Critical Discourse Analysis of Xenophobia in UK Political Party Blogs

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This paper takes a CDA approach to investigating discourse and ideology in political blogs, focusing on the 'Conversative Home' blog. I mainly explore the writers and commentors attitudes towards British Muslims in the UK, focusing essentially on how extremist they are in their own narratives. The blog/article discourse reflects the writer's political identity and their authorial voice while the commentors create adversative positions, introducing different language users, who bring their own identities and argue around different ones. I rely on Van Dijk's (2001) cognitive approach along with Fairclough's (2010) dialectical approach to understand dominant discourses. Consequently, I analyzed qualitatively 10 articles with more than 200 comments to explicate the dominant discourses of Islamophobic/extremist context in the far-right blog. I further aim to produce systematic analysis of actor, action, argument (KhosraviNik 2011) to understand identity construction and appraisal analysis (Martin et.al 2007). This is to first understand discursive strategies used to legitimize xenophobic discourse, second to classify attitudes, and finally to elaborate on core values in the data set. Finally, I rely on the grammar of othering to explain how these discourses are expressed.

The main findings suggest that the dominant discourses produced by the blogger and the commentors are variant and different. Commentors produce a victimhood discourse as they argue that the British race, values, and cultures are under threat by Islam and Muslims and go far to explicitly reflect on 'replacement' theory of white race and culture. They also negatively represent Muslims as being misogynist, terrorists and violent and they directly associate them to fascism as 'Islamofascism'. Finally, the blaming discourse is reflected through the argument of power as the government with main parties is represented as weak and tolerant in facing the power of Islam and extremism in events of violence and national security. Moving to the bloggers' discourse they still represent Muslims as terrorists and supporters of violence, but some writers argue for Muslim women being leaders and businesswomen. Bloggers who are conservative party members attempt use their authorial voice and political identity to influence readers and argue for the positive role of the government as holding the power and defending the British values.

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