Expression, Spread and Governance of Misogynistic and Anti-Feminist Discourse on Social Media

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Abstract

Misogynistic and anti-feminist discourse finds in social media a medium that is both large-scale mass communication and intimate peer network, as well as have been amplified by the amplification logic of algorithmic recommendation systems. Based on the examination of how this kind of discourse is expressed, disseminated and regulated across major social media platforms through application of Foucault's Discourse Theory, digital misogyny studies and platform-politics paradigm respectively. The following three interrelated arguments are developed as follows: First, Online misogynistic discourse exists along a continuous spectrum from direct harassment to subtle ideological infiltration; The second is that algorithm-based recommender Systems and the dynamic formation mechanisms of communities actively strengthen Anti-feminist information by exceeding individual users' actions; Third, current governance response measures - platform content moderation, legal framework system, Counter-discussion Strategies have structural flaws making it difficult to effectively address the systemic aspects of this issue. Based on this research, the following conclusions have been reached in relation to platform liability, feminist digital activism, etc., under the framework of political discussion online.

Keywords

Misogyny; Anti-feminist Discourse; Social Media; Content Moderation; Algorithmic Amplification; Manosphere; Platform Governance.

1. Introduction

Proliferation of misogyny and anti-feminism on social media Platforms is a significant development in current gender Politics that has consequences going Beyond the digital Environment in which it takes place to affect cultural Attitudes and Political Mobilisation as well As The lives Of Women And Gender Minorities In Real Life Contexts. Once restricted to marginalised groups and sub-cultural Spaces, it has gained mainstream recognitions and organisational strengths through the infrastructure provided by social media for organised misogynists before which they did not have such an organisation. Hashtag Campaigns, viral Memes, Coordinated Harassment Operations, Ideological Communities: These are all components of current Online Anti-Femininity, not just digital reproductions of previous misogynistic views but genuine New Forms with their own characteristics due to the unique functions of various Platforms where they emerge.

Therefore, the required theory has necessary depths to comprehend these varieties. The online misogyny phenomenon is neither a single individual nor the entirety of women's hatred history as one might expect; It manifests in many forms at different intensities and displays distinctly on their own merits, including verbal abuse, ridicule, etc., against people with different backgrounds or identities. Banet-Weiser has studied the connection between ordinary women's liberation movement and ordinary women's hate in a specific context; That is, as long as there are anti-feminist discourses on one side, they will be intensified under the

increasing publicity of women's liberation movements. In this way, the current dynamic brings about an active-reactive reaction characteristic in contemporary online misogyny; It is also ideologically more advanced than previous expressions of gender-based malice and harder to counter.

This paper investigates online misogynistic and anti-feminist discourse in three aspects: its form of expression and the scope of types; The mechanism by which it disseminates to achieve the current scale and organisational stability; And platform Governance Response, regulator, feminists and Activists development process, as well As Structural limitations that Responses Face. This study does not cover all issues of online misogyny; it aims to provide some theoretical support and suggest countermeasures based on this theory for specific forms or causes of online misogyny.

2. Theoretical Foundations

Based on these three theoretical foundations, this paper will examine the problems at hand. Foucault's account of discourse: As a mechanism for maintaining power-knowledge to construct social reality, position people in the relationship between society and oneself, regulate what can be talked about, thought or believed within this framework[1]. Applied in online misogamy, this tool can guide people's attention to the discursive structures constructing and maintaining gender hierarchy instead of direct objects of their anger at women. Anti-feminist discourse in cyberspace not only reproduces pre-established misogyny but also generates new sets of categorisations such as irrational feminists, deceptive women, and cuckolded men to interpret and question gender relations. Foucault's theory points out that the production aspect of discourse in networks has been given new meanings; It is not simply a ban on words but rather generates identities, Communities and subjectivities through such constructions.

Jane's initial research on online misogyny first introduced the concept of "e-bile" to explain an unusually hostile mode of discourse targeting women via digital means; she argues that this is not merely a modern-day variation but a wholly novel form of expression among its participants[2]. Jane's analysis shows how the technical means of social media, including anonymity, scalability, and ease of coordinating actions, provide Conditions for misogynistic expressions under which there is neither a historical nor an empirical basis comparable to this kind of harassment or ideological community building in traditional settings. The manosphere, loosely linked ecosystems of online communities organised around men's rights, incel ideology, pickup artistry and anti-feminism politics, is considered to be the most developed institutionalisation of this new generation, offering organisational support for diffuse misogynistic opinions into integrated ideological propositions and unified political actions.

Gillespie's accounts of platform guardianships provide the third theoretical basis for investigation; They examine the management of the contradiction between being an open communication Infrastructure for a medium and serving as a business enterprise where brand values depend on a suitable environment for advertisers' adhesion [3] . Based on Gillespie, content Management is an Ideological Activity carried out under a particular Economic and legal background; And it will influence People's Forms Of Communication According to their various Social Status or behaviour. Based on the above analysis, it can be seen that there is a structural defect in platform-based content regulation's response to misogynistic discourses; To eliminate extremely controversial content promptly but maintain users' interest through delicate hostile expressions, and other systems are not covered by such mechanisms yet.

3. Forms of Expression: Typology of Misogynistic Discourse Online

The online misogynistic and anti-feminist discourse exists across multiple forms of expression with one characteristic: broad scope in analysis as well as an obstacle for governance management. At the extreme ends of the scale, there are cases such as direct harassment (threatening with sexual violence) and coordinated piling-on targeted at individuals due to their gender; Doxing campaigns disseminating personal data for off-platform attacks have also emerged. Marwick and Caplan analysed the networked harassment from their perspective in 2018 to find out that these phenomena are organised via misogynistic online communities with a high level of coordination through technological means to generate stronger psychological pressure than the actual participation indicates[7]. Although the visible aspect of overt harassment has attracted research and governance attention away from subtle forms of misogamy that are more widespread but harder for individuals to identify or react against.

At the ideological extreme point is that constituted by manosphere Communities investigated by Ging, which has a more subtle form of anti-female discourse and power resides in its system[4]. Incel communities build intricate structures through which male sexual failure is attributed to the influence of feminism on society; as a result, they can provide members with an explanation for their own situations and direct aggression towards women and feminist movements. Red Pill discourse translates this ideological system into a conversion narrative, presenting it as an "awakening" of men from truths concealed by feminist theory; therefore, providing the manosphere with missionary content and recruitment rules. The Men Going Their Own Way communities have extended anti-feminist ideas to an all-encompassing way of life that rejects interaction with women altogether. They are not just collections of individual misandrists' ideas, but organisational discourse systems that create categories and narratives for participants to develop an understanding of gender interactions within society and one's own identity based on these discourses.

In the middle there are some middle-layer misogynistic remarks that fall between obvious harassment and systematic ideology; They include irony, memes, etc., as encoded forms containing hostility in hidden ways to offer justifications for such behaviour. According to Banet-Weiser's accounts, there is an instance of common misogyny that has been identified; This type of misandristic speech employs irony by giving the object of criticism (men) a self-critical platform within its structure to enter into this unequal system[6]. The #NotAllMen formation, anti-feminism humor that pretends to comment on the absurdities of feminism, and content positioning misandristic views as "commonsense" or scientific truths all operate in this kind of middle area; thus, we might call it ambient misogyny for mainstream social-media environment.

4. Mechanisms of Spread: Algorithmic Amplification and Community Formation

The scale of the Online Misandrih Discourse is already beyond what can be explained simply in terms of individuals' misandric beliefs; instead, its propagation across Platforms, aggregation into groups, and diffusion to many people depends. The two interrelated mechanisms are: Algorithmic recommendations and the Dynamics of Community Formation in Digital Environments.

According to Massanari, Toxic Technoculture has developed through platforms like Reddit; Under specific conditions of platform construction and algorithms for information dissemination, these communities may flourish without any form of official support from the platform[5]. Reddit's vote system and content-aggregation algorithm promoted high-

engagement contents through an in-group identification effect and hostile reactions towards outgroups; As such, it created a structural condition of misogynistic communities where emotion-driven metrics became more valued under algorithmic distribution. The platform's community architecture simultaneously established isolated spaces for developing anti-feminist ideas and ensuring their spread without public resistance, as well as a mechanism for quickly spreading the most popular content produced in these islands across all platforms based on user behaviour patterns optimised for attention rather than quality assessment.

The cross-platform Dynamics of misogynistic Discourse also contribute another layer to its spread which single-platform analyses may miss. Matamoros-Fernández has described platformled racism as a way to investigate the migration of hate-related content across multiple platform systems; In this case, the most evident reaction typically occurs on more permissive platforms; However, subtle differences may circulate relatively easily within traditional mainstream Platforms, creating an ecologys connecting diversified radicalisation routes through mainstream acceptance and extremist Communities [8]. Applied to misogynistic discourse, this approach can help explain why individuals might be exposed to anti-feminist information through mainstream social media environments; Why they will recommend such content based on its relevance; And thus gradually entering into manosphere communities with a significantly different ideological orientation that is far beyond the initial atmosphere of the mainframe platform.

According to Urman and Katz's computational study on the feminist and anti-feminist discourse in Twitter, there are asymmetries in their system; They found that non-cohesive subgroups of both camps have stronger cluster stability within themselves and better coordinated external alliances. These characteristics result from platform-based amplifiers due to varying sizes rather than real differences between communities [9]. Above results can serve as direct references for governance; the Organisational complexity and anti-feminism on these Online Communities provides them with Structural Advantage against Platform-based Content-Moderation Systems.

5. Discussion

Currently, the issue with the governance of misogynistic and anti-feminist discourse in social media has a structural problem that existing responses fail to tackle adequately; thus, theories from this paper should be used for analysis rather than solely technical or legal methods focusing on content regulation.

Currently, the platform content moderation system used to address online misogyny is inherently constrained by these limits according to Gillespie's account of platform custodianship[3]. Moderation systems are intended to eliminate content that violates the explicit terms of use while retaining some form of interaction generated by subliminal hostility-discourse, a Design Logic which systematically favours the mid-register of misogynistic expression over blatant harassment that can be easily detected through moderation. The result is a moderate landscape, with the most prominent and legally enforceable forms of online misogyny receiving governance attention; However, the ideological foundations that produce and sustain these misogynist attitudes and Communities remain largely untouched. The Council of Europe's Recommendation on Combating Sexist Hate Speech noted the deficiency in such governance to address systemic patterns of gendered speech and not just focus on individual content violations [10].

There is an obvious inconsistency between the principle of freedom of expression and the management of harmful speech when it comes to misogynistic Discourse that appears disguisably through other means within this context but ultimately harms others. The legal system established under traditional settings cannot effectively deal with the networked

distribution, anonymous nature of some online-harassment activities; Platform Rules also do not possess an equal status to these formal regulations. The feminist counter-discourse strategies, such as developing alternative platforms, using hashtags to resist misogyny, documenting harassment patterns, etc., all fall under this category; However, they do not aim to transform the platform's governance structure but adapt to the constraints of formal governance due to platform power distribution realities; Therefore, it can be seen from these examples that feminism has reached its own boundaries in terms of achieving substantive changes at present.

The further implications of the above analysis are that good governance of online misogyny needs to consider the platforms' architecture and algorithm-based system for amplification rather than focusing solely on individual expressions produced by these algorithms. Massanari's evidence shows that platform Design Choices can facilitate the formation of a Toxic Community; while Urman and Katz found through documentary research that organised anti-feminist Communities currently benefit from these platforms' structure, suggesting that meaningful governance needs to counteract the recommended Systems, the organization Architecture, and Economic Incentive Structure that enable misogynistic discourses to expand in size and organisational Power [5] [9].

6. Conclusion

Mistrustful attitudes towards women in social media develop gradually in users' minds, and thus it is difficult for them to complete simply deleting offensive content efficiently. There is a broad type spectrum of online misogyny, including coordinated harassment, systematic ideological control through humour coded as hostility; Therefore, only effective governance measures are available against the obvious manifestation forms, while the core problem remains unsolved. These discourses' spread paths include algorithmic amplification, community formation dynamic fluctuations, and cross-media-radicalisation ways to form an organisational capacity and a diffusion scope exceeding the explanatory power of individual users as well as content-moderation control limits.

Foucauldian discourse analysis, digital misogyny scholarship, and the theory of platform politics jointly offer an improved explanation for such issues that is inadequate in terms of pure technicality or only based on legal foundations. As a discourse construction rather than just a group of individuals' expression, as an algorithm-based reinforcement mechanism rather than a random phenomenon of platform Design, and as part of the process by which platforms exercise power rather than simply acting as impartial technologies - these are prerequisites for formulating countermeasures that cover the extent of the issue's Scale.

In the future, it is possible that further research will include long-term analysis of the formation of anti-feminist community phenomenon in response to platforms change; compare various countries' regulation mechanism for feminist online community, also evaluate practical effects of counter-discourse policy with experiment design method. Creating such an evidentiary foundation is necessary to advance from a reactive, content-based approach in governance towards more systematic measures that are required given the systemic nature of online misogyten.

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