ABSTRACT

In this talk, comparisons will be drawn between representations of Islam and Muslims in three different fields. Firstly, Tony Blair’s New Labour government will be discussed, explaining how they portrayed Islam and Muslims between 2001 and 2007 in public speeches and statements. Examples will be provided to show how Tony Blair, Jack Straw, Gordon Brown, and other senior cabinet ministers routinely singled out Muslims as a specific problem, and how they reinforced lazy stereotypes about Muslims. Secondly, an investigation into news media’s representation of converts to Islam will be discussed, showing how they often depict converts as extreme, brainwashed and mentally unhealthy. Thirdly and finally, it will be shown that online Islamophobia is rampant on Twitter, with shocking comments being made by individuals every day that totalise, stereotype and even call for the extermination of Muslims. The Islamophobia that appears on all three platforms has consistent themes of depicting Muslims as outsiders, threatening, violent, extreme, sexist, and needing to be curbed for the integrity and security of ‘the West’. In light of these reoccurring Islamophobic tropes, the reality of the discrimination and harassment that Muslims encounter becomes more plausible, and the huge amount of ignorance and fear that needs to be challenged reveals itself.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Leon Moosavi is Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Liverpool. He is currently based in Singapore, establishing the country's first criminology degree on behalf of the University of Liverpool. His research interests include Islamophobia, conversion to Islam and Muslim community dynamics. He has been invited to present his research in several countries, has featured in mainstream media debates on numerous occasions and has been consulted by British police and government on community cohesion and counter terrorism issues.

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