From Westernisation To Wild Westernisation: The Power Of Social Media

Batılılaşmadan Vahşi Batılılaşmaya: Sosyal Medyanın Gücü

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century draws attention as the history of rapid social changes as well as technology. The phenomenon of westernisation as an important expression of development and modernisation in the historical process is accepted as an important scope of human rights and freedom of expression. The fact that the newspaper, as the first mass media, began to reach people in the 17th century brought the expanding effect of freedom of expression on the masses to the agenda. During the following 300 years, the means of reaching the masses have continuously developed and diversified. Although the limits of freedoms vary from society to society, the gains have been recognised as a universal necessity with the concepts of human rights, the right to information and freedom of expression. The important breaking point is the unprecedented power and function of the Internet, which is characterised as the 5th power, in reaching the masses. With people becoming producers in a medium for the first time, a media medium has faced new problems brought about by 'limitlessness'; the internet has not been able to guarantee the maintenance of a democratic environment. The aim of this study is to develop a discussion on how the ideal of freedom of expression and democracy in the Westernization process has turned into a brutal power in social media. In this direction, the study is a source where current problems related to social media are presented together. It is examined how Westernization, which means reaching the level of development of western countries around the world, has revealed experiences with enriching media channels and turned into a "Wild West" environment. While offering important perspectives on social media, the study aims to bring to the fore that the sanctity of human life is as important as the unlimited freedom of these platforms. This study invites readers to a discussion on social media.

Keywords: Westernisation, Wild Westernisation, Social Media, Human Rights, Freedom of Expression.

ÖZ

21. yüzyıl teknolojinin olduğu kadar hızlı toplumsal değişimlerin de tarihi olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Tarihsel süreçte gelişmenin, çağdaşlaşmanın önemli bir ifadesi olarak batılılaşma olgusu insan hakları ve ifade özgürlüğünün önemli bir kapsayanı olarak kabul görmektedir. İlk kitle iletişim aracı olarak gazetenin 17. yüzyıldan itibaren insanlara ulaşmaya başlaması, ifade özgürlüğünün kitleler üzerinde genişleyen etkisini gündeme getirmiştir. Takip eden 300 yıl boyunca kitlelere ulaşma araçları sürekli gelişmiş ve çeşitlenmiştir. Özgürlüklerin sınırları her ne kadar toplumdan topluma değişiklikler gösterse de; kazanımlar, insan hakları, bilgi edinme hakkı ve ifade özgürlüğü kavramlarıyla evrensel bir gereklilik olarak kabul edilmiştir. Önemli kırılma noktası ise, 5. güç olarak nitelenen internetin kitlelere ulaşmada benzeri görülmemiş gücü ve işlevidir. İnsanların ilk kez bir mecrada üretici konumuna geçmesiyle bir medya mecrası "sınırsızlığın" getirdiği yeni sorunlarla yüzleşmiştir; internet demokratik bir ortamın sürdürülmesinin teminatı olamamıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Batılılaşma sürecinde ifade özgürlüğü ve demokrasi idealinin, sosyal medyada nasıl vahşi bir güce dönüştüğü üzerinde bir tartışma geliştirmektir. Bu doğrultuda çalışma sosyal medyaya ilişkin güncel sorunların birarada sunulduğu bir kaynak özelliği taşımaktadır; dünya genelinde batı ülkelerinin gelişmişlik seviyesine ulaşılmasını ifade eden Batılılaşmanın, medya alanında zenginleşen mecralarla nasıl tecrübeler ortaya koyduğu ve adeta bir "Vahşi Batı" ortamına dönüştüğü irdelenmiştir. Çalışma, sosyal medya üzerine önemli perspektifler sunarken, insan yaşamının kutsallığının söz konusu platformların sınırsız özgürlüğü kadar önemli olduğunu göz önüne getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, okuyucuları sosyal medyaya dair bir tartışmaya davet etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Batılılaşma, Vahşi Batılılaşma, Sosyal Medya, İnsan Hakları, İfade Özgürlüğü.

Introduction

In modern democracies, individual freedoms have acquired a special value and importance; they are no longer subject to interference by the state or anyone else. However, in a civilised and democratic nation, the meaning of such a high and valuable individual freedom cannot be understood in the unlimited sense of the word freedom. The freedom in question is the freedom of the social and civilised man. Therefore, when considering individual freedom, the common good of each individual and finally of the whole nation and the existence of the state must be taken into account. The rights and freedom of the other and the common good of the nation limit individual freedom.

Atatürk

The media has evolved into a virtual village where anyone can become a journalist, make his/her voice heard and show himself/herself to the world with the introduction of the Internet. The birth of the press in the West, freedom of expression and the realisation of polyphony are accepted as the source of strength of democratic societies. In this context, it is possible to say that human rights and freedom of expression are the achievements of the steps taken by humanity in the process of westernisation or modernisation. With Web 2.0 technology enabling unlimited global interaction in communication, people's media usage practices have moved to a different stage; people have reached unprecedented freedom and opportunities in communication possibilities and access to information.

In this respect, social media tools have provided a platform for different forms of freedom of expression for all segments of society (Şen & Şen, 2015: 133). However, the freedom of sarcastic, offensive and hateful expressions on social media - while the same expressions cannot find a place in traditional media in terms of journalistic ethics - is almost normalised in the virtual environment where anyone can be a content producer. Therefore, in addition to the deterioration in professional ethical codes that develop in parallel with journalism today, it is also necessary to mention the erosion of social ethical values.

According to We Are Social (2024), 5.4 billion of the 8.8 billion world population are social media users. The fact that this new medium has radically changed the direction of communication has increased the importance of ethics. New media has also transformed the social functions of the media. What needs to be taken into account in the user-based structure of Web 2.0 is the ground for the establishment of the cult of amateurism (Keen, 2007), the rise and diversification of implicit or explicit violence propaganda in channels where millions of personal truths are presented, the development of a common 'look at me' cyber culture while no progress can be made in cultural diversity, and the proving of the contagious effect of prejudiced comments. In other words, this brings up new conditions that need to be addressed in the world of 'everything everywhere at every moment'.

In this context, the phenomenon of violence, which is the subject of many studies, experiences two different phases as "before social media and after social media": Users eliminate the possibility of physical harm by experiencing violence in the digital environment (Bayrak, 2017:36). Therefore, hate speech, which manifests itself in the form of exaggeration, distortion, insinuation or innuendo in traditional media, has started to take place directly as swearing, insult and humiliation in the active participation environment of new media and has become popular (Öztekin, 2015: 926).

With the introduction of social media, the limitations of time, space and feedback have been overcome in the face of 300 years of traditional media history and habits. The aim of this study is to develop a discussion on how the ideal of freedom of expression and democracy in the Westernization process has turned into a brutal power in social media. In this direction, the study is a source where current problems related to social media are presented together. The study is a qualitative research; qualitative research is a method that seeks to understand the form of the problem in its natural setting through an inquiring

and interpretive approach to the problem being studied (Baltacı, 2019). Events and phenomena are not separated from their original context or reality, and efforts are made to preserve them in the form in which they occurred (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this purpose firstly, the relationship between the phenomenon of Westernization and the media in the historical process will be discussed. Following a comprehensive review of the literature, the potential of the nature of the social media environment, which offers wider opportunities for freedom of expression than ever before in history, will be discussed through current threats. In this context, national and international studies will be discussed together with current data. The goal is to emphasize a human-centered framework in social media technologies. The study aims to highlight the need for new theoretical frameworks in the field while referencing existing theories and concepts. Unlike traditional media, social media is not subject to any editorial control process, and participation and production in social media far exceeds that of traditional media. As production increases, so does responsibility. The study offers a vision of how freedom of expression, as an ideal of Westernization, has gone beyond its idealized potential with social media.

Westernization Phenomenon And Media Relation

The concept of Westernisation, in its most general sense, can be defined as the common expression of political, social and cultural initiatives undertaken by other countries and societies in order to reach the level of development produced by and represented by Western civilisation (Tekin, n.d.). Westernisation is a concept with similar definitions such as modernisation, modernisation or innovation. The definition of Westernisation also necessitates the existence of a single and unique subject to whom an unquestionable superiority is attributed and which must be accepted and approved by the rest of the world. This subject is none other than Western civilisation, which was shaped in Europe and North America as a result of a series of political, social, cultural, economic and scientific developments that began to emerge in

the 16th-17th centuries and intensified in the 19th century (Tekin, n.d; Hanioğlu, n.d).

It is concluded that the modernity constructed in the West is a new world shaped by the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Revolution, nation-state, republican regime, social changes, class struggles, and so on. The values of capitalist economy are decisive in Westernisation (Dellaloğlu, 2018: 11-12, 14). After the acceptance of the superiority of Western civilisation, countries and societies outside this civilisation had to either completely surrender to the West and lose their identity or maintain their existence and become like the West. The second option was followed in the Ottoman and Russian empires as the first examples of the Westernisation process (Tekin, n.d.).

In Europe and America, the source of the phenomenon of Westernisation, the ideas that laid the foundations of modernisation since the 17th century have enabled journalism to develop with the mission of being the voice and power of the people. In the formation phase of modernity, especially with the invention of the printing press, the printing and circulation of a large number of publications criticizing Scholastic thought and defending positive thought has an important place in the formation of free thought. One of the most important functions of the press and broadcasting organs characterized as media is that they prepare the ground for the expression and formation of this free thought (Gündüz, 2009: 6). Therefore, Western civilisation, which has a significant historical accumulation on human rights and freedom of expression, has also shaped and developed the history of the media. In this respect, the USA, which accepted freedom of the press and freedom of expression as the first amendment to its constitution, and the UK, where the first struggles against censorship were fought to achieve these gains, can be considered the homeland of the media. The first flag raised against censorship was the famous English poet John Milton's 'Areopagitica of Milton', published in 1644. John Milton found censorship inappropriate

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and defended the freedom of the press with the following words: 'To kill a human being is to destroy a sentient creature. But to destroy a valuable printed matter is to destroy consciousness itself'. While the struggle for freedom of the press began in England in the 1600s, it would take another 200 years, i.e. the period of Mahmut II, when westernisation movements accelerated in the Ottoman Empire, to see the press on Turkish soil (Atmaca, 2019:16).

Although the focus of this study is not to analyse the reasons for the late introduction of the newspaper in Turkey in detail, it will be useful to present the general picture of the process. Until the end of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire, the most powerful state in Asia and Europe, had difficulty in accepting the superiority of the West and this process took a long time. In the late 17th and 18th centuries, the defeats against Europe led some Ottoman intellectuals to the idea of counteracting the West by acquiring its weapons and techniques. In the 18th century, a period of rapprochement between the Ottomans and Europeans began, ambassadors were sent and developments in the West were examined on site (Önsoy, 1989: 365-367). The innovation of this process, which started gradually with the Tulip Period, was the establishment of the printing press in the Ottoman Empire. The period of Sultan Mahmut II, when the Westernisation movements intensified, was the first period in the history of Turkey when the first newspaper started to be published, albeit by the state. Whether expressed as Westernization or Modernization, the means of communication have a special importance in the progress of development in all countries of the world.

Looking at the historical process of media in the West, the oldest news paper, which can be considered the ancestor of the newspaper, is shown as Acta Diurna (daily events) published in Rome by Julius Caesar in 59 BC (Campbell, w.date, p. 265). The world's first news agency, Havas, was established in France; the electric telegraph was established in the USA; and circulations of millions in the press were reached in the USA with new printing technologies. Radio and television technology is also a product of western civilisation. In the 20th century, internet technology, which gathered all mass communication tools under a single roof, changed the direction of communication and created a brand new medium called new media. Developed in 1969 in the USA for military purposes to connect the defence of the country, this technology is a universe where the power of individuals to communicate their thoughts has become unlimited, especially with social media channels that are widely used around the world.

As a matter of fact, The Economist magazine expressed the new values of the new millennium on the cover of its issue dated 6 May 2017 with the titles 'The world's most valuable resource, Data and the new rules of competition'. The cover image of the magazine featured the names of technology companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft. On the other hand, it has been revealed that the United States, which hosts Facebook, Twitter (X), Google, Amazon, Yahoo, and four-fifths of the world's data is transmitted directly through its continent, monitors all communication with the National Security Agency (NSA)[1]. The National Security Agency (NSA), one of the biggest state secrets of the USA, is a gigantic shelter of electronic communication on this planet. Former

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1 In 2013, the National Security Agency (NSA), created in 1952 from a unit of the US Department of Defence, quietly inaugurated the Utah Data Center, the largest computer centre of recent years. The NSA's activities also include the Echelon Programme, a worldwide communications interception system. This programme is a joint system of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The European Parliament established a commission to investigate the espionage activities of this programme. The Commission's report made the following observation: 'There can no longer be any doubt about the existence of a world-wide communications interception system, which is a joint operation of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Aust & Ammann, 2018).

NSA chief William Binney said that the real danger is that America presents itself to the outside world as a democratic country, but inside it is still a surveillance country. Although not included in any membership agreement, probably all of humanity has long been a member of the worldwide NSA community. Humanity voluntarily contributes by participating in Google, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon - Big Brother's technological and legal allies (Aust & Ammann, 2018).

The Power Of Social Media: The Emergence Of Producer Identity

It may not be easy for millennials to imagine a world without the internet and social media. Developments in the field of communication have created a new type of media called 'social media'. The main characteristics of social media types, which can be listed as blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, video sharing networks, audio and music sharing networks, location-based tools, social signalling networks and virtual worlds according to the purpose of use and content type, are that they are more interactive, have high opportunities to reach large masses and are open to manipulation (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017: 98). Social Media and User Generated Content can be expressed as two complementary phenomena. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 60-61) consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the evolution of Social Media. Web 2.0, a term introduced in 2004, marks a shift in how the World Wide Web is used.

The social media era that started with Web 2.0 turned into the information-oriented 'semantic web' with Web 3.0 from 2010 onwards (Durukal & Armağan, 2019). As of 2020, a virtual reality-oriented digital world started with Web 4.0. In this digital era where technology has become wearable and devices can connect with each other, it can be said that humanity needs to be aware of the dangers it faces. In particular, Artificial intelligence is at the center of discussions with its potential for multidimensional threats ranging from manipulation and disinformation to foreseen and unforeseen threats.

As of 2024, Professor Geoffrey Hinton, who laid the foundation of today's AI technology, updated his predictions about the possibility of artificial intelligence bringing the end of humanity and announced that the probability of this risk being realised in the next thirty years is up to 20 percent (TRTHaber, 2024).

The problems experienced in this process, which can be expressed as a breaking point in media history, will be discussed under the headings of hate speech, self-presentation culture, amateur cult, addiction, artificial intelligence effects, lynch culture, privacy and security.

Hate Speech

In this study, it is considered important to present a perspective on the phenomena that have come to the agenda as a result of social media use and have been the subject of various studies. The first of these is hate speech. At this point, it is necessary to draw attention to the phenomenon of migration as an important result of global changes. The United Nations (UN) International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that there are 281 million international migrants globally, and the number of displaced persons has reached 117 million (Arslan, 2024). When it comes to hate speech -or cyberbullying as a concept produced in accordance with the medium-, what needs to be asked is where the limit is in the context of freedom of expression. Indeed, there is a need for a balance between freedom of expression and the security of individuals.

Working out what is 'dangerous speech' in the age of mass migration and the internet is not easy, and the Brandenburg criterion of 'imminence'[2] should be modified accordingly. Then there is verbal aggression, intimidation and harassment directed at an individual or individuals: speech directly to, not simply about. Even if

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2 The "imminence" criterion of Brandenburg, established in the 1969 Brandenburg v. Ohio case by the United States Supreme Court, defines the limits of free speech. It states that for speech advocating violence or illegal actions to be punishable, two conditions must be met: The speech must create a high likelihood of illegal actions being carried out immediately and the speech must aim to incite illegal actions (Ash, 2016).

the result is not physical injury, bullying with threatening words and abusive gestures clearly can do psychological harm to its victims. You can't take a photograph of the inner cuts and bruises, but who would doubt that in many cases serious damage is done? Our ordinary life experience, and a library of memoirs and novels, tell us this is so. Even the American First Amendment jurisprudence, which does not criminalise hate speech, outlaws 'fighting words'. The definition has been traditionally confined to those delivered 'face-to-face', but what exactly is face-to-face in the age of Facebook? (Ash, 2016: 215-216).

Hate speech is the starting point of the process leading to hate crime, i.e. the expression of intolerance and intolerance that paves the way for hate crime (İnceoğlu & Sözeri, 2012: 24). Therefore, hate speech damages mutual respect and the culture of tolerance and prevents the fair evaluation and consideration of various viewpoints. Hate speech also harbours potential violence. One of the functions of hate speech is to prepare the ground for violence. It does this by creating a network of various beliefs or judgements (Ağlan & Şensever, 2010: 16-17). Since social media channels do not depend on a structure of ownership and control as in traditional media, they allow individuals to express themselves freely and uncontrollably. At this point, hate speech on social media is rapidly spreading (Yaşa & Öksüz, 2020: 1392). However, the following warning by Reuters clearly describes the basic approach to this issue: A person's race, colour, ethnic or religious affiliation should only be mentioned if it is relevant (Ağlan & Şensever, 2010:18).

The classification of hate speech can be analysed under six headings: hate speech based on beliefs and sects, race-based hate speech, gender-based hate speech, political hate speech, hate speech against foreigners and immigrants, hate speech against the disabled and various diseases (Binark

& Çomu, 2011). A striking example: On 10 October 2012 the Canadian teenager Amanda Todd committed suicide after years of cyber-bullying and harassment (Bruhn, 2013). On the other hand, online games cause young people to carry violence, bullying and harassment to real life[3]. It seems that more studies will be needed on the effects of cyberbullying on children and adolescents.

There are two different approaches to the evaluation of the relationship between hate speech and freedom of expression. The first approach argues that freedom of expression should be unlimited as long as it does not incite violence and that limits would narrow this right. The second approach, on the other hand, argues that hate speech has destructive consequences that individuals cannot fight alone and therefore should not be considered within the scope of freedom of expression. Moreover, excluding hate speech from freedom of expression and prohibiting it would also guarantee freedom of expression itself. Since the fear, exclusion and otherisation created by hate speech aims to silence those who are different, the meaning of freedom of expression narrows and harms the use of this freedom (Kaymak, 2010: 273, 276).

In social media, humiliating expressions written by ordinary people under any post are frequently seen. However, it is seen that famous names respond quickly to situations of humiliation and discrediting at the legal level. The most recent of the numerous examples is the comment written by a 73-year-old man under a news article published on Facebook about singer Yavuz Bingöl: 'Your understanding of freedom is that much, that's how much an ox's head works'. Bingöl filed a criminal complaint on the grounds that his personal rights had been attacked (CNN Türk, 2024). These discourses, which are considered by some as a part of freedom of expression or an 'act

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3 For this reason, the Republic of Turkey banned the game Roblox (Kalkandelen, 2024). On the other hand, a young man in Eskişehir stabbed 6 people in a live broadcast by turning the violence he saw in games into reality (Cumhuriyet, 2024; Milliyet, 2024). Previously, it is known that games such as mavi balina (blue whale) have driven children to suicide (BBC News Turkish, 2019).

of venting', have become a natural part of social networks, blogs, microblogs, forums, participatory dictionaries, photo, video and music sharing sites, digital game sites, and reader comments (Öztekin, 2015: 926).

Among online dictionaries, Ekşi Sözlük is one of the rare social media environments that develops a control mechanism against hate speech, but it is also one of the environments where hate speech is widely produced and easily circulated. Hate speech can be generated on almost any subject such as individuals, institutions, countries, nations, religions, sects, etc. (Öztekin, 2015: 931). However, hate speech and hate crimes pose a threat to the principle of equality in a democratic society and increase discrimination and marginalisation. The structure of social media, which enables the production of content by users, expands the debates specific to these platforms.

Self-Presentation Culture (Look At Me!)

With the cyber culture created by social media, it is almost as if it qualifies a stage of 'civilisation'. Cyber culture is the cultural rules and behaviour that have developed due to the widespread computer networks of the modern world and the reality of online interaction. In this context, one of the new concepts is the 'look at me' or 'self-presentation' culture born from social media. Sherry Turkle (1995) argues that the influence of computers and virtual environments has led to a decentralized and multiple sense of identity. She states that trends in computer design, artificial intelligence, and virtual environment experiences confirm a dramatic shift in our concepts of self and the world. Turkle refers to this as a second identity. It is clear that social media has an important function in strengthening globalisation and capitalism through communication and interaction. Before social media, individuals did not provide so much information about their private lives to people they did not even know; humanity has evolved into an age where digital screens have turned into showcases.

In order to explain this change, it would be appropriate to refer to Zygmunt Bauman's following statement: "In fact, today we are not so much afraid of someone entering our private lives and exposing us, on the contrary, we are actually afraid of being prevented from sharing our information" (Aust & Ammann, 2018). The point where the desire to be visible on global platforms has reached; the desire for lives to be watched by everyone on purpose is a contradiction of the understanding of freedom specific to the 21st century.

With respect to the social dimension of Social Media, the concept of self-presentation states that in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them. On the one hand, this is done with the objective of influencing others to gain rewards (e.g., make a positive impression on your future in-laws); on the other hand, it is driven by a wish to create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity (e.g., wearing a fashionable outfit in order to be perceived as young and trendy) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61-62).

As Uluç and Yarcı point out, social media has rapidly spread among young people, allowing individuals from all corners of the world to showcase themselves on different platforms. While it facilitates intercultural interaction, some scientists view the impact of social media positively, while others see it negatively (2017: 96). However, at some point the desire to 'share' can become almost hysteria.

Relationships are strained or ended because of misinterpreted tweets. Reputations are damaged by ill-considered updates. These are not hypothetical scenarios — they're the reality for a lot of folks who have fallen victim to their own oversharing. And the risks aren't just external. When we're always performing for an audience, always curating our experiences for public consumption, we're losing touch with our selves...This constant curation of our lives for public consumption creates a dangerous feedback loop. We don't value experiences for their intrinsic worth — we value them

solely for their shareability. We judge our lives by how they look to others, not by how they feel to us (Westenberg, 2024).

While social media enriches communication opportunities, it is a surprising fact that human interaction with human beings has evolved in a negative direction. Social media is a different universe that makes us see what has not been seen before, shows us the unknown and brings us closer to the unreachable. It would not be wrong to say that people are perhaps alienated from themselves in this universe.

Linch Culture

Another problem related to social media platforms is the so-called "lynch culture"[4]. Levent Eraslan evaluated these behaviours, which are aimed at humiliating, embarrassing, targeting individuals or institutions, and attacking the other party, as social media aggression; The consequences of behaviours such as image manipulations and deliberate publication of fake news, mocking under the name of humour on social media users can range from the slightest sadness and shame to suicide in young people (Sakarya, 2020). Tamer Bayrak's (2017) study on violent messages on Twitter showed that individuals can exhibit behaviours that are considered disgraceful in society through social media.

The content and results of 18 messages selected from Twitter show that the traditional act of violence is transformed into digital violence in social media. In this context, some individuals who acquire virtual identities in the digital world use expressions that they cannot express in real social life. The main reason for this is that user individuals have the chance to hide their identities. It is observed that individuals who use their social, economic and cultural accumulation in social life and live in socially acceptable norms take on a highly variable personality in the context of new media technologies (Bayrak, 2017: 44).

The 'content producer identity' created by Web 2.0 technology also has the power to direct public opinion. According to a study by the University of Wisconsin, insulting comments by internet users (trolls) in articles published online contribute to polarising the opinions of readers (Foucart, 2013). Another study by the University of Pennsylvania proved that an engaged minority can change the opinion of the majority; the increasingly widespread use of social networks facilitates sudden changes in social consensus (Centola et al, 2018).

Addiction Potential

The contribution of social media to the socialization of humanity expresses a contradiction. At this point, an important problem caused by social media is its potential to "develop addiction". Different studies reveal clear, common results regarding addictions: Social media addiction scores decrease with increasing age, but increase slightly in retirement. The highest social media addiction scores were found among students aged 14-18 and unemployed people. There is a positive relationship between social media addiction scores and the time spent on social media; it is higher in singles than in married people and in women than in men (Uslu, 2021: 370; Güney & Taştepe, 2020: 183; Bilgilier, 2018: 368). Sometimes, communication is only used to maintain the state of 'being connected' and social ties without exchanging any meaningful information. Therefore, the content of the communication and the message may be secondary (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017: 98).

The negative impact of social media on attention and focus spans is a hotly debated topic. It is known that the increased amount of time the human mind now spends on short and engaging images reduces the brain's capacity to absorb voluminous information. Indeed, scientists have announced that the intelligence level (IQ) of humanity, which they have been measuring since 1932, has decreased for the first time in 100 years.

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[4] The concept of lynch culture does not correspond to "cancel culture" used in English-speaking countries. "Cancel culture" is based more on the idea of boycotting a person and ensuring social justice (Romano, 2020).

While artificial intelligence technologies continue to increase their functionality in the service of humanity; current research draws attention to the fact that the decline is especially in the 18-22 age group (Dworak et. al., 2023). On the other hand, the fact that technology, which has reached the peak of its time with AI, has become an indispensable part of daily life, has also brought new psychological problems. Social media can cause nomophobia, orthopedic problems, inability to stay away from social networks, reduced time allocated to human relations, social isolation, attention disorder, internet addiction, decreased self-esteem, isolation, depression, physical ailments, photolurking and many other physical, social and psychological disorders. These social media-induced disorders directly affect the individual's inner world, interaction within the family, communication with other people and, accordingly, productivity in professional life. In addition to the disorders it causes, social media can also trigger or exacerbate existing disorders in some cases. One of these disorders is alexithymia, which is expressed as emotional deafness or difficulty in expressing emotions (Kalaman et al., 2019: 47-48)

Amateur Cult

Another paradox of the online world is that it creates a breeding ground for misinformation and the cult of amateurism. In the digital world, misinformation sophisticates threats with brand new concepts, while user-generated content contributes to the unlimited spread of these falsehoods. The new media, which offers a miracle-like opportunity compared to traditional media, has started an unprecedented period of opportunity by eliminating all control mechanisms in traditional media.

According to American internet critic Andrew Keen (2007: 17), one person's truth becomes as "true" as anyone else's. Today's media is dividing the world into billions of personalized truths, each seemingly equally valid and valuable.

In today's self-broadcasting culture, where amateurism

is celebrated and anyone with an opinion, however ill-informed, can publish a blog, post a video on YouTube, or change an entry on Wikipedia, the distinction between trained expert and uninformed amateur becomes dangerously blurred. When anonymous bloggers and videographers, unconstrained by professional standards or editoria! filters, can alter the public debate and manipulate public opinion, truth becomes aCcommodity to be bought, seid (Keen, 2007:1).

As Andrew Keen argues in his book "The internet is not the answer" (2015), "far from being a democratising force in society, the internet has only amplified global inequities". Based on Keen's ideas, it is seen that the mass media, which is an instrument of capitalism, serves neoliberalism, which is considered a brutal stage of capitalism, in the process of its evolution into new media.

The more important truth about the internet, Keen thinks, is that it has evolved into a global machine for creating a world characterised by vast and growing inequality. "The error that evangelists make," he writes, "is to assume that the internet's open, decentralised technology naturally translates into a less hierarchical or unequal society. But rather than more openness and the destruction of hierarchies, an unregulated network society is breaking the old centre, compounding economic and cultural inequality, and creating a digital generation of masters of the universe. This new power may be rooted in a borderless network, but it still translates into massive wealth and power for a tiny handful of companies and individuals." (Naughton, 2015).

Today, social media, which has dramatically transformed the communication and interaction spheres of both individuals and societies, is being banned by many Western countries due to its negative effects on the development of children and adolescents, indicating the magnitude of the danger.

Privacy And Safety

The term privacy cannot be said to be a term used in ancient times; the importance of privacy has emerged with the onset of modernization and the individual's participation in society. With the

modernization process, the boundary between people's private and public spheres has become clearer (Semi-Türkoğlu, 2018: 170)

It can be said that social media is the area where the biggest change in humanity's perception of privacy is seen. Many behaviors that could be interpreted as exhibition, flaunting or vulgarity before social media have become normalized in this medium. Although how social media is effective in people's communication and how it shapes their relationships is a research topic in itself, the process requires caution against threats that have diversified and become more complex with artificial intelligence.

With digitalization, the possibility of unlawful actions that can be carried out using personal data is increasing. The principles of privacy are insufficient to protect the rights on personal data. The right to protection of personal data should be considered as a fundamental right in itself and should be handled more comprehensively (Varol, 2023: 46).

At a time when many devices can connect to the Internet, the protection of privacy has become a priority issue. In his article "Your Facebook Profile Makes Marketers' Dreams Come True", tech journalist Eliot Van Buskirk points out that social networks seem free, but we pay for them in ways we may not readily realize. The rich personal data many of us enter into these networks is a treasure trove for marketers. Media analysts remind us of the value of face-to-face communication (Christians et al, 2006: 125). New media presents unique risks and opportunities, with online situations often carrying ethical consequences. While cyberspace will eventually be regulated, the specifics of how this will happen and who will benefit or suffer remain uncertain (Davis et al, 2009: 8). On the other hand, the potential of artificial intelligence, whose area of use and capacity are being developed day by day, to assist in malicious uses should not be ignored. Various examples of this are seen in fake advertisement videos on YouTube, which are

usually created by copying the images and voices of celebrities (AA, 2023).

Artificial Intelligence Impacts

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly expanding its uses, from video creation to painting and song composition. However, these developments have raised concerns rather than benefits for human labor and power. Especially the power of "deep fake" content to instantly spread manipulation and disinformation to the masses on social media is a threat mechanism in itself in the "post-truth era".

According to Kaplan (2020: 153) Artificial Intelligence represents a threat to democracy which needs to be taken seriously. There are at least three areas in which AI might be a danger to democratic life and mechanisms: supervision, manipulation, and frustration.

Fuchs, on the other hand, argues that social networks are "the world's largest advertising agencies"; at the same time, he highlights the fascist potentials that can be created by integrating each "trace" left on the web by people surveilled on social media into a single profile and transforming them into analyzable data, and the dangers that can arise from surveillance and guidance based on algorithm logic (2020:84).

When a perspective is developed for the future, it does not seem far away that Web 5.0 technology will bring machines that can think emotionally, which is a feature unique to humans, in addition to ultra-intelligent robots, machines and other technologies developed with the update of the new generation technologies brought by Web 4.0 (Ersöz, 2020: 64).

Today, it has become normalized to manipulate the masses with false news created solely on the axis of attractiveness from fraudulent content created with images of celebrities on social media. On behalf of humanity, AI poses economic problems with the threat of creating unemployment in various fields on the one hand, and legal problems

in all areas of society with security risks on the other. Therefore, it is possible to say that while the era of socializing on the internet has begun with social media channels since Web 2.0, it has almost imprisoned society in a universe full of contradictions and dangers.

Ethics And Freedom Of Expression: The Search For A Common Ground

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in democratic societies. It can be said that the internet is unique among all media in the enjoyment of freedom of expression. Media consumption habits have been revolutionized as more and more people are drawn to social networks. In this limitless universe, everyone can create their own world through social networks.

It is clear that social media does more harm than good in maintaining communication, which is an indispensable act of human life, for the benefit of both individuals and societies. Today, when individuals are closer to each other than ever before and can reach each other more easily than ever before, there is a greater need to think about control, balance and limits.

Article 19 of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of borders. This was groundbreaking at a time when international broadcasting was new and the internet was still a distant concept (Ash, 2016: 27).

Freedom of speech is critical to the growth and maturation of societies and is a much vaunted benefit of living in the United States. However, that freedom has not always led to the collective improvement of all citizens (Thesis, 2002: 5). The digital world contains many elements that threaten human life in various ways. At one end of the picture revealed by the unlimited freedom of

the new media is the damage to human dignity with hate speech, and at the other end is the normalisation of everything in this universe with its structure that blurs the distinction between virtual and real.

The right to say something doesn't always mean it's right to say it, and the right to offend doesn't imply a duty to offend. This challenge involves exploring ways to make free speech productive and creative without causing societal harm. Ultimately, the question of how free speech should be practiced is crucial for determining how free it should be, emphasizing self-management over legal enforcement (Ash, 2016: 79-80).

When it comes to social media, experience shows that all past stereotypes of freedom of expression need to be reconsidered. Indeed, it has also been argued that the current information regime creates the illusion of an environment of freedom, but on the contrary exploits it (Byung-Chul Han, 2022: 9) argues that digital information technology transforms communication into surveillance. Meanwhile, in the information regime, people do not feel that they are being surveilled, but that they are free. Paradoxically, it is precisely the sense of freedom that secures sovereignty. According to Han, the information tsunami created by the digital world has transformed democracy into infocracy, the timeliness of information is short; the 'frenzy of constant topicality' and the 'lure of surprise' force us to accelerate. This causes time-consuming cognitive practices such as knowledge and comprehension to be pushed aside (2022: 17, 22).

It is an experienced fact that capitalism and neoliberal policies use technology effectively, and that technology shapes the social structure (Castells, 2008: 78). China constitutes an interesting example in this struggle for Western dominance. While American-made platforms such as Google, Facebook and Twitter[5] are widely used in most of

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5 In 2021, US President Trump's account was closed by Twitter due to the risk of inciting violence. Twitter was bought by Elon Musk in 2022 and renamed X. Musk opened Trump's account as a result of a survey of users; He stated that 51.8 per cent of more than 15 million Twitter users surveyed supported giving Trump his account back. In his message, Musk used the Latin phrase 'Vox Populi, Vox Dei', which means 'The voice of the people is the voice of God' (BBC News Turkish, 2022).

the world, in China Baidu is used instead of Google, RenRen for Facebook, Sina Weibo instead of Twitter and Tencent's Weixin/WeChat application instead of WhatsApp (Ash, 2016: 40).

It should be underlined here again that, unlike traditional media, the content created by non-professional producers causes differentiation of ethical problems and increased security concerns in social media; the ordinary individual, who could not own a radio, television or newspaper in traditional media, now owns his own channel. According to Hüseynova's research on the social media phenomenon born of the digital revolution in Azerbaijan, the main ethical problems include manipulation, the use of misleading headlines, the spread of hate speech, violation of privacy, failure to specify the primary source of the news, the use of fake profiles, trolling and violation of language rules (2022: 403).

Figures make the importance of ethical responsibility in social networks much more understandable. More than 4 billion videos were uploaded to Youtube in 2023 alone. The number of videos uploaded from 2006, when the platform was established, to 2023 is 13 billion 325 (NTV, 2023). The control of this global content production is of course beyond human power. Therefore, in addition to artificial intelligence, every YouTube user must also have an ethical responsibility. Here is Youtube data that shows why ethical mechanisms need to be strengthened: In just the first 3 months of 2024, YouTube removed 103 million 815 thousand 590 videos. Again, the number of channels closed in these 90 days was 15 million 799 thousand 880. Among the reasons for the removal of approximately 104 million videos, the top three reasons were the safety of children, harmful and dangerous, violent or censored content (Youtube, 2024). Again, among the top 10 countries where the videos removed in the first 3 months of 2024 were uploaded, India, Brazil and the USA are in the first three places. Turkey ranks 8th in this list and Germany ranks 9th. The number of people who comment even if they do not upload videos on Yotube is higher. In the first 3 months,

1 billion 443 million 821 thousand 162 comments were deleted due to ethical problems (Youtube, 2024). However, these high figures do not mean that all problematic comments and content have been cleaned. We can easily see this fact on any social platform.

However, before Web 2.0 technology, Virginia Shea (1994), in her book Netiquette, identified 10 basic rules about ethical behaviour on the Internet and explained the importance of complying with them. These rules are briefly as follows: 1) Remember that you are talking to a person, not a computer, and that you can injure them. 2) Follow the same rules and standards of behaviour that you follow in real life. 3) Think about where you are in cyberspace: Netiquette varies from place to place. 4) Respect others' time and traffic: Don't force anyone to waste it. 5) Pay attention to how you 'look': write about what you understand and be polite. 6) Share your experience and knowledge. 7) Keep conflict situations under control. 8) Respect the privacy of others and do not read other people's correspondence. 9) Do not abuse your power. 10) Forgive people for their mistakes: You were once a beginner yourself (Shea, 1994).

At a time when humanity has not yet met social networks where interaction is at its historical peak, the rules of etiquette set out by Shea 30 years ago should be emphasised as the common principles of platforms where young people are concentrated today. Sherrry Turkle, in her book 'Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less of Each Other', she found that while technology blunts the aspects that make people human, it also maintains loneliness in its own ways. In the new etiquette, turning away from those in front of you to answer a mobile phone or respond to a text has become close to the norm. When someone holds a phone, it can be hard to know if you have that person's attention. A parent, partner, or child glances down and is lost to another place, often without realizing that they have taken leave (Turkle 2011: 161). It is obvious that virtual environments have aspects that destroy reality in people's physical life; however, it is important to remember

that individuals are not the only cowboys in this universe.

Turkle questions this change as follows: "Gradually, we come to see our online life as life itself. … Technology reshapes the landscape of our emotional lives, but is it offering the lives we want to lead?" (2011:17). When it comes to enabling or restricting global freedom of expression, some corporations have more power than most states. Were each Facebook user to be counted as an inhabitant, Facebook would have a larger population than China. Without their users -us- these giants would be nothing (Ash, 2017:1). According to the data of We are social (2024), according to the number of users exceeding 5 billion globally, the top 5 social platforms are respectively: Facebook, Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram and Tiktok. The 16-24 and 25-34 age groups are the leading users of these platforms.

Legal regulations for these platforms where the world is together can be a subject of study in itself. Following the Law No. 5651 regulating the internet law in Turkey in 2007, the following statements were included in the proposal and justification of the Law No. 7253 on the Amendment of the Law on the Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Combating Crimes Committed through These Publications, which became law in 2020:

… today, the intensive use of social networks on an international scale has made it possible for people from different cultures, nations and geographies to interact easily in very short periods of time. This acceleration and diversification of social relations has led to many problems or violations of personal rights. However, despite the large number of users of social network providers and the billions of dollars of revenue they obtain by utilising user data, it is observed that they do not develop or effectively use the preventive and protective mechanisms needed to protect the rights of individuals, or that they resist the justified demands of users and states. As a result, there are difficulties in fulfilling the positive obligation of States to protect fundamental rights and freedoms (https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d27/c047/tbmm27047118ss0226.pdf)

With the new regulations, social media companies will be required to open offices and be subject to taxation in Turkey, and platforms may be fined if objectionable content is not removed. There is no universal control mechanism for social media. While countries generally make their own legal arrangements, social media companies say that they carry out audits related to their own platforms. While Germany, France, the UK, Australia, Russia and Australia have laws that include fines for companies, China has stricter restrictions (BBC News Turkish, 2020).

In the light of today's experiences, the drawbacks of humanity suddenly having an unaccustomed freedom will be on the agenda for many years. Indeed, to draw an analogy from history, today's 'frenzy of limitlessness' can be likened to the confusion of not knowing how to use the freedom that followed the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy II in the history of the Turkish press[6].

Conclusion

Social platforms, which renew themselves day by day, harbour a new potential for danger every day. In the traditional media, certain principles are observed while conveying the news to the public, although they may differ in line with the editorial policy. In social media, on the other hand, not only news but also all content is shared more unrestricted and uncontrolled. These posts can be misleading and provocative to the public. As a matter of fact, individuals can share the most intimate information on the internet. Especially in social media, it is very common for individuals

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6 Following the years under control, the Second Constitutional Monarchy Period in the Ottoman Empire was described as a 'press frenzy'; the new period was characterised by the fact that anyone who had the urge to publish a newspaper or a magazine could do so, just as anyone who had the urge to make a speech at a soapbox (Koloğlu, 2015: 87). One step after the aforementioned period, violent incidents expressed as the Brute Force regime started (Bardakçı, 1984).

to use offensive expressions by hiding their identities. Therefore, fake profiles created on social media have led to a 'socialisation without identity'. This situation has brought a completely different phenomenon of violence to the agenda of societies as a result of social media. What escapes attention is that the fact that the digital world is a virtual medium does not virtualise its power of influence. As a matter of fact, everyone, child or adult, is open to the dangers specific to the medium.

On the other hand, the intense sharing routine on social media causes communication between people to remain superficial; 'showing' has become synonymous with the concept of sharing. While ethical rules form the basis of traditional media, which are the main channels of communication, social media seems to prioritise a freedom that is open to debate.

These environments, which expand unlimitedly and encompass the whole humanity, offer a new form of reality today. Although social media is a medium where freedoms are prioritised, the rights that humanity has struggled for are openly violated in digital media. It is important for social peace to make a revolution of principles against the dangers discussed in this study on platforms where the age of users is decreasing day by day.

As a matter of fact, it becomes difficult to bring together ethics and freedom of expression on the same ground. The solution to all ethical violations committed by hiding behind anonymity may be platforms on social media where everyone can be found with their real identity. In addition, although it has never been taken into consideration, a utilisation skill for these channels should also be developed. The fact that the medium is based on the producer-consumer mass has brought about confinement in a highly individualised area. Today, while trying to keep up with technology on social media platforms with a history of about 20 years, we have more information about a person on the other side of the world than our next door neighbour.

There is a need for a balance between the unlimited freedom of communication and human dignity in order to prevent the loss of the gains that humanity has achieved so far and to prevent societies from turning into a wild west environment. For the first time in the 300 years of media history, humanity is experiencing an environment in its own centre with Web 2.0. This study, which questions the potential of social media, is also a call to remind that man exists for man, while it is known that artificial intelligence will be the important agenda of the coming years.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

İnsan hakları ve ifade özgürlüğü olguları, insanlığın batılılaşma sürecinde kat ettiği adımların kazanımlarıdır. Ancak insanlık, ilk kitle iletişim aracı gazeteden bugüne ulaşılabilirlik ve etkileşimde tarihi zirvesini sosyal medyayla tecrübe etmektedir. 8.8 milyarlık dünya nüfusunun 5.4 milyarı sosyal medya kullanıcısıdır. Bu ortamda, hem iletişimin yönü kökten değişmiş, hem de medyanın toplumsal işlevleri dönüşüme uğramıştır. İlk kez üretici tüketici konumuna yükselen bireylerin katılımıyla gelişen sosyal medya mecralarında, batıda basının doğuşuna paralel elde edilen ifade özgürlüğü ve insan hakları gibi kazanımların zarar gördüğü görülmektedir. Söz konusu ortamların "sınırsızlığı" farklı boyutta tehlikeler doğurmuştur. Bunlar, amatörlük kültünün (Keen, 2007) yerleşmesine zemin oluşturması, milyonlarca kişisel doğrunun sunulduğu mecralarda örtülü ya da açık şiddet propagandasının yükselişi ve çeşitlenişi, ön yargılı yorumların bulaşıcı etkisinin kanıtlanması, sosyal medya bağımlılığı, kültürel çeşitlilikte ilerleme kaydedilemezken adeta ortak bir "bak bana" ya da "kendini sunma" siber kültürünün gelişmesi ve yapay zeka etkileri gibi gün geçtikçe çeşitlenen olgulardır. Küresel platformlarda insanların yaşamlarının bile isteye

herkes tarafından izlenmesini arzulaması ise özgürlük anlayışının 21. yüzyıla özgü bir çelişkisidir.

Bu, adeta "her şey her an her yerde" dünyası ele alınması gereken yeni koşulları gündeme getirmektedir. Bu kapsamda birçok araştırmaya konu olan şiddet olgusu da, "sosyal medyadan önce ve sosyal medyadan sonra" iki farklı fazı tecrübe ettirmektedir: kullanıcılar şiddeti dijital ortamda deneyimleyerek fiziksel açıdan zarar görme ihtimalini ortadan kaldırmaktadırlar (Bayrak, 2017:36). Ancak sosyal medyada alaycı, saldırgan ve nefret dolu ifadelerin serbestliği -aynı ifadeler geleneksel medyada gazetecilik etiği açısından bu ölçüde yer bulamazken- herkesin içerik üreticisi olabildiği sanal ortamda adeta normalleşmektedir. Dolayısıyla, günümüzde gazeteciliğe paralel gelişen mesleki etik kodlardaki bozulmaların yanı sıra, toplumsal etik değerlerin erozyonundan da bahsetmek gerekir. Sosyal medyanın kullanıma girmesiyle yaklaşık 300 yıllık geleneksel medya geçmişi ve alışkanlıkları karşısında zaman, mekan ve geribildirim sınırlılıkları aşılırken, batılılaşma sürecinde ifade özgürlüğü ve demokrasi idealinin yeni medya ortamında nasıl bir boyuta evrildiği üzerinde düşünmek gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, batılılaşma sürecinde ifade özgürlüğü ve demokrasi idealinin, sosyal medyada nasıl vahşi bir güce dönüştüğü üzerinde bir tartışma geliştirmektir. Bu amaçla, öncelikle tarihsel süreçte batılılaşma olgusu ve medya mecraları ele alınacaktır. Ardından ifade özgürlüğü için tarihte hiç olmadığı kadar geniş fırsatlar sunan sosyal medya ortamının doğasına ilişkin potansiyel, güncel tehtidlerle ele alınacak ve yapılmış çeşitli çalışmalar ışığında yeni perspektifler sunulacaktır. Medya tarihinin bir kırılma noktası olarak ifade edilebilecek bu süreçte tecrübe edilen sorunlar, nefret söylemi, kendini sunma kültürü, amatör kültü, bağımlılık, yapay zeka etkileri, linç kültürü, mahremiyet ve güvenlik başlıkları altında tartışılacaktır. Bu doğrultuda çalışma sosyal medyaya ilişkin güncel sorunların birarada sunulduğu bir kaynak özelliği taşımaktadır. Geleneksel medyanın aksine hiçbir editoryal kontrol sürecine tabi olmayan sosyal medyada katılım ve üretim de geleneksel medya üretiminin kat be kat üzerindedir; üretim arttıkça

sorumluluk da artmaktadır. Çalışma, batılılaşma idealinin bir getirisi olarak ifade özgürlüğünün, sosyal medya ile idealize edilen potansiyelin dışına nasıl çıktığına dair bir vizyon sunmaktadır.

Batılılaşma olgusunun kaynağı, 16.-17. yüzyıllardan itibaren belirmeye başlayan ve 19. yüzyılda yoğunlaşan bir dizi siyasal, toplumsal, kültürel, ekonomik ve bilimsel gelişmenin neticesinde Avrupa ve Kuzey Amerika coğrafyasında şekillenen Batı medeniyetidir (Tekin, t.y; Hanioğlu, t.y). Avrupa ve Amerika'da 17. yüzyıldan itibaren çağdaşlaşmanın temellerini atan düşünceler gazeteciliğin halkın sesi ve gücü olma misyonuyla gelişmesini sağlamıştır. İster batılılaşma ister modernleşme olarak ifade edilsin, tüm dünya ülkelerinde gelişimin katedilmesinde iletişim araçları özel bir öneme sahiptir. Dolayısıyla insan hakları ve ifade özgürlüğü konusunda önemli bir tarihsel birikime sahip batı medeniyeti, medya tarihini de şekillendirmiş ve geliştirmiştir. Bugün ise insanlık, birçok alanda sınırlarını genişleten siber dünyanın yaratılışına tanıklık etmektedir. Kullanım amacı ve içerik türüne göre bloglar, mikrobloglar, wikiler, sosyal ağlar, video paylaşım ağları, ses ve müzik paylaşım ağları, lokasyon tabanlı araçlar, sosyal işaretleme ağları ve sanal dünyalar şeklinde sıralanabilen sosyal medya çeşitlerinin temel nitelikleri daha interaktif, büyük kitlelere ulaşma olanaklarının yüksek ve manipülasyona açık olmasıdır (Uluç & Yarcı, 2017: 98). Sonuç fiziksel yaralanma olmasa bile, tehdit edici sözler ve aşağılayıcı jestlerle zorbalık, mağdurlarına açıkça psikolojik zarar verebilir, neticede iç kesikleri ve morlukları görüntelemek mümkün değildir (Ash, 2016: 215-216). Kimi çevrelerce ifade özgürlüğünün bir parçası ya da bir "iç dökme eylemi" olarak kabul edilen bu söylemler sosyal ağların, blogların, mikroblogların, forumların, katılımcı sözlüklerin, fotoğraf, video ve müzik paylaşım sitelerinin, dijital oyun sitelerinin, okur yorumlarının doğal bir parçası haline gelmiştir (Öztekin, 2015: 926). Twitter'da şiddet içerikli iletilerin incelendiği bir çalışma, toplumca kabul edilebilir normlarda yaşayan bireylerin, yüz kızartıcı olarak nitelendirilen davranışları sosyal medya aracılığıyla sergileyebildiklerini göstermiştir (Bayrak, 2017: 44).

Geleneksel medyanın aksine, profesyonel olmayan üreticilerin oluşturduğu içerikler sosyal medyada etik sorunların farklılaşmasına ve güvenlik endişelerinin artmasına neden olmaktadır; Geleneksel medyada radyo, televizyon ya da gazete sahibi olamayan sıradan birey artık kendi kanalının sahibidir.

Youtube verileri sosyal ağlarda etik sorumluluğun önemine ilişkin dikkat çekici veriler ortaya koymaktadır: 2024'ün sadece ilk 3 ayında Youtube 103 milyon 815 bin 590 video çocukların güvenliği, zararlı ve tehlikeli, şiddet barındıran veya sansürlenmiş içerik yer almaktadır. İlk 3 ayda 1 milyar 443 milyon 821 bin 162 yorum da etik sorunlar nedeniyle silinmiştir (Youtube, 2024). Mecranın üretici- tüketici kitle üzerinde temellenmesi, son derece bireysel bir alana hapsolmayı getirmiştir. Etik ve ifade özgürlüğünü aynı zeminde buluşturmak zorlaşmaktadır. Sosyal medyanın potansiyelinin sorgulandığı bu çalışmada mevcut tehlikeler üzerinden kapsamlı bir tartışma geliştirilmiştir. İnsanlığın elde ettiği kazanımların yitirilip, toplumların geriye, adeta bir vahşi batı ortamına dönüşmemesi için iletişimin sınırsız özgürlüğü ve insan onuru arasında bir dengeye ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

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