

Incitement to violence on social media in Iraq, Facebook publications as a model for the period (from 1/4 to 1/6/2022)

By

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Abstract

The role of social media has increased during the past decade in a way that has become a threat to society and its security because of its bad uses and the possibilities that harm society in order to serve certain parties or programs, especially with regard to spreading violence and hate speech. Facebook is one of the most widespread websites in Iraq in terms of discussion, exchange of ideas and putting forward positions, which makes verbal violence, hate speech and incitement clear in its contents, and affects society negatively, which increases the state of tension, congestion and psychological charging that leads to many cases of physical violence, as well as the decline in the state of acceptance of the other and an attempt to understand him . This phenomenon and its seriousness motivated the researcher in addressing this study to examine the problem of the absence of censorship of Facebook's discourse in Iraq by tracking the forms of incitement to violence on Facebook and how it reflects on society and who are the supervisory authorities that are supposed to bear the responsibility for monitoring. The researcher relied on the appropriate survey method for descriptive research, through the questionnaire tool to get to know the opinion of the public of the city of Baghdad from the users of social media, as well as the scientific observation and interview to lead to conclusions that,

Verbal violence, especially speech violence, was the most severe in incitement through Facebook publications, as it ranked first in the classification of categories, and this is due to the fact that physical violence is a natural product of verbal violence.

Likewise, censorship on Facebook is very weak, which was revealed by the results of the respondents' answers.

Keywords: incitement, violence, social media, Facebook posts

Introduction

The forms of incitement on social networking sites vary, with the diversity and multiplicity of these different types of sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok and Snap), as well as the possibilities offered by these sites to their users to show their publications on these sites, and Facebook is one of the most widespread sites in Iraq in terms of discussion , exchange of ideas and putting forward positions, which makes verbal violence, hate speech and incitement clear in its contents, and affects society negatively, which increases the state of tension, congestion and psychological tension that leads to many cases of physical violence, as well as a decline in the state of acceptance of the other and an attempt to understand

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Topic One

The Methodological Framework

First: the research problem

The research problem is one of the most important and difficult steps for the researcher, as it does not crystallize from a mere idea that occurred in the mind of the researcher, but rather emerges through the feeling and sense that there is a real problem needs explanation and results to reach the goal that the scientific research aims to it. The problem is defined as “a subject surrounded by ambiguity, a phenomenon that needs to be explained, an issue in dispute, or a situation that needs corrective treatment and is caused by the conditions of society or the social environment, and it requires the collection of means and social efforts to confront and improve it” (Al-Mashhadani, 2019; 66). In light of the foregoing, the research problem revolves around a main question: What is the extent to which users of social media “Facebook” employ their publications to incite violence, and was the absence of censorship of its publications in Iraq a major reason for inciting violence?

Sub-questions emerge from the main question.

- What are the forms of incitement to violence on Facebook pages?1
- What are the types of violence that monitored the incitement on Facebook?2
- Explanation of the effectiveness of censorship of Facebook publications in Iraq?3

Second: The importance of research

The importance of the research comes from the increasing negative impact of social media publications on society, security and stability in general, which calls for official intervention to prevent their negative impact, similar to what is happening with the audio-visual discourse that is monitored by the Media and Communications Commission, especially after the decision of the Iraqi Court of Cassation in which considered Facebook is a means of publicity, and therefore the laws that apply to the traditional media discourse apply to it

Third: Research Objectives

- .-Identifying forms of incitement to violence on Facebook pages1
- .-Diagnose the most common types of violence on Facebook2
- .-Explanation of the effectiveness of censorship of Facebook publications in Iraq3

Fourth: Research Methodology and Tools

The researcher relied on the survey method because it suits the type of study that belongs to the descriptive research, and the researcher relied on the questionnaire tool to get to know the opinion of the public of Baghdad city of social media users as it is the most appropriate for the nature of the study, and the study relied on scientific observation and interview to complete the scientific research procedures.

Fifth: Previous studies

There are many studies that dealt with the subject of social media and the discourse of violence and hatred, including Arab, Iraqi and foreign ones, but what distinguishes this study

is that it deals with Facebook's discourse directly and delves into the problem of the absence of censorship of its discourse in Iraq.

-Study (Mahdi, 2019)

The study aimed to identify the concept of virtual identity and incitement to violence in the virtual world and to verify the multiplicity of virtual identities of the individual or not. The researcher adopted the survey method used in the descriptive research, using the questionnaire as a tool to study the research community, He chose the intentional sample of the study community represented by users of social networking sites (Facebook), and the size of the sample was (100) respondents.

One of the most important findings of the study is that the virtual identity is an extension of the real identity, and that the virtual world is a haven to escape from unwanted reality, thus making it a platform for incitement and virtual identity is a means of incitement and not a cause of it.

-Study (Al-Rahamna 20182)

The study aimed to identify the effects of hate speech through social networks, especially Facebook, and the impact of this type of speech on the system of religious, societal and cultural values, the researcher used the descriptive research method and relied on the questionnaire as a tool for collecting data related to the subject of the study, namely (Facebook users , Amman)

The sample size was (400) individuals, depending on the stratified random sample. The sample was distributed to the University of the Middle East, the University of Petra, the University of Jordan and a number of cultural associations, the study reached many results, including: The concepts of hate circulating through Facebook varied, as it came in the introduction, distortion or falsification of facts” followed by “not accepting with differences with others, and that social networking sites (Facebook) work to stir up strife among the components of society and lead to division and rivalry, and the society loses its internal cohesion, thus becoming weak in the face of crises.

Commenting on previous studies

The study of Mahdi and Al-Halfi agreed that Facebook plays an important role in spreading violent discourse and incitement to it and inciting sedition, and that this role depends primarily on the nature of the user and how to deal with him, and the two studies agreed that the spread of this type of discourse leads to disunity and weak social cohesion and this is what it calls for the presence of a supervisory body to curb these crimes, which are killing the world

Topic Two

The theoretical framework

First: Incitement: its concept and forms

1-The concept of incitement

Most of the definitions of incitement focus on the negative meaning of the term, especially the criminal dimension by focusing on incitement to crime, and since crime is a form of violence, and also incitement to violence

Incitement in language

The linguistic concept of incitement is to urge something and push towards it, and this meaning is provided by synonymous terms that carry the same significance, such as

exhortation, exhortation, encouragement, suspense, advocacy, and others. It may incite another person to do a good deed, or incite him to do an evil deed. Hence, the term “incitement” is considered neutral, and its nature is determined according to the intended use of it. (Massoud, 1964; 820).

Idiomatic incitement.

The Camden Principles¹ document devoted an entire article to the subject of incitement (Twelfth Principle) under the title "Incitement to hatred", in which it considered that the word hatred and hostility refer to strong and irrational feelings of contempt, enmity and hatred towards the target group (Principle 21.1-a). . It also considered that “the word “incitement” refers to statements about national, ethnic or religious groups that lead to an imminent risk of discrimination, hostility or violence against persons belonging to these groups” (Principle: 21.1-c). Here, the Camden Principles considered that incitement to hatred is a path to violence. (Article, 2009)

Mohammad Sobhi Saeed Sabah defines incitement as “inviting the public, directly or indirectly, to take an action against individuals or groups, using one of the public methods, provided that the speech is directed against specific individuals or groups, even indirectly, as in the case of using metaphors and expressions (Sabah, 2016; 9)

Legal incitement

The term incitement differs legally from its linguistic counterpart, as it depends on the negative dimension of the term, and in the old man-made legislations the definition of incitement was not specific, and what was meant was what is usually understood from this word and includes everything related to making a person act in a certain way as an act or action that has a confirmed effect. . (Rashid, 1974; 330)

Elements of incitement

Woroud Al-Fakhri argues that incitement is based on two elements: (Fakhri, 2017)

First: the material element, which is that the instigator contacts another person or persons and tries to influence their minds to push them to commit a specific crime. It is not enough for the accused to send a letter to another person inciting him to commit a crime, but rather it must be proven that there were discussions in this regard, i.e. the opportunity for other person to agree or refuse, and the material part of the crime is considered to have been achieved whether the other person is convinced and agreed to commit the crime or not.

As for the second element, is the moral element, as the instigator must have the intention and determination to attract those he incited to carry out an illegal act, with the instigator knowing the meaning of his words and phrases and the extent of their impact on person to whom they are directed

Western media thought does not set clear boundaries between incitement and propaganda, they said that incitement is a method of collective influence, and that propaganda is the dissemination of doctrines and ideas, while incitement is inciting people to do spontaneous action. The Eastern (socialist) media thought witnessed a heated and wide-ranging

¹ Camden Principles: These principles are concerned with freedom of expression and equality as fundamental rights for every individual but for legitimate expression and against expression that incites hatred, violence and discrimination, for more see the link below: <https://2u.pw/zu8Lv>

debate about the difference between propaganda and incitement, given that propaganda is a clarification of the problem, while incitement is a call to action, but this definition did not find popularity due to its lack of practical accuracy. (Jaed, 2006; 30)

It is clear from the foregoing that incitement is: mobilizing against the other, whether by word or deed, and incitement succeeds in fueling violence if it finds an appropriate environment that is affected by it and transforms it into violent behaviors that may start verbally and end with physical violence.

These definitions focused on the availability of intentionality and bad faith in the process of incitement by deliberately pushing the instigator towards violence, while we find through the discourse of the media, especially social networking sites, an inciting discourse in which there is no intentional factor, but rather is done out of awareness and ignorance, but it is equal in its result and effects, with the intentional inciting discourse, and therefore the laws and regulations must include both incitement (intentional and unintentional), with disparity in the actions taken by the judicial and regulatory authorities against the instigators, parties and individuals.

Forms of incitement

International jurisprudence distinguishes three forms of incitement classified as a crime: (Al-Minawi, 2010; 178)

1-Incitement to violence:

It takes the form of a direct or indirect invitation to a group or audience and prompting them to practice violence against individuals or groups, which the state must criminalize if this incitement actually leads to violence.

2-Incitement to hostility and hatred:

which needs an awareness-raising and social confrontation that creates a social rejection of this type of discourse, while the victims of this incitement retain their right to resort to civil justice or media treatment (response, denial or apology) through the media.

3-Incitement to discrimination and racism:

This type of incitement may result in violence that requires a move by the state to treat it criminally, and here the instigator is considered a partner in the crime, unlike incitement to discrimination that does not result in violence. It is not treated by criminal means, but rather it is sufficient to give the victim the right to request civil compensation (material and moral)

Some believe that incitement is not limited to a specific form, as it may take the form of actions, suggestions, or signals, or it may take the form of words or writing. What combines all these forms is that it addresses the perpetrator with the idea of the crime, aiming to induce him to commit it after cutting off the path of hesitation or abandonment. (Herga, 2021; 320)

Incitement to violence on social media (Facebook 4

The impact of social media, the most important of which is Facebook, is not limited to the social and economic aspect, but goes beyond it to playing a role in mass mobilization and creating a stressful political climate and massive popular revolutions, as happened in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria during the so-called Arab Spring revolutions. Despite all the positive roles of these media, the negative impact gradually began to spread deviant cultures and spread hatred, sectarianism, violence and incitement to violence and other negative matters.

(Al-Rahmana N., 2018, p. 22-23)

From the foregoing, it is clear that social media, in particular, Facebook, under study, played an actual role in broadcasting such a kind of discourse that carries violence and incitement to it among its folds, albeit indirectly and unintentionally, especially in societies that enjoy simple fertile land that interact and are drawn through their belief in loyalty and not thinking. rationally logically.

Agwan confirms that social networking sites are a double-edged sword that may become a means of inciting violence, especially with the difficulty of determining the identity of those behind these inciting pages (Agwan, 2021; 51)

It is clear that the response and interaction of the users opened the way for the expansion of the hidden pages that took the form of groups that move simultaneously and deal with one topic or put forward a specific position against a certain party, person or subject. These pages are now termed as electronic armies, and they are divided between two categories, the first is fake pages that are controlled automatically by certain algorithms in what is known as the method of controlling by robot, while the second category is pages with known identity, but they move under the direction of a specific party or person according to what he wants.

There is another type of electronic armies that Mustafa Abbas talks about, and its mission is to penetrate the pages of the opponents' websites, they are trained groups that work with a special agenda to promote a specific point of view through various Internet platforms to silence and discredit the opponents, among the practices carried out by electronic armies, is the promotion of rumors and lies and creating confusion (Rida, 2021, p. 90-91)

The effects of social media, including Facebook, call for not only prosecuting those who incite violence, bullying and spreading hatred, but rather to teaching users, starting with children, the principles of calm discourse and a sober style, and avoiding weak language, profanity, bullying and mockery, which provokes hatred in the souls and leads to verbal violence that may lead to physical violence. The researcher believes that immunization by matching behavior in the virtual world with its counterpart in the natural world is necessary in light of virtual communication occupying more space than natural communication in the lives of individuals (Culatta, 2021; 34).

In addition, the misuse of social media, including Facebook, leads to psychological and mental effects that turn into depression, anger or negativity in the outlook on life, which turns into violence with oneself and others, which is reflected in the used speech, which may incite violence or include contempt or verbal attack, and he calls for prevention by controlling the use of communication platforms, whether by the number of hours the user spends in dealing with these programs (Durlofsky, 2002;51)

The ethics of dealing with social networking sites, including Facebook, represents a set of values and ethical standards, upon which members of the local and global community are based, during their interactions through cyberspace, and among these controls are staying away from rhetoric and incitement, denying the existence of the other, marginalizing him, spreading sedition, using profanity, insulting to a religious or ethnic sect, inciting violence and accusing the other of treason and corruption

4-Monitoring the content of the media

Censorship, according to media literature, is a follow-up to the departure of the content
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of any media from controls, standards or the law, carried out by an authority that has the powers of deterrence in all its forms, as stipulated by law (Al-Shujairi, 2018; 300)

Censorship has a broad concept, and it is of two types: one is self-censorship, which stems from within the individual over himself, and therefore he is a watchdog over his actions, behaviors and manner (Hussein Ahmed Al-Tarawneh and Tawfiq Saleh Abdul-Hadi, 2011; 19)

As for the other type, what is known as the government sergeant: it works according to a team that monitors the content of the media and has the right to refer the institution that breaks the rules to the law or by legislation according to the powers it possesses by the ruling regime (Tahseen Al-Attar et al., 2007; 18-19)

The problem of censorship on Facebook in Iraq. 5

Censorship over the media in general in Iraq represents a point of apprehension and rejection on the part of the media and cultural department due to the confusion between the concept of censorship that guarantees freedoms and rights and censorship that restricts freedom, although the concept of censorship has been replaced by the term “media monitoring” practiced by the Media and Communications Commission in Iraq as a body concerned with regulating the media and communications, However, the effects of this monitoring include measures taken by the commission against media departments that violate the standards of media discourse, which receive strong opposition and accusations of restricting freedoms.

As for monitoring the discourse of the new media, the difficulty seems to be greater, given that this field is considered one of the innovations for which controls and legislation have not been established in many countries (Al-Moayad, 2022). According to Ali Al-Moayad, legislation on social media discourse has begun in some countries, but it is taking place at a much slower pace than the speed of the development of modern communication technologies, and that it requires agreements with Facebook and others of countries in order to the relative control the discourse and combat what provokes hatred and violence from it.

Ali Hussein Abdul Qadir Al-Moayad

Head of the Executive Authority of the Media and Communications Commission for the period from (May 2021-April 2022), in an interview conducted by the researcher with him on 4/10/2022

In this regard, Salem Mashkour (Mashkour, The Problematic of Facebook Censorship in Iraq, 2022) says that the political instability, the absence of institutional work and the competition for powers lost the opportunity for Iraq to conclude agreements with communication companies, especially Facebook and Twitter, to organize their work in Iraq, as countries such as the UAE And Turkey did, Facebook company has expressed its willingness to reach an understanding with Iraq, but it complained about the multiplicity of parties connected to it, claiming that it represents the Iraqi state in this matter, including the Ministry of Communications, the Prime Minister’s office or security agencies. It also goes beyond the financial aspect.

Although minds are drawn to the role of the Ministry of Communications in monitoring the content of websites, especially social media, particularly Facebook, the ministry denies the existence of censorship by it, except for cooperation with the Media and Communications Commission and the judiciary in the field of blocking websites, given that the ministry has a monopoly on the optical cable that passes through the Internet service to Iraq, ministry denies

the existence of any cooperation between it and communication companies, including Facebook, in the field of confronting hate speech and incitement to violence (Damad, 2022)

Despite the objection of many to the role of the Media and Communications Commission in monitoring the discourse of electronic media and banning the means of communication under the pretext that the Commission's mission is only technical side.

However, **Mohammed al-Asadi** confirms that the Commission's monitoring of audio-visual media discourse in accordance with its applicable law authorizes it to monitor social media discourse after a decision of the Court of Cassation, which considered Facebook as a media mean and is described as a new media, and therefore its discourse must be monitored in order to protect society from using it to incite to the violence directly or indirectly (Al-Asadi, 2022)

Mujahid Abu al-Hail asserts that monitoring social media discourse needs to develop the current regulation in order to add new elements related to the nature of the techniques it adopts, in addition to the ethical standards for all forms of media discourse, therefore, the authority has been working since 2021 to develop this regulation in line with the requirements imposed by the nature of new technologies, and the authority has held several meetings with specialists and stakeholders to formulate a list of integrated controls that meet the need (Abu al-Hail, 2022)

It seems that the regulation of media discourse controls for the authority needs parallel legislation that criminalizes some practices related to dealing with social media, including Facebook, since the current laws do not help the judge to decide even in cases related to audio-visual media because of an old publications law that dates back to the sixties of the last century, in addition, there are details about the use of electronic media and social media discourse.

Judge Rahim Al-Ugaili confirms (Al-Ugaili, 2022). That such a law is basically required, but criticisms include its loose formulations and undisciplined expressions that put everyone under the spear of tyranny and abuse in the name of the law, as well as prosecuting users of electronic devices for intentions and not criminality and exaggeration of cruelty in the penalties contained in it, as well as being free from many information crimes, which have been addressed by the laws of other countries keen to protect users from intrusions and infringements.

From the foregoing, it can be said that the technologies related to social media are moving at an accelerating pace, while the measures taken - if any - to regulate their discourse and prevent its negative use, including incitement to violence, are moving very slowly, which exacerbates the danger of these means to civil peace because of the looseness of its discourse providing a ground for promoting violence

Topic Three

Practical Side

The researcher conducted a survey on the forms of incitement to violence on social networking pages and its censorship in Iraq for a sample of users of these sites, specifically Facebook, here are the forms of incitement to violence on Facebook pages

Table (1) Forms of incitement to violence on Facebook pages

-Forms of incitement to violence on Facebook pages16

| | Recurrences | Percentage % | weighted mean | standard deviation | Relative significance |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Direct incitement (against specific parties or names) | 205.00 | %351. | | | |
| Indirect incitement (suggestions and gestures) | 195.00 | %847 | 1.51 | 0.50 | %7563 |
| Total | 400 | 100 | | | |

The field survey process of the respondents' answers revealed two forms of incitement to violence in Facebook publications. Direct incitement against specific parties or names topped the classification of categories by 205 recurrences and got %51.3, which is the highest percentage in this distribution, followed by the indirect incitement category in second place with use of suggestions or gestures was 195 recurrences and got a rate of %48.7, and the statistical treatment showed that identifying the forms of incitement to violence in social networking sites occupied a good importance in the point of view of the respondents, as the degree of relative importance reached %75.6% and a weighted arithmetic mean of 1.51 which is a good level between the weights that were used in the measurement have a standard deviation that represents a simple dispersion of the values from their mean of 0.5.

Table (2) Types of violence resulting from incitement on Facebook according to the respondents

Types of violence that monitored incitement to it on Facebook

| Category | Recurrences | Percentage% | weighted mean | standard deviation | Relative significance |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Verbal violence | 247.00 | %61.7 | | | |
| physical violence (physical) | 105.00 | %326. | 2.50 | 0.70 | %25.38 |
| Other | 48.00 | %12.00 | | | |
| Total | 400 | 100 | | | |

The field survey process of the respondents' answers resulted in three types of violence resulting from incitement in social networking sites, including Facebook. verbal violence topped the classification of categories by 247 recurrences and obtained a rate of %61.7, which is the highest percentage in this distribution, as this type was limited to the words used in Facebook publications, which is characterized by violence, insults and cursing, whose basis was inciting, followed by the second place in the category of physical violence at a rate of 105 recurrences and obtained a percentage of %26.3, as for the other types of violence, accounted for 12% and came third and last in the classification of categories, and the statistical treatment showed that the types of violence resulting from incitement in the publications of social networking sites, especially Facebook, occupied importance with a high relative degree of %83.25 and a weighted arithmetic mean of 2.50, which is A high level among the three weights used in the measurement (1, 2, 3) and a simple standard deviation representing the dispersion of values from their mean was 0.70

Table (3) The effectiveness of censorship on Facebook

-How effective is censorship on Facebook in Iraq19

| Effectiveness | Recurrences | Percentage % | weighted mean | standard deviation | Relative significance |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Strong | 15.00 | %3.7 | | | |
| Accepted | 73.00 | %318. | 1.26 | 0.51 | %41.92 |
| Weak | 312.00 | %78.00 | | | |
| Total | 400 | 100 | | | |

A weak category topped the classification of the categories of the effectiveness of censorship and came first with a rate of 312 recurrences and got the highest percentage in the distribution of %78, which is close to the result of the first table that there is no censorship on these publications, while the respondents who believe that censorship was acceptable accounted for %18.3 and came in the second place 73 recurrences, followed by a strong category with 15 recurrences, It got %3.7 and came last in the categories.

Conclusions

1-Verbal violence, especially speech violence, was the most intense in incitement through Facebook publications, as it ranked first in the classification of categories, and this is due to the fact that physical violence is a natural product of verbal violence.

2-It has been practically proven that censorship on Facebook is very weak, which was revealed by the results of the respondents' answers.

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