring organisations such as *Tell MAMA* have suggested that levels of Islamophobic discourse online are ongoing and increasing, especially through Twitter (Allen, 2014). In 2016, *Tell MAMA* documented 340 anti-Muslim crimes or incidents, of which 311 were verified that were classified as 'online', occurring on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, or other Internet-based websites, such as forums and online newspapers. Most of the online incidents reported to *Tell MAMA* (2016) fell under the category 'Abusive Behaviour' at 84% (n=261), with some falling under the rubric of 'Threats' being 9% (n=29) and Anti-Muslim literature comprising of 7% (n=21) – a term which broadly includes racialised memes in the online sphere. As Awan and Zempi (2015) highlight, online anti-Muslim abuse occurring on social networking sites, such as Twitter, can be categorized as being "cyber harassment," "cyber bullying," "cyber abuse," "cyber incitement/threats," and "cyber hate" (p. 12). According to Awan (2014), many of the comments that are posted online through social networking platforms possess an extremist and incendiary undertone, and also transpire on blogging sites (see Ekman, 2015), online chat rooms and other virtual platforms which have been used to propagate online anti-Muslim hatred, often in the form of racist jokes and stereotypical 'banter'. As such, the Internet and social media sites are popular arenas for online hate to flourish, partly due to their accessibility and the anonymity they offer for offenders who use it to intimidate, harass, and bully others (Awan, 2014).

According to Awan and Zempi (2015), the prevalence and severity of virtual and physical world anti-Muslim hate crimes are influenced by 'trigger' events of local, national and international significance. Terrorist attacks carried out by individuals who identify themselves as being Muslim or acting in the name of Islam, such as the Woolwich attack, the atrocities committed by ISIS and attacks around the world such as Sydney, the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris and attacks in Copenhagen and Tunisia have induced a significant increase in participants' virtual and physical world anti-Muslim hate crime experiences. Additionally, national scandals such as the aforementioned grooming of young girls in Rotherham by groups of Pakistani men[146], and the alleged 'Trojan Horse' scandal in Birmingham framed as a 'jihadist plot' to take over schools, were also highlighted by participants as 'trigger' events,

---

[146] Note by focus group organisers: The Rotherham scandal has been described as the "biggest child protection scandal in UK history". From the late 1980s until the 2010s, child sexual abuse continued almost unchallenged by legal authorities in the norther English town of Rotherham in South Yorkshire. Rotherham Council commissioned an independent inquiry led by Professor Alexis Jay. In August 2014, the Jay report concluded that an estimated 1,400 children, most of them white girls, had been sexually abused in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 by predominantly British-Pakistani men.

which increased their vulnerability to anti-Muslim hostility. Such assertions are supported by Feldman and Littler's (2014) research, who discovered that in the wake of the soldier Lee Rigby's brutal murder in Woolwich, reported incidents to *Tell MAMA* skyrocketed – there were nearly four times more online and offline reports (373%) in the week after 22 May 2013 than in the week beforehand (see also Törnberg and Törnberg, 2016).

Oboler (2016) reported that Facebook is being used to normalise Islamophobia and associated discourses. After a qualitative analysis of 349 posts on Facebook, Oboler found several themes that depict Muslims as manipulative, dishonest and a threat to security and to Western way of life. In an earlier study concerning online Islamophobia conducted by Oboler (2013), culminating in a report for The Online Hate Prevention Centre, over 50 different Facebook pages were analysed, and which illustrated a clear correlation of hate speeches online that were targeted toward Muslims. Overall, 349 separate instances of online hate speeches directed against Muslims were discovered, including a number of Facebook pages created in order to specifically target Muslim communities. Allen's (2014) study found similar strong links of Facebook users and growing public opposition about mosques. Allen (2014) found that members were engaged actively in online discourse which was opposed to the mosque. Some of the themes that emerged from this, included, issues regarding social identity, otherness and the Islamification of Britain. Another problem that emerged within the discourse of Islamophobia was the issue of Muslims being a threat to national security.

As mentioned earlier, Awan's (2016) study concerning Islamophobia on Facebook revealed a typology of five offender behaviour characteristics, which were situated and divided into five walls of anti-Muslim hate that are used on Facebook by such individuals and groups. The five perceptible categories were also related to the type of engagement these groups of were involved in on Facebook, and are:

1. *Muslims are Terrorists*, in which in 58 occurrences, visual and written communications were used to depict Muslims as aggressive terrorists, a key point being that no distinctions were made between Muslims and non-violent Muslims, as all were portrayed as terrorists;
2. *Muslims as Rapists*, where in 45 instances, material was used following incidents such as the Rotherham abuse scandal to represent Muslims as sexual groomers and serial rapists;
3. *Muslim women are a security threat*, where in 76 cases, visual and written material was used to depict Muslims, in particular Muslim women wearing the veil as being an example of a security threat;
4. *A war between Muslims*, in which in 53 occurrences, dangerous and emotive material is used evocatively to situate and view Muslims through the lens of security and war. This particular means of engagement is relevant for far-right groups who make use of English history and patriotism to whip up anti-Islamic hate by utilising war analogies; finally,
5. *Muslims should be deported,* where in 62 episodes, immigration and particular campaigns such as banning Halal food are used to create online hate and fear that heavily implies that Muslims are taking over the UK and should be deported before Sharia law is implemented.

Additionally, casual racism is deployed which consequently blurs the line between anti-Muslim comments and those which specifically target Muslims due to their race, gender, religion and beliefs (Awan, 2016). Tellingly, much of the content within the walls of Islamophobic hate were derived via the Britain First, English Brotherhood and EDL Facebook pages, which aimed to create an atmosphere of fear and anti-Muslim hate (Awan, 2016).

The anonymous Facebook page administrators, through the construction of fake Muslim identities on social media, tap into existing antagonistic stereotypes about Muslims in the UK and other European countries (see Awan, 2016; Brindle, 2016; Ekman, 2015; Horsti, 2017). As Farkas *et al.,* (2018) point

out however, these fake Muslim Facebook pages represent these antagonistic discourses in a novel and distinctly platformed manner that relies on the socio-technical characteristics of Facebook to obscure their identity, create fictitious Muslim identities and disseminate antagonism through user networks. In doing so, whilst the logics of platformed antagonism facilitate old categories of racist stereotypes, their amplification, distribution and mainstreaming works within the logics of the social media platforms, including Facebook (see Farkas *et al.,* 2018). Farkas *et al's* research (2018) demonstrates the increased sophistication of the use of social media platforms such as Facebook to continuously construct and disseminate new modes of ethnic and cultural antagonism, as well as the Facebook pages and commenting users reproducing stereotypical constructions of Muslims similar to what is found within far-right discourses. As such, via the use of fictitious names, combined with the ability to upload text, images and video and to circulate such content through user networks, the studied Facebook pages created antagonism based on stereotypical tropes of Muslims and the perpetuation of anti-Muslim hate speech by user commenters (Farkas *et al.,* 2018).

Ekman's (2015) examination of online Islamophobia in which he discovered that the main actors were counter-jihadists strongly contributing to the online Islamophobic milieu, also identified the key discursive themes deployed by the network to represent in various ways, Islam and Muslims as the foremost threat to the Western world. These eight discursive themes are:

1. *The demographic threat,* a recurrent topic that emanates from the Islamophobic camp is the claim that Muslims are posing a demographic threat to Europe. Articulations about a 'mass immigration' of Muslims are very frequent in blog posts, the claims here are that demographic change will gradually transform the very nature of European civilization, and that the continent will eventually decline;

2. *Stealth Jihad: the silent infiltration of Islam,* in which the idea that Muslim organisations and groups are secretly infiltrating and changing mainstream politics, doing so by affecting national legislations and institutions, but also by enforcing Islamic law and customs at all levels in society;

3. *Muslims are imposing sharia law on Western societies*, counter-jihadists advocate the idea that sharia is being forced upon the West by small, but rapid, visible changes in societal practices. The claim is validated by numerous examples of the enthusiasm of mainstream politicians and institutions to cave in to the demands of Muslims. Headlines suggest that sharia is gradually being imposed all over the Western world;

4. *Islam is a totalitarian political ideology*; in which Islam is believed to be a totalitarian political ideology in the same line as fascism and communism. By suggesting that Islam (as an entity) has an agenda that is political, and that it operates as a single political actor, suggests that all Muslims, explicitly or implicitly, advocate a unified totalitarian Islam is framed as the absolute opposite to 'Western values' and individuals who practise Islam as incapable of becoming 'enlightened';

5. *Muslims are inherently violent*, as a consequence of the totalitarian nature of Islam, Muslim culture and Muslim individuals are also depicted as inherently violent, and since there is no distinction between Islam and Islamism, between non-violent and violent Islamism, and so forth, 'moderate Islam' is only presented as violent Islamism. On blogs, typical crime topics that explicitly frame Muslims as violent include news about rape, sexual abuse against children, violent acts caused by a culture of honour, violence within arranged marriages, threats against public individuals and physical violence against non-Muslims;

6. *Political correctness,* a persistent topic in the online material that highlights mainstream society's attitudes towards Muslims and Islam, Islamophobic actors use political correctness as a derogatory term for everything that they believe to be censured and concealed truth about

Muslims and Islam. Here, politicians and journalists are accused of covering up the fact that immigrants from Muslim countries 'rape, murder' and commit other crimes of violence to a much higher degree than the native, indigenous citizens;

7. *Left-wing and liberal politicians are aiding Islamism*, in the Islamophobic discourse, the idea of a continuing colonisation by, or a ruling shadow government of, Muslims in Europe, which is facilitated by the naive outcome of liberal immigration policies, multiculturalism and 'soft' politics, or as a more deliberate agenda of multicultural Marxists' whose desire is to terminate the very essence of European and Western civilisation; and, finally

8. *Islamic multiculturalism,* the final component analysed is the perceived hegemony of multiculturalism, the outcome of which has been argued by the counter-jihadists to be the Western surrender of Islam, where Western countries are accused to appeasing Sharia law and cultural relativism in regards to Islamic practices.

The sociologist Sian's (2018) critical auto-ethnographic research documenting her personal experiences of online hate highlights how online Islamophobia is multifaceted and encircles misogynistic abuse, inter-ethnic racism and intra-ethnic discrimination. Sian's research has examined Sikh and Muslim conflict, in particular the notion of Sikh Islamophobia that has been fuelled by ideas of 'predatory' Muslim males targeting 'vulnerable' Sikh girls and forcing them to convert into Islam, described as the 'forced' conversions narrative (see Sian 2013). According to Sian, who herself is a Sikh, this is a tale that has been circulating within the Sikh community for some time and one that is underpinned by Islamophobia, racism and Orientalism. As Sian explains, theme of 'forced' conversions to Islam is central within Sikh discourse as it reignites historical tensions between Sikhs and their antipathy towards Muslims (Sian 2013). Although the story emerged in the British diasporic Sikh community in the 1980s, Sian argues that it is largely based on anecdotal accounts and hearsay, and there is scant evidence to suggest that a genuine case of 'forced' conversion exists. Therefore, Sian's research has been committed to understanding and interrupting anti-Muslim discourse circulating within the Sikh diaspora, and she has sought to develop a wider conversation around collectivity and anti-racist politics. For Sian, the abuse she suffered began in 2013, following the publication of her first monograph, where she was invited to participate within a book launch, which was filmed by the organisers and posted online with her full consent. What ensued was a barrage of Islamophobic and misogynistic abuse, across a variety of platforms, including Internet forums, YouTube, news comments sections, Twitter and Facebook, which Sian (2018) collected from 2013 to 2016 as a corpus to analyse to the logics of Islamophobia in regards to its online circulation and manifestation, alongside the gender dimension involved in the abuse.

As Sian (2018) observed, soon after the organizers of the book launch posted the recording on YouTube, several disparaging statements appeared in the comments section, such as "Who is [this] bitch?? Looks like [a] porn star [.] Why is she [n]ot wearing her burka bitch" (p. 120) and "STUPID PAKI LOVING BITCH … LOOKS HALF HALAL … BITCH" (p. 120). Here, specific Islamophobic comments and racist utterances is evident, with Sian (2018) asserting that the first comment that she should be wearing a burka is indicative of the anger around her perceived association with Islam. The second comment extends this affirmation by suggesting that she is in some way connected to Muslims and Islam, with the inference that Sian (2018) possesses a Muslim appearance, however it may be defined.

A key trope noted by Sian (2018) within the corpus was resentment of her work challenging Islamophobia, both within the Sikh community, and at the state level, resulting in a palpable sense of anger from the perpetrators around the idea that Sian has aligned with Muslims/Islam, and is an 'Islamophile'. On several Sikh forums, Sian (2018) discovered that in being perceived as an

Islamophile, numerous comments existed that made frequent references to sex and promiscuity, such as, "Sounds like she has already converted to me, the actions and signs are all there to be seen. Apparently she was known to s*** [shag] pakis in her uni days" (p. 122) and "Her name is Katy Sian and she is an out and out islamophilic apologist. She was on the 'board for antiracism' or something at the University of Leeds, a city with a disproportionate number of grooming cases" (p. 122). As such statements demonstrate, the view that Sian (2018) has engaged in sexual relationships with Muslim men seems to be an issue that the perpetrators are preoccupied with, along with them attempting to account for the fact that her work does not subscribe to Islamophobia, by offering different theories and explanations as to why she is not anti-Muslim. In this context, the perpetrators claim that Sian (2018) is anti-Sikh, a self-loather who has betrayed her community and allowed Islam and Muslims to 'brainwash' her with the suggestion that she has converted, or rather been forcefully converted into Islam. Additionally, Islamophobia is prevalent throughout these statements, in which the perpetrators refer to Muslims as 'Pakis,' as well as Sian being an apologist for Islam. According to Sian (2018), based on the names of some of the perpetrators that appears to connote links to being Indian and/or Sikh, the perpetrators are likely to be racialised themselves, but have appeared to have internalised racist, colonial narratives around Muslim 'others'.

Further occurrences of online abuse were experienced by Sian (2018), specifically on Twitter, where she was accused of being an 'Islamist Sympathiser', where a particular user and troll named @LiberalCraig engaged in antagonistic activity by harassing, stalking and abusing Sian. @LiberalCraig created several fake accounts under Sian's name, or using one that was very similar, featuring my profile picture to suggest the account(s) belonged to her as offensive tweets were posted, with background images on one of the accounts used to evoke concepts of Islamic terrorism, featuring the ISIS flag. Strikingly, @LiberalCraig also went on to publish a video onto YouTube entitled 'Katy Sian: The Islamist', where Sian's entire Twitter page was dissected and trawled in order to reveal her alleged Islamist links (Sian, 2018). Escalating their online intimidation and harassment of Sian (2018), @LiberalCraig then went onto tag her university institution calling for them to sack me for allegedly being a racist, pro-Muslim, Islamist sympathiser, with such Tweets including "Hey @UoYSociology—When are you going to sack your Islamist/Terrorist sympathising lecturer @theculturecraft?" (p. 128) and "UoYSociology Why do you have the racist & Pro Islamist @theculturecraft as a lecturer in your department?" (p. 128). @LiberalCraig also continued such negative online activity by posting tweets of Sian's (2018) supposed Islamist sympathising, where much of Islamophobic discourse was also bound with direct misogyny, such as, "She's a vile Islamist apologist of the most annoying kind @theculturecraft" (p. 129) and "She wrote a book on Islamophobia in the Sikh community yet she sucks Islamists dick" (p. 129). According to Sian (2018), @LiberalCraig's longstanding interest and obsession with her work indicates that they are likely to be Sikh. Sian (2018) cites as confirmation @LiberalCraig's many Twitter exchanges around Sikh politics, where in one tweet they proclaim that their "ancestors put up a good fight against the Mughal Empire," which is a strong indicator of their Sikh background. Sian's (2018) auto-ethnographic work powerfully spotlights how anti-Muslim hatred in the online sphere is also encompassed by misogynistic abuse, personal attacks, and enmity between religious groups with historical contestations.

Language

In his exploration of anti-Muslim hate crime on Twitter, Awan (2014) discovered that were a number of terms that were used to describe Muslims in a negative manner; these included the words "Muslim pigs" (9%), "Muzrats" (14%), "Muslim Paedos" (30%), ''Muslim terrorists'' (22%), "Muslim scum" (15%), and "Pisslam" (10%). Likewise, Awan's (2016) examination of Islamophobia on Facebook revealed, via a word frequency count of comments and posts to ascertain words and patterns directly related to anti-Muslim hate, the presence of six key words that depicted Muslims in an overtly prejudicial way,

including the words; "Muzrats" (18); "Paedo" (22); "Rapists" (24); "Paki" (25), "Scum" (28) and "Terrorists" (22). These words were accompanied by images and texts that were posted following high-profile incidents, including spate of beheadings by ISIS and the Rotherham abuse scandal in the UK. Similarly, the Islamophobia monitoring project *Tell MAMA* undertook an investigation into the use of words to label Muslims from the time period of January 2013 to December 2013 of incidents received, collating high-frequency words that were directly related to anti-Muslim hate and prejudice. *Tell MAMA* also found that the terms "Muzrats", "Ninja" and "Paedo" were being used against Muslims (Tell MAMA, 2014). As a report by *Tell* MAMA (2016) affirms, the usage of the term 'Muzrat' demonstrates the unique vernacular of dehumanising language when discussing Muslims in online spaces and remains a rhetoric that does not always translate into street-based abuse (see also Oboler, 2013).

As part of wider efforts to understand the scale, scope and nature of uses of social media that are possibly socially problematic and damaging, research conducted by the Centre of the Analysis of Social Media (CASM) at Demos measured the volume of messages on Twitter considered to be derogatory towards Muslims over the duration of a year, from March 2016 to March 2017, also yielded interesting results. Over the course of a year, researchers Miller and Smith detected 143,920 tweets sent from the UK that were considered to be derogatory and anti-Islamic, totalling around 393 tweets a day, with such tweets being sent from over 47,000 different Twitter users. These tweets fell into a number of different categories, from directed angry insults, to broader political statements, with a random sample of hateful tweets being manually classified into three broad categories:

1. 'Insult', in which tweets were used as an anti-Islamic slut in a derogatory way, often directed at a specific individual;
2. 'Muslims are terrorists', constituting around one fifth of tweets characterised by derogatory statements that generally associated Muslims and Islam with terrorism;
3. 'Muslims are the enemy', comprising just under two fifths of tweets denoting statements that claimed that Muslims, generally are dedicated to the cultural and social destruction of the West (Miller and Smith, 2017).

Demos' (2017) research study also identified six online tribes, to which the largest group was 'Core political anti-Islam', a politically active group engaged with international politics, composed of about 64,000 users that included recipients of tweets. Miller and Smith (2017) found that hashtags employed by this group suggested engagement in anti-Islam and right-wing political conversations, including: #maga (Make America Great Again) #tcot (Top Conservatives on Twitter) #auspol (Australian Politics) #banIslam, #stopIslam and #rapefugees (Miller and Smith, 2017).

In their study of how online Islamophobia is articulated by average Internet users or 'netizens', Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez (2016) analysed a corpus of more than 10, 000 tweets compiled around the hashtag #jihad. Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez (2016) found that the hashtag #jihad was associated in the corpus with a diversity of tweets, in which Muslims were stereotyped as very violent, disparaging and extremist. Clear evidence of this was demonstrated by the fact that of over 10,000 tweets containing the hashtag #jihad, the most frequent verbs were "attack" (364 times), "kill" (354 times), "hate" (150 times), "fight" (104 times), "rape" (59 times), "beat" (49 times) and "murder" (46 times), strongly illustrating the negative mood of the corpus (Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez, 2016). In addition, according to the semantic description of Muslims, Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez (2016) argued that tweets with the hashtag #jihad could be classified among the following categories:

1. the association of Muslims both implicitly and explicitly with terrorism, shown as a feature almost inherent to Islam;
2. the portrayal of Muslims as fundamentally hostile to those of other faiths, and to Jews in particular, in which Muslims are also depicted broadly and directly as being against secularism;

3. violence against women and sex crimes, where wife beating, oppression and abuse of women and honour killings are shown as being essentially a part of the concept of 'jihad, and Islam is depicted as a religion that justifies women's denigration;

4. 'jihad' as involving Muslims taking the law into their own hands, to which anything from attacks on homosexuals, women, members of minorities and other faiths was depicted as being a direct result of the attackers following the Islamic concept of 'jihad'.

Aguilera-Carnerero and Azeez's (2016) research suggests that much of the online discourse concerning the hashtag #jihad is not carried out by Muslims themselves; rather, the acquired data originates from speakers with a clear Islamophobic intent and bias.

An online study by the third sector organisation Faith Matters (2014) investigated how Facebook as a social media platform is being used as an environment to reproduce and perpetuate anti-Muslim hate in the wake of the Rotherham scandal in the UK. An independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in the town of Rotherham from 1997–2013, concluded that at least 1400 children had been sexually exploited and raped by multiple perpetrators, as well as abducted, beaten and trafficked to other towns and cities over that period (see Jay 2014; Pilkington, 2017). The majority of known perpetrators in Rotherham, including five men convicted in 2010, were of Pakistani heritage (Pilkington, 2017). Faith Matters (2014) examined Facebook comments that were gleaned from Britain First posts, which were scraped and complied into a large corpus, shortly after the Rotherham story broke in the press. Moreover, a word frequency count to was created to explore key issues and recurring themes. Thereafter, terms relevant to anti-Muslim hate were selected, examined in context, and after key concepts had been identified within the dataset, qualitative analysis was conducted to illustrate how particular terms, concepts and discourses were used by Britain First and its Facebook followers. Faith Matters (2014) discerned three key areas of hateful language with a relatively high frequency: a) 'Identity' b) 'Denigration' and c) 'Action'.

Identity is language that expresses anxieties about British identity and multiculturalism, with common words in the corpus being 'Asian', 'Islam', 'Muslim', 'Paki' and 'Mosque'. Posts and comments grouped under this rubric revealed a significant level of anti-Muslim hate, such as: "Muslims are filthy pigs, especially their prophet; Mohammed" and "all the non-muslim world armies should rise up and rid the Muslims of this cancer on their religion" (Faith Matters, 2014: 4). According to Faith Matters (2014), such narratives indicate that commenters are unable to recognise Muslims and the criminals in Rotherham, rendering them as interchangeable, where in this context, 'Muslim' is deployed as a term to cast all Muslims as synonymous with child abusers. Moreover, the use of the word 'cancer' reveals that posters have understood the actions of the reprehensible criminals in Rotherham as representative of Islam and Muslims as a whole. This is not surprising considering that Britain First's posts directly implicate Muslims as the problem, fostering an environment that enables hate to continue by rationalising it from the top down (Faith Matters, 2014). A compelling occurrence in a few comments was the attempt to cast Muslims as separate from Asians, which can be attributed to the actions of broader movements on the far-right such as EDL who aim to incorporate Sikhs, Hindus and other non-Muslim Asian minorities in their political movements, as demonstrated by such comments as: "not Asian…but Muslim" and "It should not say asian gang because they are all muslim men so it should be saying muslim gang" (Faith Matters, 2014: 5). Likewise, Brindle's (2016) study also found that much discussion among EDL group supporters regarding the term 'Asian' in regards to events that took place in Rochdale: "They are not Asian Communities, they are Muslim communities because by implication, the label Asian implies dissolute morals amongst Chinese and other east Asian communities. I can assure Mr Rochdale that the Chinese are not involved in these Muslim Rape Gangs" (Brindle, 2016: 11). Here, some EDL group supporters claim that the designation Asian is too broad and includes ethnic

groups not involved in the events under discussion, with the particular poster discursively framing Muslims as possessing dissolute morals, while utilising the label Muslim Rape Gangs. Accordingly, the convicted group of men in the Rochdale case are labelled as Muslim and of being a Rape Gang, thereby associating the act of rape with Muslim communities in the UK (Brindle, 2016).

Denigration is abusive and derogatory language, with frequent terms in the corpus being 'Paedo', 'dirty', 'filthy', 'gang' and 'scum' to describe the nature of Muslims. This was evident in the minds of the commentators, with such utterances including: "And we are not surprised these are Muslim Asians. Scummy, filthy, depraved, disgusting cretins" and "blanket bomb the whole bloody place rid the world of this scum pedo religion" (Faith Matters, 2014: pp. 6 and 8). Given the nature of the offences of the criminals being discussed, references to paedophilia are frequent and expected, however, these mentions are often made in relation to all Muslims rather than the specific criminals that organised the sex trafficking (Faith Matters, 2014). Faith Matters (2014) noted that many remarks focused on the Prophet, relating to paedophilia or other forms of sexual perversity: "this is long over due for the media to tell why Muslims accept paedophilia because of their prophet Mohammed, biggest paedophiles of the lot, our country is a disgrace" (p. 8). Such allusions are not intended as a critique of Islam, but rather to disparage the entire Muslim community, via suggesting that the criminal behaviour of the offenders in Rotherham is in fact of part of Muslim disposition. As Faith Matters (2014) point out, in this respect, overwhelmingly, discourses used by Britain First and its Facebook followers tellingly point to the identification of Islam and Muslims as a static monolith – a common practice on the far-right. On this issue, once the interchangeability of the terms 'Muslim', 'Islam', and 'Criminal' have been established, the abuse fortifies these frames and consequently, further positions Muslims as the subjects of abuse, with the nature of the language and discussion making action imperative and a logical next step (Faith Matters, 2014).

Action is words that call for direct action to be taken in response to the Rotherham incident, with recurrent expressions in the corpus being 'Bomb', 'death', 'deport', 'hang', 'nuke', and 'send'. Britain First, like the EDL, operates its communications and outreach online, however, it is also involved in street-level confrontation and protests, resulting in continuous threats of 'offline' violence in the real world (Faith Matters, 2014). Such statements in this category include: "I'm disgusted our government treats its own people like second class citizens dirty Muslims they need hanging Britain First all the way send them home" and "Flatten the lot. While the Quran is on this earth there will never be peace" (Faith Matters, 2014: 9). Much of the 'action' language here perpetuates a notion of a global war with Islam, in Britain as well Rotherham is seen as a frontline in the same battle, where Muslims, not just in the UK but across the world are seen as an equal threat and Britain First members want them removed from Britain and are strongly supportive of domestic and foreign offensives (Faith Matters, 2014). Similarly, deportation and 'sending' are two other themes that refer to government actions that Britain First commenters would like seen taken against Muslims, with references to 'deporting' all Muslims and 'sending' them home. Deportation and being 'sent' somewhere is seen as a punishment for the criminals, however, frequent reference is made to deportation of all Muslims, for example: "all muslims should be deported from this country i hate muslims" (Faith Matters, 2014: 9). In addition, mosques, more than Muslims themselves, were seen as the primary target of action, in that many commentators believed that striking at mosques was an ideal strategy, illustrated by comments such as: "We are Christians …they are scum, boot them all out and knock down the mosques we don't need them" and "Drown the muzy scum pig blood. Paint their Mosque in pig blood" (Faith Matters, 2014: 10). In the minds of posters, Islam is an inherently other religion, presenting a significant threat to the UK on multiple fronts and allegedly producing criminals and paedophiles. Faith Matters (2014) point out that this is the point at which online hate converges with offline hate that affects Muslim communities as

actual violence, as evidenced by the fact of Britain First confronting several mosques, with mosque vandalism having steadily risen in the last few years. The statements as quoted above suggest the possibility that the commentators may actually execute attacks on Muslim institutions (Faith Matters, 2014).

The research study by Faith Matters (2014) as well as the subsequent findings presented are useful in ascertaining how far-right organisations including Britain First, frame Muslims online using social media platforms such as Facebook. Here, it is evident that Facebook is utilised as a discursive environment, around the Rotherham incident, that allows anti-Muslim hate to fester, activating and rationalising language that positions Muslims as irretrievably not British, making them into an enemy. In this context, derogatory language is deployed to paint all Muslims as criminals, along with actions words that transform this denigration into concrete demands that targets Muslims and Muslim institutions, posing serious harms. By locating Muslims as 'them', and engaging in processes of othering, Britain First is successful in organising a group of people who think that Muslims as a whole are responsible for the 1400 cases of sexual exploitation of young girls. Britain First's Facebook page facilitates a scene in which extreme anti-Muslim attitudes circulate and continue largely unchallenged, demonising Muslims as a cultural 'other', and singularising them as a fundamental problem.

A report published by *Tell MAMA* (2016) has highlighted the emergence of British Muslims as a racialised threat, an 'alien other' that possesses beliefs that contrast with mainstream society, which have become synonymous with 'deviance', 'un-Britishness' and terrorism. Whereas British Muslims are a heterogenous group that comprise many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (see Abbas, 2010), as well as religious practices and various orientations of Islam, such as Sunni, Shia and Ahmadiyya, negative and salacious media coverage reduces such complexities into binaries of cultural difference. Due to this form of political rhetoric and sensational media reporting, Muslims, particularly Muslim men have been constructed as 'The New Folk Devils' - aggressive hotheads who are in danger of being brainwashed into terrorists (see Gill and Harrison, 2015; Tell MAMA, 2016). This has intensified in recent years with the onset of child sexual exploitation (CSE) scandals such as the aforementioned Rotherham incident, which have focused on the race, ethnicity and faith of organised criminal 'grooming gangs' targeting vulnerable young people across the UK. Such cases have brought into question the role of the potentially 'dangerous masculinity' of British Muslim men, which has resulted in a conflation between the Pakistani community and the constructed idea of the 'Muslim fundamentalist'. Consequently, the racial epithet 'Paki' has become interchangeable with British Muslims regardless of ethnic background, with others using this term to group sexual deviance with Islam or Muslim identity more broadly (Tell MAMA, 2016). Indeed, as a statement from a poster from the Faith Matters (2014) study highlights: "I noticed on the BBC News they said Pakistani Asian men, they wouldn't say MUSLIMS" (p. 9). Allen's (2014) research examining a pilot study which sought to investigate opposition to a proposed "super mosque" in the town of Dudley in the West Midlands region of the UK also revealed similar sentiments. Focusing on the Facebook group 'Stop Dudley Super Mosque and Islamic Village', members were engaged online to explore why they opposed the mosque, with disparaging responses stating that: "[the mosque would] ...mean more paki's will commute into the Dudley area, thus creating a curry infested atmosphere and I for one despise the cunts" (Allen, 2014: 8). However, Allen (2014) stresses that only a minority of responses were laden with such overtly discriminatory ad offensive expressions. In the minds of some respondents at least, utterances that were racist and racialised discourses were evident, where religious and racial markers – Muslim and 'Paki' – were interchangeable if not entirely the same (Allen, 2014).

Tools and techniques in the fight against Islamophobia online

- If community standards on Facebook[147], terms of service on Twitter[148], community guidelines on Instagram[149] and hate speech policy on YouTube[150] have been breached, users and victims can use the 'Report' functions available on these platforms to submit a report of hateful content.

- Tell MAMA[151] - a self-report data set, and therefore relies on the proactive efforts of victims to register new cases. Initial reports can be made by either phone, Twitter or Facebook, with detailed information collected by caseworkers in follow-up interviews over phone or email (see Littler and Feldman, 2014).

- Contacting local law enforcement – e.g. via Twitter national and local police pages such as London's Metropolitan Police Contact Centre[152] and Cleveland Police[153].

- Facebook[154] and Twitter[155] pages that expose Islamophobic content, but also refute lies and false information perpetuated about Islam and provide clarification about Quran verses and hadiths that are often misquoted and taken out of context.

- It is worth considering the possibility of closer co-operation between police and the providers of online services (ISPs, social networks, web hosting companies etc.), with organisations such as Twitter, Facebook and others voluntarily sharing relevant information with the authorities about the identities of the perpetrators of online hate speech; facilitating quicker identification; and speedier prosecution. Relatedly, the police may wish to consider ways in which they may enact reforms that make it easier to informally report online hate speech, perhaps via a dedicated website (Littler and Feldman, 2015).

- True Vision UK[156] – police-funded website that dispenses information about various types of hate crime or hate incidents and provides details of how to report it as well as using the online report form on the site.

- Stop Hate UK Hate Crime Reporting App[157] (West Yorkshire) – an app available on both Apple IOS[158] and Android[159] operating systems that helps witnesses and those targeted because of their identity, throughout West Yorkshire, to report incidents of Hate Crime, whether they are a victim of Hate Crime, or have witnessed an incident that they believe to be a Hate Crime or if they are a third party to an incident that could be a Hate Crime.

- YouTube Creators for Change[160] - an initiative dedicated to amplifying the voices of role models who are tackling difficult social issues with their channels. From combatting hate speech, to countering xenophobia and extremism, to simply making the case for greater tolerance and empathy toward others, these creators are helping generate positive social change with their global fan bases. The UK ambassador is Humza Arshad, whose YouTube channel[161] focuses on

---

[147] See: https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/
[148] See: https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior
[149] See: https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119?helpref=page_content
[150] See: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801939?hl=en&visit_id=1-636524053508075893-2549808955&rd=1
[151] See: https://tellmamauk.org/
[152] See: https://twitter.com/MetCC
[153] See: https://twitter.com/ClevelandPolice
[154] See: https://www.facebook.com/exposingdailymail
[155] See: https://twitter.com/muslim_patrol
[156] See: http://www.report-it.org.uk/home
[157] See: https://www.stophateuk.org/resources/west-yorkshire-hate-crime-reporting-app/
[158] See: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/stop-hate-uk/id1114573971?mt=8
[159] See: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.stophateuk.app&hl=en_GB
[160] See: https://www.youtube.com/yt/creators-for-change/
[161] See: https://www.youtube.com/user/HumzaProductions

countering Islamophobia, combatting extremism and radicalisation as well as humanising Muslims by dispelling negative assumptions about Islam.

- MANDOLA (Monitoring and Detecting OnLine Hate Speech)[162] – this project aims to improving understanding of the prevalence and spread of on-line hate speech and towards empowering ordinary citizens to monitor and report hate speech. The objectives of this project are: To monitor the spread and penetration of on-line hate-related speech in Europe and in Member States using big-data approaches, while investigating the possibility to distinguish, amongst monitored contents, between potentially illegal hate-related speeches and potentially non illegal hate-related speeches; To provide policy makers with actionable information that can be used to promote policies that mitigate the spread of on-line hate speech; To provide ordinary citizens with useful tools that can help them deal with on-line hate speech or bystanders or even as victims; To set up a reporting infrastructure that will connect concerned citizens with police forces and which will enable the reporting of illegal hate-related speech. For the public to report hate-related speech to MANDOLA, the project has both a smartphone app and a website portal.

- eMore Project[163] – this project intends to contribute to developing, testing and transferring a knowledge model on online hate speech and offline hate crime, based on a circular and advanced joint monitoring-reporting system, to gain a sound understanding of the phenomena/trends over the Internet and offline, to allow comparative analysis at national/EU level, and to support the harmonised combatting against hate-motivated offences at EU/national level. The Project will develop a knowledge platform available to target groups, which will allow to in-depth analyses of hate phenomena in both online and offline contexts. The platform will process data/information collected through a crawler to monitor the Internet and an APP to report crime. Both will be developed by the Project, too. The APP will be tested in 9 participating countries. The knowledge base will include the most important categories of hate motivated offences (hate against gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and disability).

- The Fight against Hate System V2.0 – The Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI)[164] have developed a software tool that has been built and designed to create reporting gateways on the websites of different community organisations. For example, there could be a reporting widget sitting on each local mosque, so then the community themselves and can engage and report things they see in social media. The local communities, including the executive committee, can actually see what their communities are experiences, what they are reporting, and they can choose to do something with this. At the same, the data feeds into a central system which can be used by human rights organisations, government agencies, and the police to follow up, where appropriate.

---

[162] See: http://www.mandola-project.eu/
[163] See: https://www.emoreproject.eu
[164] See: http://ohpi.org.au

Strengths and Weaknesses of the tools

Strenghts

- The majority of software tools, apps and websites designed to fight online hatred implement geographic location technology which can further enable both servers and states to control the flow of information on the Internet. This is a salient strength as geo-location tools can identify the users IP address and, in turn, their location, in order to restrict access and filter out odious material (see also Banks, 2010).

- Using the reporting functions on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube can result in temporary or permanent bans for perpetrators.

- Whilst the Fight against Hate System V2.0 has recently been built to completion, resulting in a dearth of available data at present, the software has started to be implemented by various organisations, especially at the international level. A strength of the tool is that it is able to be customised into different languages and also configured to different types of online hate, enabling different organisations to have divergent categories of the hatred that can be reported by NGOs, CSOs, victims and other people. A further strength of the software is that it has been designed to work with all the major social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and further platforms will be added in the future as the system grows. This demonstrates another strength in terms of the adaptability of the software to incorporate new forms of social media in exploring online hatred activities. In addition, the software will also be enabled to start processing general URLs from blogs and websites, thus extending the scope for a large amount of open-source content to be investigated and analysed.

Previous research into online anti-Muslim hatred by the OHPI has found that during extremely serious incidents such as a terrorist attack or a vehicular incursion, some far-right groups gain the impetus to incite violence against groups of people on various social media platforms. According to the OHPI's research, such incitements for violence can occur within thirty to forty-five minutes of the incident taking place. As such, a salient strength of the system is that it allows members of the public in real-time to monitor these groups and report what they see. The software empowers civil society, such as academics, NGOs, CSOs and government agencies to review the submitted reports and flag the reports that are the most urgent. In doing so, such reports that have been flagged by civil society as being imperative, can then go to a police clearing house, where they can be dealt with immediately, illustrating the collective, social nature of the software. The system thus has positive implications for altering the traditional method of reporting hate crime, where reports are sent to the police who then attempt to process all intelligences handed over to them. This is often a time-consuming, laborious task that can take several weeks, which is ineffective if an incitement to violence leads to an incident occurring within hours, and so in this regard, the software is highly useful in altering the practices of law enforcement to swiftly and effectively deal with reported instances of online hate crime and associated activities.

Depending on funding, the OHPI also state that the software will be implemented to examine anti-Muslim keywords and phrases online, to importantly acquire data that reflects a sense of the quantity in regards to the scale and also the nature, in terms of common tropes and narratives of this dimension of online hatred. Given that online anti-Muslim hatred and related activity is a growing phenomenon with serious implications in the offline context, this is a significant strength of the software.

The software will be made available on a commercial basis for researchers to use as a tool to access the online hate data that has been submitted by various NGOs, CSOs, academics, victims and other peoples', enabling time and resources to be saved while accessing a rich pool of data. There is also a second element to the system, which is an intelligence tool that has been designed for researchers to store and analyse the raw data in their own research projects concerning online hatred. This is a major strength of the software as it demonstrates the possibility of a wide range of use and applicability to a diverse range of online hate projects.

- The Stop Hate UK Hate Crime Reporting App possesses several strengths. Firstly, the app allows picture, video or audio recording to upload directly from the device; secondly, it is easy to use with details of local resources and information about Hate Crime and Discrimination; thirdly, the app links directly to leading independent organisation or to the police in an emergency situation; fourth, the app allows a direct response to the person making the report and referrals to appropriate organisations (including the police); fifth, the app is GPS (Global Positioning System) enabled to help plot the exact location of incidents; Sixth, the app makes use of quarterly reports to monitor usage information and statistics; Finally, no pre-registration is required to access and the use the app, so reports can be anonymous.

Weaknesses

- It is time-consuming for each social platform to check every instance of suspected anti-Muslim hate speech.
- There are issues pertaining to 'free speech' and censorship.
- The identification of hate speech on Facebook is particularly challenging for moderators, who must evaluate content (such as full-length videos) to determine user intent and act on it through censorship (see also Farkas et al., 2017).
- Individuals targeted on various social media platforms can use the 'block' function to stop harassment or viewing hateful content, however this does not negate the possibility of these accounts creating new e-mail addresses and linked social media accounts specifically set-up to engage in Anti-Muslim hate online.
- It is difficult for law enforcement to access the data needed to enable a prosecution (see also Awan, 2016).
- The perpetrators of hateful content can use VPN to obscure the visibility of their IP addresses or use software such as the TOR browser provide a false location, consequently being untraceable and hindering the efforts of law enforcement.
- The Online Hate Prevention Institute (see also Oboler, 2013) report on anti-Muslim hatred on Facebook revealed that despite reporting a range of images considered to incite religious based hate speech, Facebook chose not to remove the images because the images had not breached their community standards. The report states that, "the fact that this page was, and continues to, inciting hate against people on the basis of their religion, specifically Islam, is grounds for complete closure. Reports of the page, however, were not successful" (p.11). The report also recommends that Facebook should allow users the opportunity to lodge a single complaint via multiple items of content and for those items to be reviewed independently. Littler and Feldman (2015) recommend more engagement with online providers including Internet Service Providers (ISPs), social networks and hosting companies to better identify the perpetrators of online hate crime. While it is not directly Facebook's responsibility that far-right organisations use its platform to create an environment of hate, this hate presents a concern for organisations attempting to understand, monitor, document and challenge hate, absorbing a huge amount of resources (Faith Matters, 2014). Moreover, the popularity of social network media platforms

has obstructed efforts by social media companies such as Facebook and Twitter to moderate hateful content, in which rules against hate speech are only enforceable through active user participation (Farkas et al., 2017). User participation to moderate hate speech is crucial for social media corporations as the company moderators only review content reported by users. As Farkas et al., (2017) concede however, epistemological challenges exist in identifying content as (visible) hate speech, resulting in increasingly sophisticated tactics by perpetrators to disguise hateful content and thereby further its dissemination on social media. Online abuse thus remains extremely difficult to contain due to the use of anonymous screen names, virtual private networks and the TOR network.

Summary of the main points identified during the focus group and the interviews in the UK

- The anti-Muslim discourse of the far-right is much more aggressive than previously, in a very short period of the time in the UK. The authorities have failed to tackle the issue. Both the offline and online contexts are part of the same phenomena, and part of the same manifestations of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia. Compellingly, all the interviewed Experts stated that they had received abuse in the online sphere, comprised of verbal abuse in the form of threats as well as disparaging remarks about Islam and Muslims, and were called 'traitors' and 'quislings' due to their work on anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

- Although Anti-Muslim hatred has a long historical pedigree, Islamophobia in the current context has been shaped by important geopolitical factors. There was a tendency among the participants to think that anti-muslim hate crime have increased in the country especially after 9/11 in New York, 7/7 in London and Brexit. Specific localities that were mentioned were London, Birmingham, Manchester and other large urban centres although it was suggested that minor, everyday incidents of anti-muslim hate are present throughout the country. In addition, specific wards (neighbourhoods) with virtually no presence of Muslim populations were identified as hotspots of anti-muslim hatred, especially in the north of the country.

- Anti-muslim hate is to be explain through a number of prisms: Firstly, Demographic: The level of anti-muslim hatred online and offline is seen as directly linked to the size of Muslims in a country. There is a 'natural threshold' to the number of Muslims, ('foreigners', migrants etc) a society can absorb. Once the limit is passed, conflicts erupt. Secondly, Economic: The level of hate violence in general is often explained as being directly linked with socio-economic factors and circumstances. Thirdly, State and Police Responses: Oppression of, or tolerance towards the extreme right may each in different ways influence the emergence of Anti-Muslim violence. Measures in a state's immigration policy and its policies towards minorities in general are perceived as forms of institutional racism and as creating an atmosphere in which anti-Muslim hate crime is acceptable. Finally, Media: the nature and type of media coverage of anti-Muslim violence increase the violence and support of racist groups or limits it. The type of media source is important. Some sources (e.g. *The Daily Mail* in the UK) are directly linked to anti-Muslim sentiments and hate. Participants however, were aware of the problems the quantification of the phenomenon entails. Additionally, participants acknowledged that the term 'Islamophobia' is replete with problems, particularly that there is no consensus amongst Muslim organisations of the meaning of the word.

- There are significant practical difficulties in measuring the online space in terms of anti-Muslim hatred, how can it be quantified, detected and controlled.

- Statistics fail to convey a sense of the true harm inflicted upon the individuals and groups that are the target of anti-muslim hate. The harm lies in the consequences for the individual, his or her family as well as the group. Victims of anti-muslim hate may experience a wide range of emotional reactions including anger, fear, sadness, feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability and suspicion of others. Victims of anti-muslim hate incidents may exhibit difficulty concentrating, self-blame, and may have difficulty trusting and connecting with those who are similar to their perpetrators. The harm of anti-muslim hate is not restricted to just the victims involved and their families. Hate crimes convey a message of fear to all members of the community to which the specific individual belongs.

- With the advent of the Internet, online or cyber Islamophobia has seen a large increase, with spaces on the Internet now becoming a platform for the spreading of its rhetoric, in which xenophobic viewpoints and racist attitudes towards Muslims being easily disseminated into public debate.

- Online Islamophobia takes place primarily through blogs and social media, as well as through traditional media outlets seen online. The Internet has afforded opportunities for like-minded individuals to locate each other and bypass traditional mass media gatekeepers, resulting in a huge number of online anti-muslim communities. This is especially the case with social media. The less involved face-to-face contact, the greater likelihood exists for individuals to admit to socially undesirable behaviour, to which online spaces appear to allow for a greater sense of security.

- Online spaces have been noted to continually invert and blur the boundaries between the private and public, in which content, which may have been typically restricted to privatised spaces, now encroaches public, online spaces. As such, online spaces create environments where what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable, private and public, legitimate and illegitimate become progressively obscured distinctions.

- LEAs (Law Enforcement Agents) particularly noted that social media platforms and constantly dynamic, fluid, and evolving in number, which increases the possibility for online hate to manifest and be perpetrated as well as consequently experienced on an array of online forms. All participants noted that the youth tend to use Instagram and Snapchat, whereas older people use Facebook and Twitter, with the use of certain platforms and sites reflecting age demographics.

- In the UK, the participants were cognisant of several far-right groups that are active online, and were able to identify such groups, including: the Football Lad's Alliance (FLA), North-East Infidels (off-shoot of the English Defence League), Bishop Auckland Against Islam, Middlesbrough Against Mass Immigration, and also Military Veterans' groups e.g. Veterans Against Terrorism. These groups have used the web to create and establish a public presence, being successful in using social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to disseminate further online hate and intolerance toward people of Muslim faith. These groups never make a distinction between radical and moderate forms of Islam. A common representation in these groups narratives is that Muslim communities undermine British culture and traditions. The problem, however, might be the diffusion of these representation and the acceptance by individuals who are not affiliated with the aforementioned groups, especially the least known for their anti-muslim sentiments.

- Online anti-muslim hate takes a diverse set of forms ranging from posting an anti-muslim message at the end of a newspaper article to spreading negative rumours for Muslim people (especially women) to using extreme, vulgar language against an individual and his/her family. There are many similarities in the manifestation of offline and online anti-muslim hate. In fact, the internet acts as a very effective tool to spread anti-muslim sentiments to a wider audience. Very often anti-Muslim hate

cuts across offline and online realm and forms of anti-muslim hate online is the platform for activities offline. For instance, occasionally, vulgar language may be used online to instigate a fight offline (especially when the perpetrator and the victims are acquaintances).

- Social media and in particular Facebook and Twitter have to a large extent *normalised* Islamophobia and associated discourses. It has been suggested that these social media make anti-muslim hate look as a mainstream activity. On this issue, if a perpetrator is writing Islamophobic content or participating in the circulation of Islamophobic material, all it takes is for one or two other users to agree and spread such inflammatory and hateful messages further to a wider reach of users, possibly even internationally, resulting in the spread or sharing as being acceptable behaviour. Participants mentioned that is imperative to attempt to identify who the core group of perpetrators of online anti-Muslim hatred are, and likewise who the main receivers are. In the online context, participants outlined that there are particular nodes (nodal points), peripheries and localities, comprised of repeat offenders, who are committed Islamophobic actors.

- Several participants stated that they had noticed a disturbing trend in receiving reports of school-aged children aged between 8, 9, or 10 years of age engaging in hate (anti-muslim among other) activities online. LEAs noted the average perpetrator of online (and offline) anti-Muslim hatred is White males between 40-60 years of age, with the average victims online being Muslim women, often those who wear traditional Muslim clothing.

- Sometimes the platform for Anti-Muslim violence is specific incidents such as the building of a mosque in a predominantly white British area or is based on the assumption that Muslims in general are a concern for national security.

- There are a number of items (i.e. words) that are being used derogatively to connote supposed quality of Muslims: 'Pigs', 'scum', 'terrorist' etc. Of particular relevance here is the use 'paedo' (meaning paedophile) to associate Muslims with child abuse. Certain crimes/crime collectivities such as grooming gangs are conflated with points of view that the Prophet Mohammed had a wife of 9 years of age. This is used to make the argument that all Muslims are paedophiles as it has been sanctioned in the Qur'an, which has been advantageous for far-right groups to justify their views.

- Specific cases, such as this of Rotherham, are important in the consolidation of the 'paedophilic Muslim' stereotype. Online narratives by individuals who are negatively pre-disposed towards Muslim people tend use the terms 'Muslim' and 'paedo'/'paedophile interchangeably.

- The experience of reporting online victimisation is exactly the same as reporting offline victimisation. There is the perception on the part of the victims that the authorities are not doing enough to deal with the issue. Participants identified that there are significant issues and barriers with the online reporting of online hate, particularly in reference to the reporting process. A major barrier is the lack of support from the major social media platforms – Twitter and Facebook – to back LEAs. LEAs spoke of their negative experiences with online reporting functions, citing their struggle to remove an inflammatory, offensive Facebook post since March 2018, which they had reported numerous times, but still exists on the platform and is causing offence to the targeted individual. LEAs agreed that anti-Muslim hatred is easier to deal with in the offline context. For example, if an individual is shouting obscenities in the street and/or using derogatory terms, it is easier to secure evidence and enable a prosecution through acts such as Public Order Offences. In the offline context, LEAs stated that there is a greater likelihood of attaining a positive outcome for the victim through an arrest and conviction, providing satisfaction to the victim.

- There are challenges in investigating, arresting and engaging in attempts to secure a conviction concerning online hate crime. LEAs mentioned that they receive many alerts of suspected online hate crimes occurring on Facebook, however there are certain criteria that must be met for such behaviour to be classed as a 'hate crime'. One LEA commented that on social media platforms such as Facebook and/or Twitter, a user posting indirect statuses or Tweets is highly unlikely to be dealt with. If a user is, however, directing hate speech, such as religiously aggravated utterances towards a certain individual, this online behaviour then falls under 'malicious communications' and can be categorised as an offence.

- Participants were also aware of the existence of a fine line between legitimate criticism of Islam and anti-Muslim hatred, such as abusive, threatening speech.

- Participants highlighted that in regards to online hatred in general, it is important to address the technical issue of the *offline-online* distinction. Is online anti-Muslim hate crime more serious, are the effects on victims more consequential? An Expert commented that it is salient to assess the causal relationship between the *online-offline* – will the tool be able to pick up evidence of the association? The online arena can be seen as a 'vent' for hatred, particularly anti-Muslim abhorrence, and can act as a 'safety valve' – it can displace activity, especially from far-right groups' offline.

- The same expert highlighted several pertinent concerns regarding the implementation of the ICT platform/tool, the first being the assumption that online spaces confirm or strengthen bias and negative attitudes. What is known is that when certain incidents occur, the volume of anti-muslim material online increases. There are certain 'triggers', most commonly 'terrorist incidents', which can be national, international and/or local. In this context, The key point is to identify the 'baseline', and to understand where the 'baseline' of online hate is at a particular moment in time:
    - looking at a normal period free from any incidents (before phase),
    - then examining the volume of material, communications and messages increasing when there is an incident (during phase), and
    - whether this material reduces afterwards (aftermath phase).

    If so, is it because of the attention span of people (forgetting/not being concerned about an incident after a certain period of time)? In terms of baseline figures, is there a cumulative effect of these incidents and is the baseline figure continuously increasing? If the baseline figure is increasing afterwards, as a consequence of the incidents, it is imperative, therefore, that the ICT tool and associated software possesses the ability to adapt itself to those crises when they occur, and take into account the different elements and points in time.

- Another question raised by participants was whether the ICT tool and software functions only with public online content, and whether it possesses the ability to target private messages on Twitter and Facebook that are sent to Muslim victims.

- The participants posited an important question: how can the ICT tool differentiate, or is it able to differentiate, between a user posing a legitimate question or criticism about Islam or a question that possesses an Islamophobic undertone? Some participants, especially previous victims of anti-Muslim hatred were interested in whether the tool and software could pick up on soft-language that is often used in comment boards to pass online censors, comprised of sarcastic comments i.e. 'now I know the meaning of the religious of peace', derogatory references to perceived Islamic 'cultural practices', or action towards Muslim such as 'wrap them in bacon'.

- Much discussion was concerned on the issue of the counter-narratives: some participants were wary that reframing explicit Islamophobic comments to comments that are less Islamophobic legitimises Islamophobia in a different way through the use of subtle, less detectable speech.

- Another significant issue of discussion revolved around *who* is going to provide the counter-narratives – are they going to be predominantly Muslim organisations? Or government-funded think tanks e.g. Quilliam[165] (which is perceived as highly controversial among Muslim groups? It was suggested that is absolutely essential that broad Muslim representation is included, especially from the different and often contesting sects within Islam, the two major branches being Sunni and Shia. As such, produced counter-narratives must be mindful of, and take into account the intra-religious dimension of Islam, and the different interpretations of Sunni and Shia Muslims, respectively.

---

[165] https://www.quilliaminternational.com/

RECOMMENDATIONS

Italy

- The national report highlighted the fact that In Italy there are no specific tools designed to combat Islamophobia. Nevertheless, among the wider online tools that exist today in Italy in the fight against hate speech, an important one is 'the Intolerance Map'. The Italian NGO VOX – Osservatorio sui Diritti – in partnership with universities in Rome, Milan and Bari has for three consecutive years drafted a map to identify discriminatory and intolerant messages posted on Twitter in Italy and targeting women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI people and religious minorities. The mapping exercise is 'sentiment-based': it consists of identifying the use of specific terms and how often they are 'virally' shared. Specifically, the University of Bari – Department of Computer Science – developed a software through Social Network Analytics and Sentiment Analysis, which use artificial intelligence algorithms to understand the semantics of the text and to both identify and extract specific content on Twitter. Our recommendation is to create a network with these organisations in order to identify background experiences, needs and aspirations of previous stakeholders that collaborate in the development of this platform.

- Moreover, past research highlighted the fact that a national network on hate speech is missing. Stakeholders cannot meet and share experiences in order to combat together hate speech online. The only attempt is a series of workshops recently created by Amnesty International Italy bringing together various organisations and academics in order to discuss ideas on how to both fight online hate speech and involve civil society. The main aims are to bring together the research of different people participating in the workshops, to implement pre-existing collaborations and to promote new connections. Our recommendation is to involve all the members of the workshop as beneficiaries of an augmented knowledge of anti-Muslim online hatred and the potential transferability of the Hatemeter platform, as members of the "EU laboratory on Internet and social media for countering online Anti-Muslim hate speech" (i.e., Hatemeter Lab).

- Our technical recommendations for the development of the Hatemeter platform spring directly from the collection and analysis (content analysis techniques) of anti-Muslim hatred data. In general, with regard to the social media, it should be considered that anti-Muslim online hate speech is not only spread on Facebook and Twitter but also on other social media, which should be monitored. In particular, VKontakte, known as 'Russian Facebook', as with most social networks, has as its core functionality communicating private messages and sharing photos, status updates and links with friends. The difference between Facebook and VKontakte concerns its policy on content that has looser speech restrictions — at least for certain types of hate speech; and YouTube comments on videos: the social media has a specific policy regarding hate speech but it addresses just video content, not also the comments on videos. Research activities showed that these comments are particularly scornful and made without moderation.

  First, with regard to the keywords and hashtags utilised to detect anti-Muslim online hate speech, we recommend not to use only the most popular ones found during the research activities, such as 'islamizzazione'; 'musulmerda'; 'afro-islamici'; #NOislamizzazione; #NoIslam; #NoMoschee; #STOPIslam; #Eurabia; #Europastan; #Banislam; #Bansharia; #Banmuslims; #StopMuslim; #NoAllaMoschea; #IononsonoMusulmano; #EuropaCristianamaiMusulmana. Instead, we recommend to utilise a combination of keywords and hashtags (including those of political parties or

politicians, such as #Salvini; #SalviniPremier; #iostoconsalvini; #SalviniNonMollare; #Lega; #casapound; #centrodestra; #fratelliditalia) and more 'neutral' words such as 'islamici' e 'musulmani' as they offer more chances to detect web content concerning anti-Muslim online hate speech.

The platform should be developed organising the collected data around the themes that are directly linked to hate speech, in order to produce counter-narratives that are tailored to each specific topic. During the research activities the following themes were highlighted: religion; terrorism, immigration-related issues (especially irregular migrants); social integration; and national/European identity. From the analysis of the influencers it emerged that alongside the subtle and elaborate narratives of some politicians, there are 'ordinary citizens' and groups that spread hatred to thousands of followers on Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, the Hatemeter platform should also consider those accounts highlighted during the research activities and not associated with political groups and people. Moreover, the platform should manage to identify both specific hate speech posts and the associated comments, dividing up the material based on those who produce it and those who spread and share it. Lastly, within the platform there should be a section concerning fake news in the traditional media and in the online media, such as voxnews.info, which is one of the most vigorously anti-Muslim websites, on which haters claim to evidence their hateful narratives with either 'scientific data' or 'news'.

Furthermore, the content on anti-Muslim online hate speech is inter-sectional, in the sense that it is not simply directed towards the Muslim community but involves other social groups. We recommend to highlight this aspect within the Hatemeter platform, with a specific section on multiple targets which are the following individuals, social categories and institutions: the centre-left coalition, the condition of women, the Pope, non-governmental organisations and social minority groups (for example, migrants and Gipsies).

Finally, we recommend that the Hatemeter platform develops sentiment analysis based on the analysis of dehumanising adjectives or negative nicknames in the discourses associated with Muslim communities, such as: 'merde', 'bastardi', 'belve', 'animali', 'risorse', 'cammelli', 'beduini'. The social media platform should also regard

- The final recommendation for the Hatemer platform concerns how counter-narratives could be developed in the tool. The stakeholders interviewed suggested to include irony as a weapon to challenge Islamophobia online. In fact, exposing hate speech and engaging with haters to steer their ideas towards more moderate stances is often not sufficient.

France

- The platform should offer flexibility and nuance in approaching online hate speech. Counter-narratives should be recommended but also there is a need to do so with more than one platform. Online harassment has no platform boundaries and will flock toward those that allow them to do so.

- The platform should contain a whole set of strategies that can be tried, potentially helping the user to learn how to adapt to any individual poster. Another recommendation is that the database contains information on many different topics, such as anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, sexism, xenophobia, but also a specific section against misinformation. This could be useful to deal with intersectional hate speech.

- The platform may be difficult to use for someone who is not already accustomed to the relevant debates on social media. As a result, teaching users while responding is an important recommendation.

- Detecting anti-Muslim hate speech by only using keywords is extremely difficult. For instance, words like "Islam" or "Muslim" are not often used with online hate speech context. In order to be efficient, a robust monitoring tool has to be able to recognise different types of Islamophobic speech. A good starting point is to define categories of such content, as in some of the aforementioned projects. In addition, the French academic language processing competition similarly found that it was the sarcastic speech that is embedded in a witty post that is often the most difficult to analyse.

- According to our online observation work, we found more direct forms of hate speech in the comment sections of newspaper articles (including on the Facebook news page) or YouTube news videos. More indirect hate is often related to groups that are perpetually obsessed with Islam or that are following a harassment campaign launch by an "influencer." Considering the sophistication of most of the discourse by the influencers, the best way to identify concrete hate speech of the people rallying to it, is by searching hate speech in their answers to the influencers of the anti-racist groups. Another efficient strategy to detect the hate speech perpetrators is to identify the members of organised groups by using their mutual shared messages, news or posts (for instance using in common re-tweets). In turn, since we discovered that targeted campaigns are prevalent, perhaps an efficient strategy would be to find a way to detect these campaigns targeted toward individuals.

- Regarding the concrete building of the *Hatemeter* platform, we previously described the French platform "Seriously." This platform is geared toward helping victims of hate speech to build responses and counter-narrative to hate speech. A possible improvement for a new, similar tool would be to include an automated determination of the best strategy to adopt to counter hate speech, depending on the precise message the victim would want to respond to. It could also determine automatically the best factual reminders than can be used to counter the stereotypes involved in the discussion. Then, it would be useful to add an interface to collect users' experiences and feedback on whether or not their response worked to counter hate speech. By combining these different ideas, the platform could include a real learning system, based either on learning machine algorithms or just on the user experience database, with the end goal to be more and more efficient. This raises the question of evaluation. Many of the projects do not have a built-in system to analyse effectiveness. Finally, this platform would benefit with a communication campaign that includes not only both traditional media but also from the platforms themselves, such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube or Twitter.

United Kingdom

- Mainstream as well as marginal online newspapers (such as *Rebel Media* and *Breitbart)*, and social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram should all be monitored, because they can intersect with each other. For example, a disparaging newspaper article on Muslims can easily be shared on Facebook and/or Twitter. The source rather than the platform is more important to monitor however, as the source will use multiple platforms, for example far-right groups such as *Generation Identity* possess a dedicated website which also features links to their Twitter page, Instagram account, Facebook profile, demonstrating a huge convergence right across the platforms and internationally. Actors should also be watched and followed, particularly the MSM, e.g. *The Daily Mail* in the UK context and the content that they spread about Muslim communities.

- There should be a focus of targeting both private and public profiles, especially those that pertain to the far-right groups in the UK.

- Certain markers can indicate whether an online group, page or sole profile is associated with the far-right and engaging in anti-Muslim activity, such as images of 'Pepe the Frog' and/or symbols such as Skull and Crossbones, use of the Fraktur font, triangles and the Arabic symbol for 'Christian' – ن

- In terms of measuring the phenomenon of anti-muslim hate online, a 'baseline' must be identified, and there is a need to understand where the 'baseline' of online hate at a particular moment in time is by looking at a normal period free from any incidents (before phase); then examining the volume of material, communications and messages increasing when there is an incident (during phase); and whether this material reduces afterwards (aftermath phase). In terms of baseline figures, there is a need to identify whether there is a cumulative effect of these incidents and whether the baseline figure continuously increases.

- It is essential that the platform incorporates robust reporting mechanisms that constantly keep the victim or NGO/CSO in communications of the process, including what is going to be done, the progress of the report, and what the outcome is going to be. Failure to keep in contact with the victim or NGO/CSO after a report will most likely result in a lack of faith of the particular platform's reporting process, elicit feelings of frustration for the victim, and worryingly, cause reluctance to report further instances of online hate experienced.

- The platform ideally should be able to differentiate between a user posing a legitimate question or criticism about Islam or a question that possesses an Islamophobic undertone ('wrap them in bacon').

- As regards to online counter-narratives, once adequate causes and solutions for these counter-narratives have been identified, the next stage in the process is to approach and work with key members in the local and national Muslim community to enhance credibility. Counter-narratives must be non-patronising to Muslims or focus on trivial aspects (e.g. 'Asian food'). One important counter-narrative could be to publicise the good deeds and charitable behaviours by Muslims in the UK. This campaign could also include famous Muslims in the UK, such as the footballer Mo Salah, Sadiq Khan the Mayor of London, and the sportsman Mo Farah and their positive achievements in and for the UK. It is essential that the counter-narratives tackle the content that is propagated by the far-right groups, and dispel negative myths and tropes of Muslims and Islam.

- Effective counter-narratives that are going to be utilised and disseminated by NGOs, CSOs and software tools online to tackle anti-Muslim hatred in the fora should be comprised of three distinctive elements: (1) facts concerning Islam and Muslims to clear myths and negative misconceptions; (2) the use of humour and/or witty banter to engage with users; and (3) the implementation of a 'person-focused' approach. Using a person-focused approach that highlights the human dimension of the users engaging in online anti-Muslim hatred, by engaging with these users as someone they may know, in a peer-to-peer fashion, such as a friend, brother, sister etc., can be a useful tactic to reason with users tackle the spread of hateful content. This creates a dynamic process where lucid dialogue can take place online to effectively counter users that are disseminating and actively participating activities pertaining to anti-Muslim hatred.

- Importantly, online counter-narratives, either disseminated by NGOs/CSOs or software tools, should not be following 'scripts' to form counter-messages, as this creates artificiality and consequently lessens the salient human element, which deters human interaction. Internet users are cognisant in noticing patterns with the use of scripts, believing them to be fake profiles or 'bots', and can alert other users of their suspicions or simply use the block function. This can be viewed as a failure, as it closes down an avenue for engaging in cogent dialogue with online actors.

- In regards to research supporting NGOs/CSOs in delivering effective positive narratives about hate speech online, a good method is to enact common practices across EU member states to challenge common tropes of anti-Muslim identities. One such tactic is the use of templates to provide information. In this context, adopting a uniformity approach and providing resources that people can draw on in various parts of the UK and/or EU member states act as important tools to tackle online hatred. For example, what might be 'Amina' and 'Mohammed' in London in the United Kingdom, that story would translate to Amina and Mohammed in The Netherlands or in Italy. This standardised method could make salient use of academics, NGOs and broad representation across a range of Muslim communities, encompassing a wide range of important partnerships. As such, open-access is needed between NGOs/CSOs and other similar organisations. An important element of this method is for NGOs/CSOs to broker contact and engage with media organisations to market these tools and their services as well as to reach audiences both offline and online.

- Social media analytics could be used as a method of measuring the success rate of online counter-narratives on various platforms, including the reporting and removal of hateful content, accounts, posts and pages; the number of instances that counter-narratives from users, NGOs/CSOs and software tools have been viewed, shared, commented/Tweeted, retweeted and liked. This can also function as a visible indicator of efficacy and impact.

- Generally, people do not use social media to seek out hate crime and it is very easy to scroll past and disregard inflammatory content – it is important, therefore, for NGOs/CSOs to address the apathy present on social media, platforms, especially in terms of online hate and associated activities. On this point, it is salient for NGOs/CSOs to devise online strategies to question why such activity is socially unacceptable, as an important means of promoting responsible and active citizenship.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE HATEMETER PLATFORM

The Hatemeter platform has been designed taking into account the remarks and recommendations introduced in the previous Sections. In this section, we describe the platform's main components and provide some technical details. One main challenge of the system is the need to support three different languages, namely Italian, English and French. This aspect has been taken into account in all the steps of the processing workflow.

Figure 2. General architecture of the Hatemeter platform
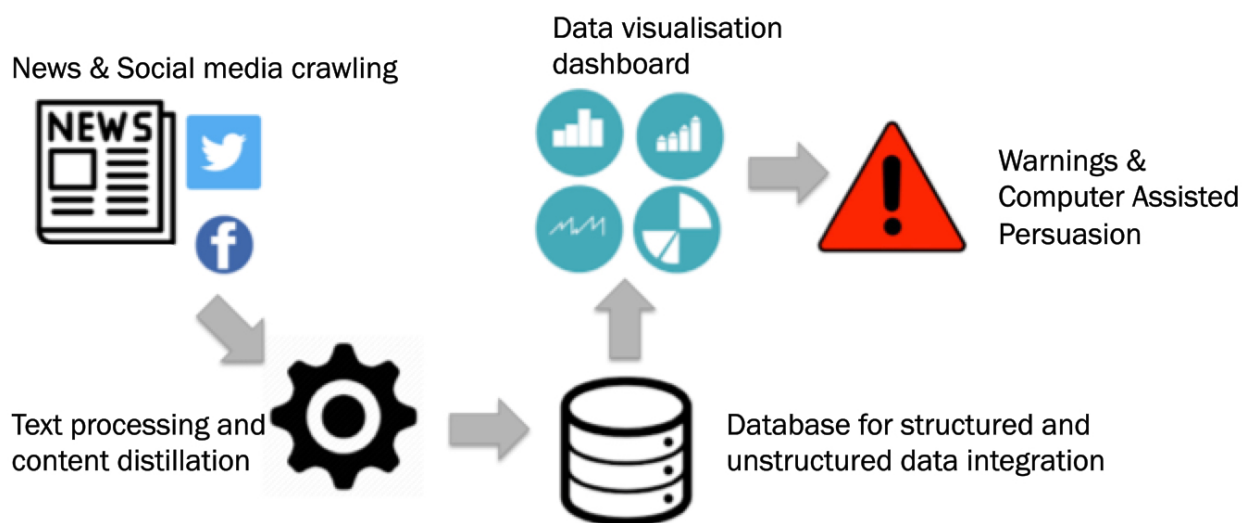
As shown in Figure 2, five modules are part of the Hatemeter platform: the component for Internet and social media data crawling; the text processing and content distillation tools; the database for structured and unstructured data integration; the data visualisation dashboard; and the module for computer assisted persuasion (CAP). They are all connected but are designed to be developed and extended independently and in parallel, so that the platform can be continuously improved with the help of users' feedback. For example, the list of social media accounts to be monitored can be updated or the suite of text processing tools can be extended.

Internet/social media data crawling

Crawling social media and news will be ongoing during the whole project to track relevant events related to islamophobia, analyse peaks of specific topics, study emerging accounts and hashtags. The work presented in this document related to the socio-technical requirements will be the basis upon which the crawling technologies will be put in place. Some of the recommendations presented in the previous Sections will be implemented through the platform. These are:

1) Focusing on Twitter and Facebook, since they are widely used to spread islamophobic discourse with different approaches (the former with short, direct attacks, the latter with specific, more sophisticated rhetorical strategies).

2) Monitoring news sources that are directly linked to anti-Muslim sentiments; for example *The Daily Mail* in the UK.

3) Following specific profiles with public presence around which islamophobic discourse is more frequent, for example the Football Lad's Alliance in the UK or right-wing politicians such as Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni in Italy.

4) Following the hashtags, keywords and their combinations recommended in the previous sections for each language of interest. In particular, monitor co-occurrence of hashtags of politicians (e.g. #Salvini, #casapound) with neutral words such as 'islamici' or 'musulmani', since they are more frequently found than explicit offensive language.

From a technical point of view, the system will rely on the Twitter and Facebook APIs allowing to access and analyse data from public profiles. We will monitor information on users, posts and associated virality metrics (e.g. how many likes, retweets, comments, etc.). We assume that Twitter and Facebook policies about API will not change during the project. Otherwise, we will make our best to cope with the problem and find alternative solutions. As for online news, we will implement specific parsers to analyse news articles on the fly.

Text processing and content distillation

The information collected in the previous stage will then be analysed using text processing tools to extract the most relevant information related to Anti-Muslim hatred online, such as the metadata connected to the messages (i.e., user, date, retweets/likes), the network in which the discourse is spread, and the related textual context; for example, relevant topics, mentioned persons and places, co-occurring hashtags, etc. To this purpose, we will employ the Stanford CoreNLP[166] java-based suite for text processing, which supports all project languages and would, therefore, provide a unified framework for content extraction, enhancing the pipeline efficiency. As for keyword extraction, the Keyphrase Digger tool (Moretti et al., 2015) will be employed: since it has been developed by FBK and is already available for Italian, English and French, it would allow us to easily tune the algorithm to meet the project requirements for all three languages.

Creation of a database for structured/unstructured data integration

All information extracted from online news and social media posts and the related content distilled from such sources will be stored in the project "knowledge store" for easy update and retrieval. We envisage to implement a repository with a mixed structure, where a standard MySql relational database is smoothly connected with the Json files coming from the social media APIs and containing all information about the message content and the network. For each message or news retrieved with the previous modules, the outcome of the text processing pipeline, such as mentioned places, mentioned persons and key-words, will also be stored together with user information, date of issue and other metadata. For social media posts, the language of the user defined in the profile will be stored, so that, even if all messages are in the same database, it is possible to retrieve on the fly only language-specific analyses. On the other hand, it will be possible also to make comparative analyses across the three languages, when some hashtags have been used in the three countries of interest (for example #MuslimInvasion). We choose to base this analysis on the language associated with a user profile, rather than using language detection tools, because these algorithms usually do not perform well on short texts. Since posts can also contain links to news sources, usually describing an event that triggers a comment or a discussion, the information related to the news will also be stored. This is important to study typical sources of (mis)information discussed online or to give proofs for fact checking. The

---

[166] https://stanfordnlp.github.io/CoreNLP/

database will be updated on a regular basis, probably daily, if social media APIs allow the collection of enough data every day.

Implementation of data visualisation dashboard

It will be possible to query the information stored in the database at different levels, to provide aggregated analyses based on language, topic, user, specific time spans, sources, etc. Pictorial and graphic formats will be used as much as possible so as to make the tool language -and country-independent (see, for example, the Mockup in Figure 3 for user network exploration). Finally, research results will also be disseminated through a dedicated web portal, by providing Internet and social media users with updated statistics, counter-narratives, and best practices about preventative behaviours.

From a technical point of view, the visualisation dashboard will be developed using HTML5/CSS3 for web page mark-up, JavaScript for the management of the client side logic and Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) for information visualisation. Among the available libraries based on the jQuery framework and HTML5, we rely on Highcharts to present the most common chart types (i.e. bar and line charts) while the most interactive and custom data-driven visualisations (i.e. co-occurrences and networks) will be displayed using d3.js (Bostock et al., 2011).

Figure 3. Mockup of the interface for User's Network navigation
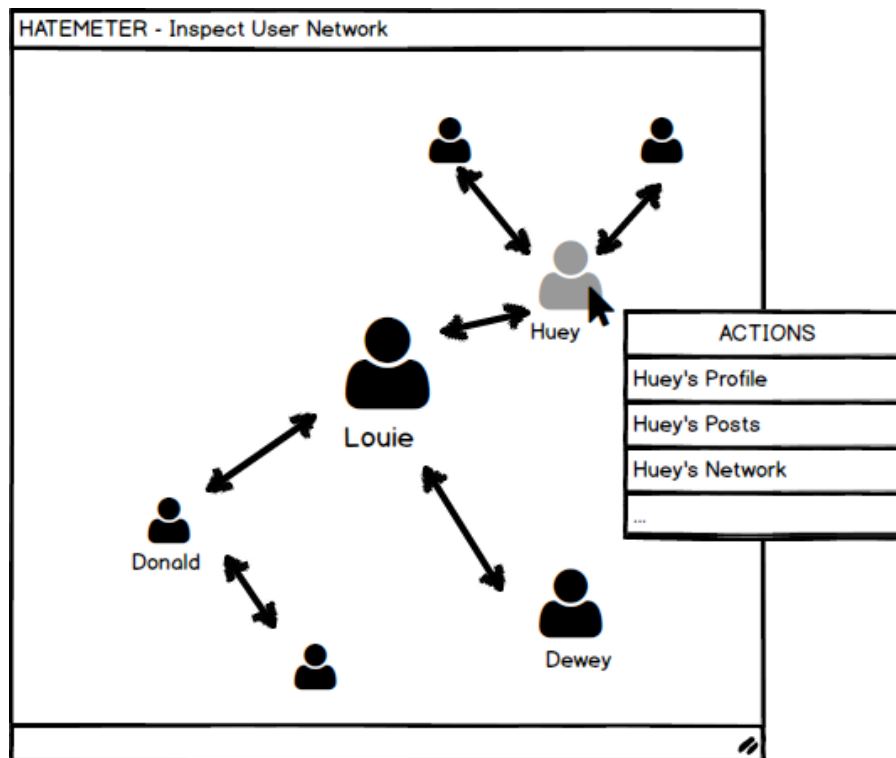
Creation of a Suite of tools for Computer Assisted Persuasion (CAP)

The goal of this activity is to provide a suite of Computer Assisted Persuasion (CAP) tools for NGO/CSOs to answer questions to prevent and combat online hate speech/crime against Muslims. The general idea is that the CAP interface can overcome many of the limitations of current approaches (see sections on "Weaknesses of the tools"). In particular:

"(i) It is time-consuming for each social platform to check every instance of suspected anti-Muslim hate speech ... (ii) Warnings to social media supervisors are often inefficient as there are tolerant policies of self-regulation".

Thus, the CAP platform on one side aims at allowing to effectively identify and filter real threat and anti-Muslim posts out of huge stream of potential hatred content, and, on the other, at allowing to directly and timely counter such content (rather than relying on often inefficient and slow third-party intervention via content-reporting). The main tasks that will be carried out to create the CAP tools are the following:

1) Providing timely and context sensitive alerts based on data analytics: this task will be the outcome of the data analysis launched on the data stored in the project database on a regular basis. This includes the classification of threads and the launch of an alert in case of very serious offenses or the monitoring of trending hashtags and the launch of an alert when one related to islamophobia is top-ranked (see Figure 4 for an interface mockup).

2) Monitoring the activities and the metrics related to the users and the communities spreading islamophobic messages. Significant changes in the network structure of the online behaviour of specific users will be highlighted.

Figure 4. Mockup of the interface for monitoring and content alerts
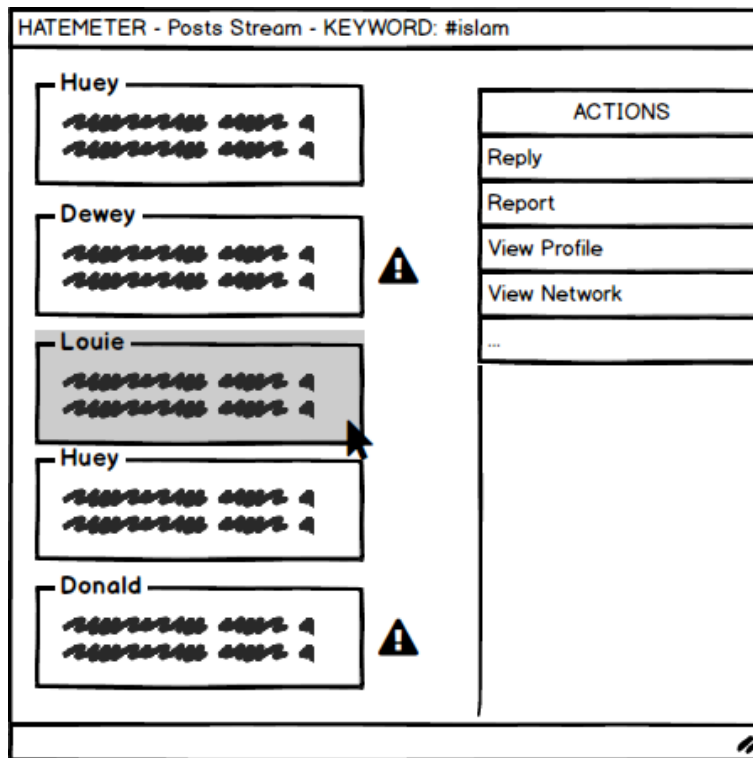
3) Producing a counter-narrative framework in several phases: (i) Data gathering and analysis from NGO's possible data (hate tweet+counter-narratives) that will be included in a repository of counter-narratives. There will be a discussion phase with the NGO and experts sociologists. (ii) Comparison of data-driven and generative approaches, via the second pilot study. (iii) Developing the CAP interface and integrating the best approach to the platform.

With regards to the creation of a counter-narrative repository, the data already gathered from NGOs and the virtual ethnography will be included in the CAP repository and augmented with additional information. There will be a discussion phase with the NGOs and experts sociologists to carefully define the information needed. Each entry will be augmented with: (i) one or more counter-narratives examples written by NGO expert; (ii) the topic of the tweet, (see, for example, religion, terrorism, immigration issues, irregular migrants, invasion, social integration, and national/European identity, as highlighted in the Recommendations section of Italy); (iii) the type of counter narrative (see, for example, facts concerning Islam and Muslims to clear myths and negative misconceptions; the use of humour and/or witty banter to engage with users; and the implementation of a 'person-focused' approach, as stated in the Recommendations section of United Kingdom). Once data types and values have been decided, we will create guidelines for NGO operators that will annotate the DB with the relevant info. Additional data will be added, if available (e.g. repositories of counter-narratives best practice and real examples own by some NGOs).

Automatic counter-narrative generation phase also includes the application of response generation technologies into the hate-speech domain and the comparison of these approaches to determine a model that produces the most plausible counter-narratives. Following the main directions in the response generation research, information retrieval and neural generative models will be put into use with the data collected during the DB production phase. Both generative and retrieval based approaches have strengths and weaknesses. While the retrieval from the DB approach ensures a grammatically correct and sociologically 'perfect' counter-narrative, it falls short of handling the unseen themes of islamophobic narratives or fine-grained contextualisation. On the other hand, generative models are able to produce more specific and contextualised counter-narratives and they can manage generating replies for the unseen cases. However, a generative model requires a huge amount of expert generated data, it is computationally more expensive than the retrieval models, and may have grammatical errors. We will use WP4 phase 2 - meant for testing and validating the Suite of Computer Assisted Persuasion (CAP) tools of the platform (2.5) - to clearly assess whether information retrieval or neural generative models are actually preferred by NGO operators.

The technical implementation of the counter-narrative interface will include the possibility for NGO operators selecting hate content and asking for a list of possible counter-narrative responses. The operator can then select a response among the possible ones that are suggested by the system (either retrieved from the repository described in the previous paragraph or generated through a machine learning model trained on the same repository). Once the response has been selected, the operator can perform actions, such as directly posting it or modifying it before posting, so that he/she has the final choice on the actual phrasing of the message. This allows the operator not only to correct possible errors but also to add the variability that the suggestion expressed in section 'Recommendations' asks for:

"online counter-narratives … should not be following 'scripts' to form counter-messages, as this creates artificiality and … Internet users are cognisant in noticing patterns with the use of scripts, believing them to be fake profiles or 'bots'".

Further actions can include the selection of a different posting profile so as to make the message even more salient, following the suggestion expressed in section 'Recommendations':

"the implementation of a 'person-focused' approach … by engaging with these users as someone they may know, in a peer-to-peer fashion …"

A mockup of the interface, implementing the above functionalities is given in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Mockup of the interface for counter-narrative production
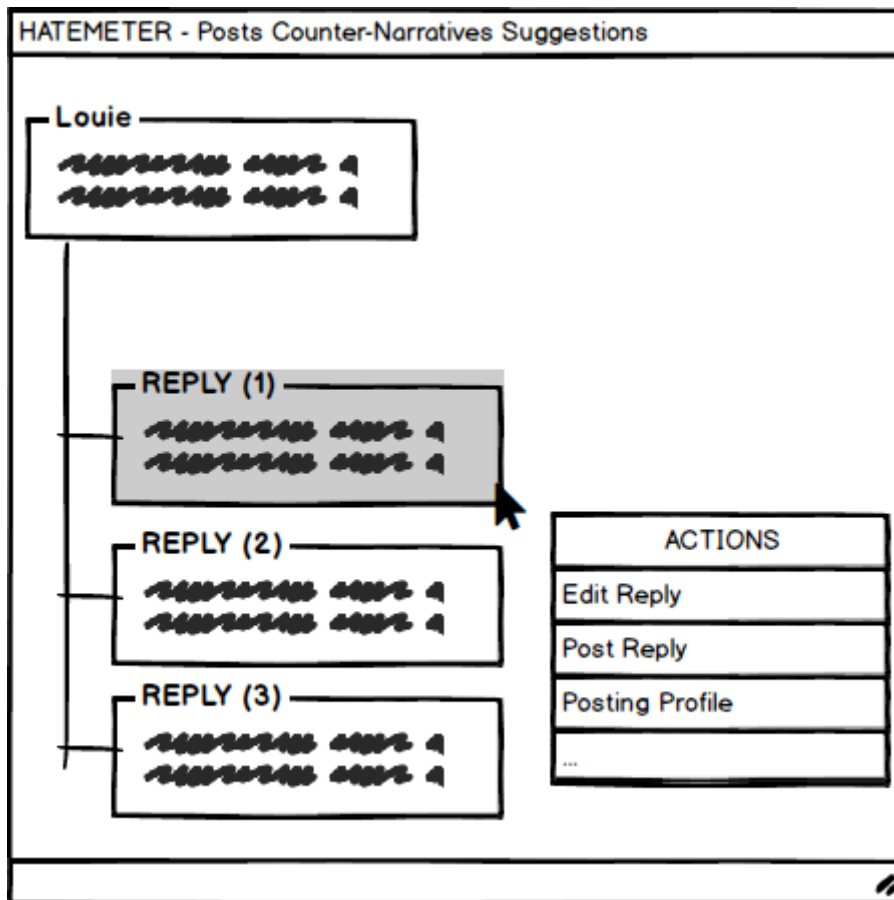
REFERENCES

Abbas, T. (2010). 'Islam and Muslims in the UK', 'Islamic Studies in Europe' Conference, held at the British Academy on 23–24 March, 2010.

Aguilera-Carnerero, C. and Azeez, A.H. (2016). 'Islamonausea, not Islamophobia': The many faces of cyber hate speech. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, *9*(1), pp. 21-40.

Alietti, A. and Padovan, D. (2010), 'Il razzismo come legame sociale nella società dell'eccezione giuridica. Alcune note su anti-semitismo e anti-islamismo in Italia dopo l'11 settembre', *Rapporto della ricerca 'Permanenza e metamorfosi delle forme del pregiudizio: antisemitismo e islamofobia dopo l'11 settembre'*.

Alietti, A. and Padovan, D. (2018), 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2017', in:

Allen, C., (2014). 'Anti-Social Networking: Findings From a Pilot Study on Opposing Dudley Mosque Using Facebook Groups as Both Site and Method for Research'. *SAGE Open*, *4*(1), p. 1-12.

Allievi, S. (2002), 'Muslims in Italy', in: Leveau, Remy, Mohsen-Finan, Khadija and Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, (eds), *New European Identity and Citizenship*, Ashgate: Aldershot: 37–49.

Amiraux, V. (2015). Après le 7 janvier 2015, quelle place pour le citoyen musulman en contexte libéral sécularisé?. *Multitudes*, 59,(2), 83-93

Amnesty International Italia (2018), *Conta fino a 10. Barometro dell'odio in campagna elettorale*, Roma: Amnesty International Italia.

Andrisani, P. and Naletto, G. (2009), 'Cronache di ordinario razzismo', in: Grazia Naletto (ed.), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, Roma: Manifestolibri, pp. 146–52.

Article 19 (2018), *Responding to 'Hate Speech': Comparative Overview of Six EU Countries*, London: Article 19.

Associazione Carta di Roma (2016), *Notizie oltre i muri: quarto rapporto Carta di Roma 2016*, Roma: Associazione Carta di Roma.

Associazione Carta di Roma (2017), *Notizie da paura: quinto rapporto Carta di Roma 2017*, Roma: Associazione Carta di Roma.

Awan, I. (2014). 'Islamophobia and Twitter: A typology of online hate against Muslims on social media'. *Policy & Internet*, *6*(2), pp.133-150.

Awan, I. and Zempi, I. (2017). 'I Will Blow Your Face OFF'—VIRTUAL and Physical World Anti-muslim Hate Crime'. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *57*(2), pp. 362-380.

Awan, I. and Zempi, I., (2016). 'The affinity between online and offline anti-Muslim hate crime: Dynamics and impacts'. *Aggression and violent behavior*, *27*, pp. 1-27.

Awan, I., (2016). 'Islamophobia on social media: A qualitative analysis of the Facebook's Walls of Hate'. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, *10*(1), pp. 1 - 20.

Baehr P. & Gordon D. (2013) « From the headscarf to the burqa: the role of social theorists in shaping laws against the veil », *Economy and Society,* 42(2), pp. 249-280.

Banet, R. & Fauchet, B. (2018) 20 millions de musulmans en France ? Ils sont environ 4 fois moins, selon les estimations les plus sérieuses, *AFP*. Available online at : https://factuel.afp.com/20-millions-de-musulmans-en-france-ils-sont-environ-4-fois-moins-selon-les-estimations-les-plus

Banks, J. (2010). 'Regulating hate speech online'. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, *24*(3), pp. 233-239.

Barlow, C. and Awan, I. (2016). '"You need to be sorted out with a knife": the attempted online silencing of women and people of Muslim faith within academia'. *Social Media+ Society*, *2*(4), pp. 1-11.

Bartlett, J. and Littler, M. (2011). *'Inside the EDL: Populist politics in a digital age. A Report for Demos'.* [Online] Available online at: https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Inside_ the_edl_WEB.pdf?1331035419

Baubérot J. (2012), *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, Paris : La Découverte.

Bayrakli, E. & Hafez, F., (Eds) (2017) European Islamophobia Report, SETA. Available online at : http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/France.pdf

Beauregard, M. (2015), *Le traitement discursif de l'islam et des musulmans dans les médias: analyse critique des chroniques de Richard Martineau*, UQÀM.

Belluati, M. and Genetti, S. (n.d.), *Odiare a parole. Gli hate speech nella discussione parlamentare*.

Bleich, E. (2011). 'What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept'. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *55*(12), pp. 1581-1600.

Bonino, S. (2016), *Muslims in Scotland: The Making of Community in a Post-9/11 World*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bortone, R. and Cerquozzi, F. (2017), 'L'hate speech al tempo di Internet', *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, dicembre, 818-27.

Bostock, M., Ogievetsky, V. & Heer, J. (2011), 'D3 data-driven documents', *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 17 (12).

Brindle, A., (2016). 'Cancer has nothing on Islam: a study of discourses by group elite and supporters of the English defence league'. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *13*(4), pp. 444-459.

CCIF (2018) *Rapport sur l'Islamophobie pendant l'année 2017 : dates, chiffres et questions*. Available online at : http://www.islamophobie.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ccif-rapport-2018.pdf

Cediey, E. & Foroni, C. (ISM-CORUM) (2006*) Les Discriminations à raison de « l'origine » dans les embauches en France Une enquête nationale par tests de discrimination selon la méthode du BIT.* Genève : Bureau international du Travail.

Citron, D. (2010), *Hate Crimes in Cyberspace*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cleland, J., Anderson, C. and Aldridge-Deacon, J. (2017). 'Islamophobia, war and non-Muslims as victims: an analysis of online discourse on an English Defence League message board'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, pp. 1-17.

CNCDH (2017) *Rapport sur la lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie*. Available online at : http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/publications/rapport-2017-sur-la-lutte-contre-le-racisme-lantisemitisme-et-la-xenophobie

Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (2004), *Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Copsey, N. (2010). *'The English defence league: Challenging our country and our values of social inclusion, fairness and equality'*, London: Faith Matters.

Copsey, N., Dack, J., Littler, M. and Feldman, M. (2013). 'Anti-Muslim Hate Crime and *Cumulative Extremism, and Policy Implications*. Teesside University. [Online] Available at: https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-20142015-findings-on-anti-muslim-hate

Corrao, F. and Violante, L. (2018), *L'Islam non è terrorismo*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Cousin, B. and Vitale, T. (2008), 'Le condizioni di espressione dell'islamofobia: Oriana, un caso italiano. Come è nato il "fenomeno Fallaci" sui nostri giornali', *RESET* 105: 84-86.

Dargent, C. (2009). L'État et la difficile saisie statistique de la religion : l'exemple des protestants dans les recensements en France au XIXe siècle. *Population*, 64(1), 215-232

De Bellis, E. and Marini, N. (2014), *Razzismo, intolleranza e discriminazione: repertorio delle principali organizzazioni e dei relativi strumenti giuridici ed operativi*, Roma: Ministero della Giustizia.

Devriendt, E., Monte, M. & Sandré, M. (eds)(2018) *Dire ou ne pas dire la « race » en France aujourd'hui. Mots, Les langages du politique,* Paris : ENS Editions.

Duffy B. (2016) *Perceptions are not reality: what the world gets wrong*, Ipsos Mori. Available online at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-what-world-gets-wrong

Ekman, M. (2015). 'Online Islamophobia and the politics of fear: manufacturing the green scare'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *38*(11), pp. 1986-2002.

eMORE, Monitoring and Reporting Online Hate Speech in Europe (n.d.), *An Overview on Hate Crime and Hate Speech in 9 EU Countries*, Torri di Quartesolo: Research Centre on Security and Crime.

Europe 1 (2018) Constitution française : l'Assemblée supprime le mot "race", interdit la "distinction de sexe". Available online at : http://www.europe1.fr/politique/constitution-francaise-lassemblee-supprime-le-mot-race-interdit-la-distinction-de-sexe-3708722

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2012), *ECRI Report on Italy (fourth monitoring cycle)*, Strasbourg: ECRI Secretariat.

Fabre, M, (2017) « Sens et usages contemporains de la laïcité », *Éducation et socialisation*, 46; DOI : 10.4000/edso.2754

Faith Matters (2014). *Facebook Report: Rotherham, hate and the far-right online.* Available at: https://www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Rotherham.pdf

Farkas, J., Schou, J. and Neumayer, C. (2018). 'Platformed antagonism: racist discourses on fake Muslim Facebook pages'. *Critical Discourse Studies*, pp. 1-18.

Farkas, J.D., Schou, J. and Neumayer, C. (2017). 'Cloaked Facebook pages: Exploring fake Islamist propaganda in social media'. *New Media and Society*, pp. 1-18.

Feldman, M. and Littler, M. (2014). *Tell MAMA Reporting 2013/14 anti-Muslim overview, analysis and 'cumulative extremism', Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies.* Teesside University.Available at: https://www.tellmamauk.org/wp content/uploads/2014/07/finalreport.pdf

Geisser V. (2003) La nouvelle Islamophobie. Paris : La découverte.

Giacalone, C. (2017), 'Islamophobia in Italy: National Report 2016', in: Bayrakli, Enes and Farid Hafez (eds), *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul, SETA: 297–319.

Gill, A.K. and Harrison, K. (2015). 'Child Grooming and Sexual Exploitation: Are South Asian Men the UK Media's New Folk Devils?'. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy, 4*(2), pp. 34-49.

Giovannetti, M. and Minicucci, M. (2015), 'L'hate speech nei new social media: percezioni, esperienze, approcci, reazioni e risposte dei giovani utilizzatori e dei professionisti', Relazione al convegno *Hate speech e libertà di espressione.*

Gometz, G. (2017), 'L'odio proibito: la repressione giuridica dello *hate speech*', *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale* (32): 1-39.

Hajjat, A., Mohammed, M. (2016). *Islamophobie: Comment les élites françaises fabriquent le « problème musulman »*. Paris: La Découverte.

Henne, P. (2015), *Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Centre.

Idpi (2018) *Baromètre mensuel des manifestations de la haine en ligne, janvier 2018*. Available online at : http://www.idpi.fr/actualites/barometre-mensuel-des-manifestations-de-la-haine-en-ligne-janvier-2018/

Idpi (2018) *Hate Speech sur Internet, benchmark international*. Available online at: http://www.idpi.fr/actualites/gouvernance/hate-speech-sur-internet-benchmark-international-2/

Jacks, W. and Adler, J. R. (2015). 'A proposed typology of online hate crime'. *Open Access Journal of Forensic Psychology*, *7*, pp. 64-89.

Kaya, S. (2015), 'Islamophobia in Western Europe: A Comparative, Multilevel Study', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 35(3): 450–65.

Kohl, U. (2018). 'Islamophobia, 'gross offensiveness' and the internet'. *Information & Communications Technology Law*, *27*(1), pp. 111-131.

Larsson, G. (2007). 'Cyber-islamophobia? The case of WikiIslam'. *Contemporary Islam, 1*(1), pp. 53-67.

Le Parisien (2017) *Ultra-droite : 10 arrestations, un projet d'attentat contre des mosquées et des politiques*. Available online at : http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/dix-hommes-soupconnes-de-preparer-des-attentats-anti-musulmans-arretes-17-10-2017-7338018.php

Leveson Inquiry. (2012). *Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leveson-inquiry-report-into-the-culture-practices-and-ethics-of-the-press

Libération (2018) Supprimer le mot «race» de la Constitution: oui, mais.... Available online at : http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2018/07/10/supprimer-le-mot-race-de-la-constitution-oui-mais_1665506

Littler, M. and Feldman, M. (2015). *Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015: Annual Monitoring,*

Malchiodi, M. (2016), *L'islam nei social media*, Pavia: Osservatorio di Pavia.

Miller, C. and Smith, J. (2017). *Toplines: Anti-Islamic Hate on Twitter.* London: Demos. [Online] Available at: https://www.demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/

Ministère de l'Intérieur (2018) *Bilan 2017 des actes racistes, antisémites, antimusulmans et antichrétiens*. Available online at : https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministre/Communiques/Bilan-2017-des-actes-racistes-antisemites-antimusulmans-et-antichretiens

Mohammed, M. (2014) « Un nouveau champ de recherche », *Sociologie*, 5(1). Available online at : http://journals.openedition.org/sociologie/2108

Moretti, G., Sprugnoli, R., Tonelli, S. (2015) 'Digging in the Dirt: Extracting Keyphrases from Texts with KD. In *Proceedings of the Second Italian Conference on Computational Linguistics* (CLiC-it 2015), Trento, Italy.

Morgan, G. and Poynting, S. (eds) (2012), *Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral Panic in the West*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Oboler, A. (2013). *Islamophobia on the Internet: The Growth of Online Hate Targeting Muslims*. Online Hate Prevention Institute. [Online] Available at: http://ohpi.org.au/islamophobia-on-the-internet-the-growth-of-online-hate-targeting-muslims

Oboler, A. (2016). 'The normalisation of islamophobia through social media: Facebook'. In: Awan, I. (Ed.), *Islamophobia in Cyberspace: Hate Crimes Go Viral.* Routledge, New York, pp. 41-62.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2018) *Hate crime against Muslims*, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Available online at: https://www.osce.org/odihr/373441

Osservatorio sulle Discriminazioni (2010), *Rapporto 2010*, Mantova: Osservatorio sulle Discriminazioni.

Padovan, D. and Alietti, A. (2012), 'The Racialization of Public Discourse', *European Societies* 14 (2): 186-202.

Pew Global Attitudes Project (2015), *Faith in European Project Reviving*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Centre.

Provalis Research (2014), *WordStat 7. User's guide*, accessed online at: http://provalisresearch.com/Documents/WordStat7.pdf

Pugiotto, A. (2012), 'Le parole sono pietre? I discorsi di odio e la libertà di espressione nel diritto costituzionale', Relazione al V Convegno Nazionale dell'Avvocatura per i diritti LGBT-Rete Lenford, *Omofobia, Transfobia e Diritto Penale*.

QUBA (2004), Una bussola per la lotta alle discriminazioni.

Rivera, A. (2004), 'Rapporto sulla violenza ed i crimini razzisti in Italia', *National Focal Point – Italy*.

Roucate, D. (2015) Quatre questions sur les statistiques ethniques. *LeMonde.fr.* Available online at : https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/05/06/quatre-questions-sur-les-statistiques-ethniques_4628874_4355770.html

Runnymede Trust, (1997). *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All,* London: Runnymede Trust.

Russospena, M. (2009), 'L'uso strumentale delle differenze religiose: l'Islam nelle retoriche pubbliche', in: Grazia Naletto (ed.), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, Roma: Manifestolibri, pp. 37–46.

Samson, V. (2018) Arrestation de dix hommes liés à l'ultradroite soupçonnés de préparer des attentats contre des musulmans, *Le Figaro*.

Scaramella, C. (2016), *Discorsi d'odio e Social Media. Criticità, strategie e pratiche d'intervento*.

Schmidt di Friedberg, O. (n.d.), *Building the enemy: Islamophobia in Italy*.

Sciortino, G. (2002), 'Islamofobia all'italiana', *Polis* 16 (1): 103–23.

Sian, K. (2018). 'Stupid Paki Loving Bitch: The Politics of Online Islamophobia and Misogyny'. In: Bhatia, M., Poynting, S. and Tufail, W. (Eds), (2018). *Media, Crime and Racism*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 117-138.

Sian, K. P. (2013). *Unsettling Sikh and Muslim Conflict: Mistaken Identities, Forced Conversions and Postcolonial Formations.* Lanham: Lexington.

Simon, P. (2008). Les statistiques, les sciences sociales françaises et les rapports sociaux ethniques et de « race ». *Revue française de sociologie*, 49(1), 153-162.

Soullier, L. & Vincent, E. (2018) Soupçons d'attentats contre des musulmans : dix membres de l'ultradroite mis en examen, *Le Monde*. Available online at : https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2018/06/28/derriere-le-groupuscule-afo-la-menace-d-une-radicalisation-violente-de-l-extreme-droite_5322275_3224.html

Strabac, Z. and Listhaug, O. (2008), 'Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis of Survey Data from 30 Countries', *Social Science Research*, 37 (1): 268–86.

Szmania, S. and Fincher, P. (2017), 'Countering Violent Extremism Online and Offline', *Criminology and Public Policy*, January.

Tell Mama, (2014). *'Analysing the Lexicon of Anti-Muslim Prejudice'.* [Online] Available at: http://www.tellmamauk.org/analysing-the-lexicon-of-anti-muslim-prejudice/

Tell Mama, (2016). *'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Intolerance and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred'.* Tell MAMA Annual Report. [Online] Available at: https://www.tellmamauk.org/constructed-threat-identity-intolerance-impact-anti-muslim-hatred-tell-mama-annual-report-2016/

Thomson, A. (2005) «L'Europe des Lumières et le monde musulman. Une alterité ambiguë», *Cromohs*, 10, pp. 1-11.

Törnberg, A. and Törnberg, P. (2016). 'Muslims in social media discourse: Combining topic modeling and critical discourse analysis'. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *13*, pp. 132-142.

Ufficio per la Promozione delle Parità di Trattamento e la Rimozione delle Discriminazioni Fondate sulla Razza o sull'Origine Etnica (2012), *Razzismo e xenofobia in Italia: rapporto del Consiglio d'Europa e osservazioni delle Nazioni Unite*, Roma: Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali.

Vox, Osservatorio Italiano sui Diritti (2018), *La mappa dell'intolleranza*, accessed online at: http://www.voxdiritti.it/la-mappa-dellintolleranza-anno-3-la-nuova-radiografia-dellitalia-che-odia-online

Wieviorka, M. (2017) *Le Front national, entre extrémisme, populisme et démocratie*, Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.