MediaWell

News Item

Roundup: #Islamophobia: Stoking Fear and Prejudice in the 2018 Midterms

November 8, 2019

Check out Mediawell's weekly roundup of content relating to the SSRC's new Media & Democracy report detailing online harassment against Muslim candidates in the 2018 midterm elections. See below for the report and articles following its release.

#Islamophobia: Stoking Fear and Prejudice in the 2018 Midterms | SSRC

> This report examines the campaign experiences of Rep. Ilhan Omar, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, and other Muslim candidates who ran in the 2018 US midterm elections. While many Muslim candidates reported limited encounters with Islamophobia among their constituents, a social media narrative of manufactured outrage was disproportionately Islamophobic, xenophobic, racist, and misogynistic. It was heavily influenced by a small number of agents provocateurs, whose hate-filled messages and disinformation were amplified by networks of accounts operating on a scale that signals the involvement of organized networks.
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> […]

Source: https://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/islamophobia-stoking-fear-and-prejudice-in-the-2018-midterms/

Opinion: Trolling Is Now Mainstream Political Discourse | WIRED

> It was a few weeks before the 2016 election, and I was putting together a report on the future of online political discourse. We had canvassed thousands of the world's leading experts in technology and culture, and had begun the long task of interpreting the more than 700 responses to the final question in our survey:
>
> *In the next decade, will public discourse online become more or less shaped by bad actors, harassment, trolls, and an overall tone of griping, distrust, and disgust?*

> Despite having studied this space for years, I read agape. It wasn't that the predictions for the coming decade were, as I'd expected, pessimistic. It was their excruciatingly candid, matter-of-fact dystopianism that left the impression. One comment in particular would become downright prescient.
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> […]

Source: https://www.wired.com/story/opinion-trolling-is-now-mainstream-political-discourse/

Twitter fueled attacks on Muslim candidates in 2018, study finds | The Washington Post

> Muslim candidates, including Reps. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, endured torrents of hateful, xenophobic and threatening tweets during last year's campaign season, much of it amplified through bots and other fake accounts, according to a study to be released Tuesday.
>
> The study, by the Social Science Research Council, analyzed 113,000 Twitter messages directed at Muslim candidates. The tweets called the candidates "dogs" and "pieces of garbage" and accused them of marrying siblings, being terrorists and seeking to impose the values of a "demonic" faith on Americans.
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> […]

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/twitter-fueled-attacks-on-muslim-candidates-in-2018-study-finds/2019/11/04/be0bf432-ff51-11e9-9518-1e76abc088b6_story.html

Opinion: The Online Cacophony of Hate Against Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib | The New York Times

> Donald Trump has made the demonization of Representative Ilhan Omar, Democrat of Minnesota, a key element of his 2020 re-election strategy. But the targeting of Ms. Omar and her fellow Democrat and Muslim member of Congress, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, started as soon as they became candidates.
>
> We published a study this week that found that, around the 2018 midterm elections, Ms. Omar and Ms. Tlaib were in the cross hairs of a tiny band of

> Islamophobes, long before Mr. Trump elevated them in his tweetstorms, and likely before they were even on his radar.
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> […]

Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/opinion/ilhan-omar-rashida-tlaib.html

WSU professor leads investigation into Islamophobia online | WSU Insider

> Muslim political candidates face a toxic online environment polluted by a small number of users that succeed in disseminating hatred through a web of automated bots and sock-puppet accounts, new research led by a Washington State University professor shows.
>
> *#Islamophobia: Stoking Fear and Prejudice in the 2018 Midterms* was published this week by the Social Science Research Council, which funded the project, and its Media & Democracy program.
>
> […]

Source: https://news.wsu.edu/2019/11/06/wsu-professor-leads-investigation-islamophobia-online/

The bots who hate Rep. Ilhan Omar: A Q&A

> A team of researchers waded through the hellscape of being Rep. IIhan Omar on Twitter and were floored: Of all the tweets that mentioned her, only 30 percent were NOT from accounts that have shared hate speech or overt disinformation, like the baseless claim that she married her own brother or has ties to terrorists.
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> […]

Source: https://www.nj.com/opinion/2019/11/the-bots-who-hate-rep-ilhan-omar-a-qa.html