



SOCIAL SCIENCES,
ECONOMICS & HUMANITIES
FGSES | AIRES | PPS

Mohamed VI Polytechnic University - UM6P
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SECOND YEAR MA GLOBAL AFFAIRS,
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION/11 STUDENTS

Hate speech and tension between Moroccans and Algerians

Awareness Guide

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Alignment of the Video and the Guide

In our awareness guide on combating hate speech on social media, a significant emphasis is placed on the critical need to recognize the deep-seated sources of tensions between communities, particularly between Moroccans and Algerians. Understanding the intricate web of historical, cultural, and political factors that contribute to these tensions is foundational for any effort aimed at addressing and mitigating hate speech effectively. The cultural disagreements over symbols and heritage such as couscous or the caftan, or the intolerance in football when the different national teams are competing are not merely topics of contention but are indicative of broader nationalistic and political conflicts. These disputes are often magnified and distorted on social media platforms, serving as fuel for hate speech and exacerbating divides.

By acknowledging and understanding these sources of tension, the guide seeks to foster a more informed and empathetic approach to navigating social media interactions. It underscores the necessity of dialogue, education, and positive engagement as tools to bridge divides, promote mutual respect, and cultivate an online environment where diversity is celebrated rather than contested. Recognizing the root causes of online animosity is a crucial step toward transforming social media into a space of constructive exchange and understanding, pivotal for the broader goals of peace and social cohesion.

Two nations...a shared history

Historically, Morocco and Algeria have shared a long and intertwined history, with many cultural and linguistic similarities. However, political tensions have led to strained relations over the years. These tensions often spill over into social media, a space where individuals can express their views with relative anonymity and reach a wide audience quickly.

...Sources of Tensions

Politically, the relationship between Morocco and Algeria has seen periods of tension and détente. These fluctuations often reflect on social media, where citizens of both countries react to diplomatic developments. Political rhetoric can sometimes exacerbate these tensions, with social media amplifying the voices of those who promote divisiveness over dialogue.

Until...

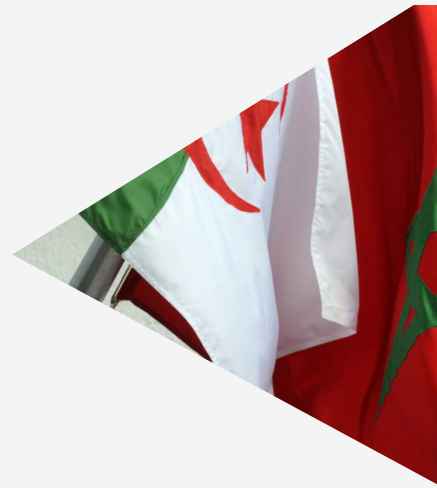
The spread of hate speech on social media between Moroccans and Algerians, is a complex and multifaceted issue that has significant implications for both societies and their bilateral relations. This phenomenon finds its roots not only in the political context but also the historical, and cultural contexts of the two North African countries.

The ripple effects of such hate speech can also extend to diplomatic relations. In the digital age, the boundary between public opinion and official policy becomes increasingly blurred, and public sentiment on social media can sometimes influence or reflect diplomatic stances. In extreme cases, online hate speech can escalate to offline violence or hate crimes, thereby posing a threat to social harmony and national security.

Concretely what is hate speech and how can we spot it?

Although there is no definition of hate speech as such in international law, nor measures to punish or criminalise it, a number of international organisations, led by the United Nations, have attempted to define it in various documents.

In the *"United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action to Combat Hate Speech"*, it is stated that hate speech is *"any form of communication, whether oral or written, or conduct that is abusive or uses derogatory or discriminatory language towards a person or group because of their identity, in other words, because of their religious affiliation, ethnic origin, nationality, race, colour, ancestry, gender or other factors that constitute their identity. Often such speech is both the result and the cause of intolerance and hatred, and in some cases can be denigrating and divisive"*.



What role does social media play in the spread of hate speech?

The online space is saturated with hate speech, which can feel overwhelming and all-encompassing...

ON A SOCIETAL LEVEL

It exacerbates existing societal divides, fosters a culture of hostility, and hinders the development of a constructive dialogue between the two nations

ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Individuals from both countries experience a sense of alienation and hostility, not just online but extending into real-life interactions.

How to spot hate speech ?

To fight against hate speech it is important to first spot it !

Recognizing hate speech as an individual involves being attentive to language that targets and discriminates against specific groups based on attributes such as race, religion, gender, or ethnicity.

Look for ... explicit expressions of hatred, stereotypes, or language that incites violence.

Pay attention to ... dehumanizing phrases or symbols associated with hate groups.

Consider the context and intent behind the words, and be mindful of their potential impact on peaceful coexistence.

Why should we combat hate speech ?

1. The Preservation of Social Harmony

Hate speech can lead to increased social divisions and tensions. In communities or countries where different groups coexist, such speech can erode the mutual respect and understanding necessary for peaceful cohabitation.

2. Prevention of Violence

Unchecked hate speech can escalate into physical violence. It can create an environment where hostility towards certain groups is normalised, potentially leading to hate crimes.

3. Protection of Individual Rights

Hate speech can lead to discrimination, marginalisation, and suppression of voices, it infringes on the rights of individuals, particularly those belonging to minority groups.

... the Morocco and Algeria case

1. *Preserve diplomatic relations*

The spread of hate speech can affect diplomatic relations between countries. In the case of Morocco and Algeria, where political tensions exist, hate speech can exacerbate these tensions, hindering diplomatic efforts and cooperation.

2. *The Cultural aspect of the two countries*

Disputes over the origin of cultural symbols and heritage, like traditional dishes like “couscous” or clothing like the “Caftan”, become proxy battles for deeper political and nationalistic conflicts. Social media serves as a battleground for these cultural disputes, where historical grievances are revisited and sometimes distorted, leading to further misunderstanding and animosity.

How should the global community respond to hate speech ?

- 1** **Raise awareness through educational initiatives:** Implementing an inclusive and action-oriented approach to combating hate speech by including education on peaceful coexistence and the need to embrace difference in school curricula.
- 2** **Combat hate speech through social media monitoring:** Increased monitoring of social media platforms to identify and remove hate speech, while promoting responsible use of social media by raising awareness of its potential negative consequences.
- 3** **Sanction harmful actions through legal measures:** The need to strengthen the legal arsenal through legislative and institutional frameworks that promote acceptance, mutual recognition and respect for otherness, while embracing peaceful coexistence.
- 4** **Make synergies through international cooperation:** International organisations such as the United Nations have a duty to combat hate speech and promote peace, and States should work with these organisations to develop strategies at the national level to combat hate speech more effectively.

Social media as a platform for peace...

Promoting Positive Narratives

Social media platforms themselves can play a crucial role in combatting hate speech, they can be platforms for enhancing co-existence through the encouraging and amplifying of positive narratives about different cultures and communities which can counterbalance the effects of hate speech.

Success stories...

The "*Moroccans Are Not My Enemy*" campaign in Algeria, is a powerful example of how social media can be leveraged to promote coexistence and counteract hate speech. This campaign demonstrates the positive potential of social media platforms to bridge divides and foster mutual understanding between communities, in this case, between Moroccans and Algerians. Such initiatives can effectively challenge stereotypes and create a counter-narrative to the often-divisive discourse found online. By providing a platform for positive and constructive messages, social media can play a significant role in bringing communities together and promoting peace and tolerance.

And what can we do, as individuals, to combat hate speech on social media ?

USE SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLY

We as individuals should be mindful of the content we post on social media and avoid sharing or promoting hate speech.

PROMOTE POSITIVE DISCOURSE

Individuals can promote positive discourse by engaging in respectful and constructive conversations with others, even if they hold different opinions or beliefs. This comes first from education but also from a personal effort and investment on research on topics discussed and on ways to engage in constructive discussions.

EDUCATING ONESELF:

Individuals can educate themselves on the issues surrounding the Morocco-Algeria rivalry and the impact of hate speech. This can help them better understand the perspectives of others and promote empathy and understanding.

CHALLENGE HATE SPEECH:

We can challenge hate speech when we encounter it, by responding directly, addressing misinformation, and spreading positive discourse.

PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We can promote diversity and inclusion by celebrating our differences and promoting respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or beliefs.

But how can individuals educate themselves on hate speech dangers and ways to combat it ?

RAISING AWARENESS

International organisations, states and civil society have a responsibility to raise awareness of the dangers of hate speech **by talking to their friends and family about why hate speech is harmful and how it can contribute to a negative online environment.**

RECOGNIZING HATE SPEECH

By understanding what hate speech is and how it can manifest itself in different ways, individuals have a responsibility to learn to recognise it.

READING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Educational resources such as the UN's "Addressing hate speech through education: A guide for policy makers" and UNICEF's "How to talk to your children about hate speech" can provide individuals with information on the dangers of hate speech and how to combat it.

REPORTING HATE SPEECH

Individuals can report instances of hate speech they encounter on social media platforms and demand action from the platforms hosting it.

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