Abstract

Numerous studies have established a notable securitisation of Muslims in mainstream media, following 9/11. However, there remained a gap where this securitisation was yet to be analysed comprehensively, in relation to the effect it had on self-censorship online. My primary hypothesis was that in light of recent political developments in Europe, increased Islamophobia had resulted in British Muslims imposing self-censorship on their expression on Facebook. This hypothesis was tested by evaluating empirical data from 10 interviews, and 62 questionnaires with British Muslims. My analysis concluded that the knowledge of government surveillance was causing some British Muslims to inadvertently alter their behaviour online. Moreover, 58% of questionnaire respondents maintained that online Islamophobia had affected their willingness to express opinions. However, the percentage of interviewees disagreeing was more significant. Most interviewees argued that online discussions had flourished on Facebook, and consequently, they were less likely to self-censor. My empirical data further highlighted gendered and geographical dimensions to Islamophobia in the UK. Ultimately, my study forms part of an emergent body of research on self-censorship on social media platforms, and will contribute to further studies on religion and self-censorship online.