

Conservative talk radio contributes to more hate of minorities, study says

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The participants and content of five prominent conservative talk-radio programs contribute to increasing hatred against certain minorities, according to the report entitled "Social Networks for Hate Speech" released on Wednesday.

The study, carried out by the National Hispanic Media Coalition and UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, analyzed the themes and content of "The Rush Limbaugh Show," "The Sean Hannity Show," "The Glenn Beck Program," "The Savage Nation" and "The John and Ken Show."

"Our study found that the ideological content of conservative talk radio has helped cultivate a social network built around talk radio hosts and their guests," NHMC President and CEO Alex Nogales said.

"This social network targets vulnerable groups in content that is spread across affiliated social media web sites. The result is an echo-chamber of voices, both online and off, that promotes hatred against ethnic, racial, religious groups and the LGBT community on social media web sites," Nogales said.

The investigation emphasized that 89 percent of the 102 guests on the five selected programs over a six-week period were white and 81 percent were men - like the hosts.

Among the 88 issues of interest identified during the broadcasts studied between April 2 and May 14, 2010, immigration was by far the most frequently discussed, occupying 23.9 percent of the time analyzed.

Regarding the language used, the programs referred to undocumented immigrants as "illegals," and the comments about Muslims frequently associated them with terrorism.

"It doesn't surprise me that this type of dialogue is continuing on the radio waves because in the United States we tend to greatly protect the right to expression, albeit at the cost of some of the words being said on the air being greatly harmful to certain populations," Jorge-Mario Cabrera, spokesman for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, told Efe.

Cabrera, as a result of his activism, was the victim of incitements to harassment by the hosts of The John and Ken Show.

Hosts John Kobylt and Ken Chiampou, in criticizing a bill in the state legislature to offer economic aid to undocumented students in California, announced on the air Cabrera's cell phone number and invited their listeners to call him and express their opinion.

As a result, Cabrera received about 450 calls that included threats, vulgarities and insults.

"Perhaps that is the No. 1 lesson for those of us who may be victims of these attacks: we can't remain silent and we have to trust that the good values and the sensible people in our community are going to silence those foolish voices," he added. EFE

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