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Commodification of Islamic Practices in Advertisement: A Case Study of “Go-jek” Advertisement in Indonesian Media

Nunung Nurhasanah*
Moch Fakhruroji**

Abstract

This article endeavors to delve into the realm of promoting services connected to Islam within the expansive domain of the Go-jek application. This particular aspect can be perceived as a form of religious commodification. Employing the discourse analysis, the exploration focuses on the episodes of “e-Badah,” which aim to aid in the seamless execution of Islamic practices. Extensive data was gathered from numerous instances, paying close attention to the taglines and jargon conveyed within these advertisements. The findings indicate that the commodification of religion within Go-jek’s eBadah episodes is evident in the utilization of visual and textual tools that encourage the audience to partake in the various socially nuanced religious practices facilitated by the Go-jek app. This phenomenon underscores the interplay between the commodification of religion in advertising and the practice of mediatization of religion, which is intrinsically linked to the pervasive nature of media platforms. In the case of eBadah, Go-jek’s app depicts mediated religious practices and highlights how media acts as a facilitator for such practices.

Keywords: Commodification of Religion, Islamic Practices, Mediatization of Religion, Advertising, e-Badah

Reklamcılıkta İslami Uygulamaların Metalaştırılması: Endonezya Medyasında “Go-jek” Reklamına İlişkin Bir Örnek Olay İncelemesi

Öz

Bu makale, Go-jek uygulamasının geniş çerçevesi içerisinde İslam’la bağlantılı hizmetlerin teşvik edilmesi alanını incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Bu özel yön, dini metalaştırmanın bir biçimi olarak algılanabilir. Söylem analizini kullanan araştırma, İslami uygulamaların kusursuz bir şekilde yürütülmesine yardımcı olmayı amaçlayan “e-Bedah” bölümlerine odaklanıyor. Bu reklamlarda iletilen sloganlara ve jargona çok dikkat edilerek çok sayıda örnekten kapsamlı veriler toplandı. Bulgular, Go-jek’in eBadah bölümlerinde dinin metalaştırılmasının, izleyiciyi Go-jek uygulamasının kolaylaştırdığı çeşitli sosyal açıdan incelikli dini uygulamalara katılmaya teşvik eden görsel ve metinsel araçların kullanımında açıkça görüldüğünü gösteriyor. Bu olgu, reklamcılıkta dinin metalaştırılması ile özünde medya platformlarının yaygın doğasıyla bağlantılı olan dinin medyalaştırılması uygulaması arasındaki etkileşimin altını çizmektedir. eBadah örneğinde, Go-jek’in uygulaması aracılı dini uygulamaları tasvir ediyor ve medyanın bu tür uygulamalar için nasıl kolaylaştırıcı olarak hareket ettiğini vurguluyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dinin Metalaştırılması, İslami Uygulamalar, Dinin Medyalaştırılması, Reklam, e-Badah

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Introduction

Religion, an intrinsic and profound aspect of human existence, holds a position of utmost significance in the lives of individuals (Hall, 1986). It serves as a beacon of guidance, illuminating the paths traversed by human beings in their quotidian affairs, both on an individual level and within the intricate tapestry of social interactions. Nonetheless, some sociologists and anthropologists perceive religion as an enigmatic realm, steeped in mystique due to its connection with a transcendental and spiritual reality (Dhavamony, 1995; Kahmad, 2002). Consequently, these scholars unanimously concur that comprehending religion necessitates delving into its contextual intricacies, as it manifests itself through longstanding traditions and the observance of daily rituals, thereby becoming an empirical reality (Dhavamony, 1995; Durkheim, 1965; Schraf, 1995; Wach, 1958).

The nature of religion in its connection to something of a spiritual nature bestows upon it a distinctiveness that sets it apart from the various components that constitute human existence. When examining religion, it becomes evident that it occupies a superior position and assumes a role that is commonly acknowledged as sacred, while contrasting any other aspect of life which is referred to as profane (Durkheim, 1965). The term sacred embodies connotations of loftiness and cannot be regarded or treated with the same degree of significance as profane matters. Moreover, the term sacred holds implications for the origination of a sequence of extraordinary rituals that serve as integral components of religious observance.

In the ever-evolving world we inhabit, where the fabric of society remains intricately woven with the sacred essence of religion, it is undeniable that the values associated with this spiritual realm have experienced a subtle yet palpable transformation. This metamorphosis, in particular, has been markedly influenced by the advent of the media, which has assumed a prominent role in the tapestry of modernity. Consequently, religion, along with various other entities deemed highly significant, has undergone a profound redefinition, wherein its significance has been subtly altered. In this contemporary landscape, religion often assumes the form of a news broadcast or even takes on the guise of entertainment within the media’s realm of influence (Fakhrurroji, 2021). Similar to religion, another paramount facet that shapes the human experience lies within the realm of economics, for it is through this intricate system that the physical needs of individuals are addressed and fulfilled.

In the course of its evolution, economic activity strives to fulfill not only the basic physical requirements of individuals, but also their intangible needs, such as gratification, opulence, self-identification, and various other symbolic desires (Baudrillard, 2019). Likewise, the items that are traded within this economic framework are often imbued with religious connotations, serving as embodiments of piety, the sacredness of worship, obedience, and so forth. When a vendor offers goods that enhance the specificity of an individual’s religious practices, it is important to note that this act is in no way connected to the intrinsic value of the items being sold. Rather, these objects serve as a foundation for worship, unrelated to the quality or efficacy of one’s devotion. Similar to historical artifacts, religious meanings are inherently non-negotiable, just as objects intended to fulfill physical needs are. This phenomenon is known as commodification, which can be described as “*the process of transforming use value into exchange value*” (Mosco, 1996).

Commodification, a concept distinct from commercialization, involves the transformation of goods or services into commodities that can be bought and sold. Commercialization, on the other hand, primarily focuses on economic activities that involve the selling of objects and adheres to the fundamental principles of economics, where the concept of scarcity and high demand contribute to the increase in the price of an object. Unlike commercialization, commodification goes beyond mere economic activities and takes on a more politically-driven nature. It is an economic action that encompasses various political aspects. Consequently, discussions revolving around

commodification are more prevalent within the field of political economy, as they are closely intertwined with the role of media and its influence on the economy.

A plethora of prior research endeavors that revolve around the central theme of religious commodification have been extensively conducted, delving into various facets of this multifaceted phenomenon. A select few of these scholarly investigations encompass a comprehensive analysis of the hijra phenomenon among artists, wherein the act of religious commodification is intricately intertwined with the genesis of particular products (Afina, 2019). Furthermore, Arifin (2019) explores the commodification of dakwah content through the pervasive medium of YouTube channels, shedding light on the transformation of religious teachings into marketable commodities. Elaborating further on the issue of commodification, Fakhruji et al., (2020) examine the predicament faced by dakwah practitioners and other stakeholders alike when confronted with the pervasive forces of commodification.

Additionally, the intricate relationship between commodification and communication, and its inherent connection to the pursuit of capitalistic objectives, is meticulously scrutinized in scholarly endeavors (Ibrahim & Akhmad, 2014; Ward, 2005). Finally, Suryanto (2011) delves into the realm of television advertisements, examining the manner in which religion is commodified within this powerful medium of visual communication.

Hence, the primary objective of this paper is to provide an intricate and detailed analysis of the captivating and enthralling phenomenon of religious commodification that is prominently showcased within the realm of advertisements on Indonesian television. In order to accomplish this, the study exclusively concentrated on the advertising strategies employed by Go-jek, which is an immensely prevalent and widely utilized online-based service product within the Indonesian market. Consequently, the particular advertisement that is under scrutiny is an extraordinarily fascinating and thought-provoking advertisement that features an episode of *e-Badah*, which endeavors to offer a plethora of services that effectively facilitate various religious practices. Hence, it becomes unequivocally apparent that the Go-jek advertisement serves as a perfect embodiment of a phenomenon that is not only worthy of exploration but also crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the intricate and multifarious practices associated with religious commodification.

Commodification and Mediatization of Religion

As previously mentioned, the concept of commodification holds great significance in various spheres. As eloquently articulated by Mosco (1996), commodification can be understood as the intricate process through which use values, which pertain to the inherent usefulness or utility of a particular object or service, are transformed into exchange values, which are essentially the economic worth or value assigned to said objects or services within a market system. In the context of the media landscape, commodification assumes a paramount role, serving as a means to bridge the gap between mass media and the intricate web of political and economic dynamics that shape our societal framework. It is through the process of commodification that the vast and diverse realm of mass media becomes more intimately entwined with the intricate fabric of the political economy approach, thereby enabling a comprehensive examination and understanding of the interplay between these two realms.

Theoretically speaking, according to the detailed analysis presented by Mosco (1996), the concept of commodification within the realm of the political economy of media encompasses a wide range of manifestations and phenomena. *Firstly, the commodification of content*, which involves the transformation of a mere message, consisting of a collection of data, into a comprehensive and meaningful system that can be marketed and sold as a valuable product. It is important to note that media content, in this particular case, is considered to be a mass media product that inherently possesses an inherent lack of neutrality or value-freeness due to the

vested interests of the media itself. This implies that media content is deliberately structured and influenced by various factors, including but not limited to the socialization and attitudes of media workers, the established media routines, the impact of social institutions, as well as external pressures exerted by different entities. From the perspective of Marx, commodification is deeply rooted in a materialistic orientation that places significant emphasis on the productive activities undertaken by individuals or groups, activities that lie at the very core of the capitalist system.

Furthermore, Marx highlights the crucial role played by the interaction between these actors and their surrounding environment, what he referred to as the commodity values that shape the dynamics and functioning of this economic system. When economists contemplate commodities within the realm of communication, their initial focus is often placed upon the vast expanse of media content. It is through this contemplation that one can begin to comprehend the intricate and multifaceted process by which exchange rates are established within the realm of communication content. This process is not merely a simple transaction, but rather a complex and intricate relationship that intertwines various entities such as workers, consumers, and owners of capital. The examination of this particular commodity delves deep into the very essence of its existence, aiming to unravel the intricate web that connects the content of the commodity to its inherent meaning. In the year 1996, Mosco delved into this subject matter, shedding light upon the intricate nature of this complex relationship (Mosco, 1996).

Secondly, the commodification of the audience, which is a form of commodification, entails the transformation of audiences into valuable commodities that are strategically marketed to advertisers. This process involves capitalizing on the fact that when a television program caters to a specific target audience, the demographic data of this audience is transformed into a highly desirable commodity. Consequently, this audience database becomes an entity that can be offered to the advertising company, providing them with the assurance that they will be able to effectively reach a specific segment of the population by promoting their products or services through the program in question.

Thirdly, the commodification of labor. This type of commodification is demonstrated by the transformation of the work process in capitalism where workers' skills and hours of work are made into commodities and rewarded with wages. In this type of commodification, there are two processes that can be considered. First, the commodification of labor is carried out by using communication systems and technology to increase control over labor and ultimately commodify the entire process of using labor, including in industry. Second, political economy explains a dual process that when workers are carrying out commodifying activities, at the same time the status of workers is being commodified.

The information society commonly described as a society that heavily relies on information networks, as well as information and communication technologies. These networks and technologies play a fundamental role in the functioning and operation of our society, shaping the way we communicate, gather information, and access various resources (Fakhrurroji, 2017). As a result, the development and advancement of communication technologies bring about not only practical benefits but also a set of cultural nuances that are deeply intertwined with the concept of consumerism, ultimately leading to a significant shift in values and attitudes that permeate throughout our society. This shift, in turn, has a profound impact on the overall lifestyle and behaviors exhibited by individuals within the societal framework.

Moreover, the advent of media facilities has further facilitated the dissemination and accessibility of information, allowing the general public to easily stay informed and up-to-date with the latest happenings and events from all corners of the globe. This newfound accessibility to information from diverse sources has effectively bridged the gap between different cultures, facilitating a more interconnected and globalized world. Consequently, individuals are now more

exposed to a wide array of perspectives, ideas, and knowledge that were previously inaccessible. This exposure has the potential to greatly enrich the intellectual and cultural landscape of our society, fostering a more nuanced understanding and appreciation for the diversity that exists both within and beyond our immediate surroundings.

The term consumerism bestows a heightened significance on a way of life that perceives goods or materials as a mere gauge of joy and distinction, no longer perceived as a fundamental requirement. The act of consumption is not solely executed to fulfill the necessities of mere practicality, but rather to devour the envisioned reputation or reputation of the material or product, thereby enabling individuals to experience the grandeur of said action. In order to cater to the impetus behind consumer needs, a product must incorporate a substance that encompasses signs, images, and meanings (Baudrillard, 2011). This endeavor serves to manipulate consumers into becoming individuals who purchase illusions as opposed to tangible goods.

The consumer culture, with its strong presence in society, has positioned society as a prime target for the process of commodification. This process, which involves transforming various aspects of society into marketable goods or services, extends beyond the mere fulfillment of material needs. Consumerism also plays a significant role in enticing individuals to engage with captivating impressions that resonate with their personal interests, even if these impressions challenge or contradict prevailing cultural norms or the ideological principles of a particular religion. It is important to note that the media, as a powerful force in shaping public opinions and perceptions, actively participates in the commodification of values derived from customs, norms, culture, and religion. This participation is driven by the intention to cater to the diverse interests and desires of the community, satisfying their cravings for unique experiences and products that align with their individual preferences.

In the grand scheme of things, within this particular framework, the concept of commodification is intrinsically intertwined with the phenomenon of bolstering and fortifying the role of media in the realm of day-to-day existence, a well-known occurrence commonly referred to as mediatization (Hjarvard & Petersen, 2013). In this particular context, media encompasses a wide array of entities that are overtly conspicuous, such as mobile phones and television screens, as well as those that may not necessarily bear the visual traits of being associated with various transactions conducted in the vast expanse of the Internet. It goes without saying that this notion is equally applicable to religion. Religion, as an entity, is unable to evade the ever-present influence of media. In actuality, the very act of religion being made visible in the realm of media endows it with an inherent power, ultimately resulting in media serving as a conduit that ensures religion remains accessible to the vast multitude of media audiences.

Hence, the interdependence between religion and the media has become increasingly apparent. In this contemporary era, the study of religion can no longer be conducted in isolation from the influence of the media. There are several compelling justifications for this claim. *Firstly*, the majority of individuals in modern societies rely heavily on the media as their primary source of religious concepts, regardless of whether they pertain to their own faith or others. *Secondly*, the media has emerged as a significant wellspring of religious creativity and inspiration. *Lastly*, the media has assumed many of the societal roles traditionally fulfilled by religion, particularly in relation to the construction and observance of rituals (Hjarvard, 2011).

Mediatization, as explained by Lundby (2014), is the enchanting process through which media breathes life into societal transformations in the realm of modernity. This mediating phenomenon serves as a “meta-process,” orchestrating the grand symphony of modernization, individualization, and globalization. It is worth noting that the term mediatization is often used interchangeably with the concept of mediation, which, in the past, was more widely recognized within the realms of communication and other social sciences.

Drawing from Schulz’s perspective, Hjarvard (2011) identifies four profound ways in which media shapes human interaction. *Firstly*, media expands the boundaries of human communication, allowing it to transcend previous limitations. *Secondly*, media replaces antiquated forms of social interaction, breathing new life into the realm of connectivity. *Thirdly*, media ignites a plethora of communication activities, each one more refined than the last, in an enchanting dance of connectivity. *Lastly*, media users tend to embrace and adapt the innovative features and characteristics of evolving technologies, further enriching the tapestry of human interaction.

Mediation and mediatization made their grand entrance into the realm of media studies long before the advent of digital technology graced the world of storytelling (Couldry, 2008). The elucidation of these two concepts, however, remains shrouded in ambiguity and continues to spark fervent debates as to which one is more fitting for the assessment of media’s impact on society. Mediation, in all its splendor, stands as a beacon of neutrality, encompassing the transmission and exchange of messages through the media, devoid of any direct affiliation with media autonomy or its influence on society. On the other hand, mediatization, adorned with a more cunning aura, finds solace in the realm of commercial advertising and political landscapes.

Mediation concentrates its attention on the pivotal role of the media, delving into the intricate dance of interaction and communication that takes place within this medium. The focal point of mediation studies lies in the transposition of messages and the semiotic facets of media, striving to unravel the enigmatic relationship between the medium as the message and its intended recipient. Through meticulous examination, mediation seeks to decipher how the media effectively transmits a message and how the recipients thereof can mutually decipher the symbols that are communicated, unshackled by the external influences that may seek to sway their interpretation.

Meanwhile, mediatization is related to the influence of the media on audiences and how audiences then become very dependent on the media. Mediatization is closely related to the relationship between media and socio-cultural changes in society (Fakhruroji, 2015, 2021). Mediatization is a social process where society becomes bored and inundated with media so that media and society are no longer considered to be separated (Hjarvard, 2011). Through both mediation and mediatization, we can examine how advertising on television constructs and builds false awareness through a strong impression of the advertised product. Advertisements contain manipulation of photography, lighting, and combination tactics that create an experience that seems real. In the context of religion, the relationship between religion and the media is built in a mutualistic manner where the media frames and presents religion in profane media spaces which sometimes reduces the sacred value of religion itself, but the presence of religion in the media has benefited religion because it remains accessible to media audiences.

According to Hjarvard (2008), the mediatization of religion is not a universal phenomenon that is characteristic of all cultures and societies, but rather is an implication of changes during the last decades of the twentieth century in Western society where one of the consequences is changes in the roles of social institutions, including religion which has undergone changes because it is increasingly facilitated by the media. In the case of religion, television broadcasts expand the reach of religious lectures to be present in people’s lives. Public acceptance of popular fiction genres at religious events in the news media is one of the contemporary comparisons, news discourse is also combined with religious discourse. Finally, religious institutions are encouraged to accommodate the demands of the news media (e.g. news criteria, presentation formats and etc.) in order to be able to project their voices into the public media space.

However, it cannot be denied that the media has played a significant role in promoting and accommodating religion. The relationship between the media and religion can be described as a symbiotic one, with both parties benefiting from each other’s presence. This is evident in the abundance of religious-themed TV shows that serve as a compromise between the media and

religion. In Indonesia, for instance, all national TV stations are committed to incorporating religious content into their programming. These religious shows can be classified into various forms, including religious talk shows that explore a wide range of religious topics, religious soap operas that depict religious social life, and reality shows that showcase the talents and experiences of religious individuals, sites, and leaders.

Method

This study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) which explained by Fairclough (2010) as a theoretical framework that analyzes how language and discourse shape and maintain power relationships. CDA seeks to uncover the hidden meanings and assumptions in language use by examining the social context in which language is used and the power relations that are embedded in that context. CDA also looks at how linguistic and non-linguistic features of discourse, such as tone, syntax, and imagery, can be used to influence and control social behavior.

As we focused on one of the visual advertisements of Go-jek products under eBadah theme which appeared on television and on various social media platforms by showing Islamic symbols and jargon obtained by taking screenshots of the advertisement. This data were then interpreted with reference to general meanings that are widely understood and correlated with various contexts that are assumed to be relevant. By doing so, CDA is considered relevant to this study because it can analyze the language used in the Go-Jek advertising e-Badah episode as a product of power relations, which in this case is capital's attempt to exploit religion to accumulate profits.

Results and Discussion

Some television shows show a tendency that society is driven by the interests of capital owners and economic power. Developments in the world of television are driven by economic interests in terms of creating new markets and making more money (Burton, 2007). In other words, market logic determines the level of quality of the broadcasts presented.

Symptoms of commodification inevitably also penetrate religious broadcasts. Religion is consumed by the public as a spectacle. The commodification of religious broadcasts – in this case Islam – raises several questions among Muslims in Indonesia itself. Most scholars say that religion should not be used as merchandise to make a profit from selling and trading religious symbols. Commodification of religious broadcasts can make Islamic life look lively, but on the other hand, this also shows shallowness because it is determined by market movements which gradually, this religious splendor will actually eliminate the spirit and meaning of religion itself.

Television stations cleverly package religious programs as attractively as possible. The problem that arises is not only how religious shows can be packaged to make them attractive by making maximum use of the capacity of communication technology, but the genre of religious shows faces problems regarding the spiritual weight that it wants to convey. Most of the media program packages, especially television stations, are dominated by entertainment that colludes with the octopus grip of political-business interests. Even though the majority of those watching are Muslims.

An example is broadcasts of religious lectures. The Islamic knowledge desired by the public is captured by the capitalistic media system as a golden field for the capital accumulation process so that the ideological elements of the spectacle are still very dominant (Fakhruroji, 2019, 2023; Millie, 2017). Their main assets are great communication skills, excellence in public speaking, and use of media. The new preachers speak animatedly in everyday language and use simple, catchy phrases, sometimes with humor and self-mocking jokes to offer short, practical advice. Apart from presenting preachers who are in accordance with the wishes of the media, these preachers are often 'accompanied' by celebrities or comedians. The aim is to reduce the impression that religious

lectures are heavy material and too serious. Accompanied by an entertaining and funny figure, the content of religious lectures will become cool, trendy and of course entertaining.

Go-jek advertisements demonstrate various phenomena of religious commodification audio-visually. This advertisement was broadcast in the month of Ramadan 2021. In this advertisement, the ideas and several visual elements that appear show symptoms of the commodification of religion. Overall, this advertisement uses a green background which in the Indonesian context is often identified with Islam. Then, there is the element of writing “e-Badah” which is pronounced as “*ibadah*” (worship, religious practices) written in large letters so that it looks more dominant. At the bottom it says, “*cara ibadah #dirumahaja pake Go-jek*” (how to perform worship while #stayhome by Go-jek), while at the bottom it says several types of Islamic practices such as *eSedekah*, *eParsel*, *e-Bukber*, and *eRezeki*. Next is a picture whose figures are made in comic form showing several people with an appearance identical to Islamic symbols (a woman wearing a hijab, a man wearing a sarong, and other related figures).

In general, this advertisement is presented in the form of a comic animation displayed on several slides with a narrative that tells about life in a village. As can be seen in the series of interconnected images. The first slide shows the festivities of the month of Ramadan where every Muslim celebrates it with joy and is shown on the first slide. On the next slide, it is shown how the pandemic has had implications for social distancing, marked by the use of masks on the story characters in the advertisement. Then, on the next slide, you can see the words *eBadah* written on the hill in a certain scene and this makes the villagers feel surprised. Their surprise was followed by an explanation about *e-Badah* as one of the service products from the Go-jek application where they can still carry out Islamic practices even in a pandemic situation. The last slide shows the products offered by the *e-Badah* service.





Figure 1. Go-jek Ads episode “eBadah”

This advertisement illustrates the symptoms of the commodification of religion carried out by Go-jek with several important instruments. *Firstly*, this advertisement was broadcast during the month of Ramadan and coincided with the pandemic period which was still being experienced by the Indonesian people so that a number of Go-jek services became more relevant to the #stayathome program campaigned by the Government through the social distancing policy. *Second*, the service offered by Go-jek is online worship which is represented by the eBadah program which is then read as *ibadah*. The use of the letter “e” in front of a word is an abbreviation of the word “electronic” which then in the media context has expanded to all online activities as found in the words “e-mail,” “e-newspaper,” “e-book” and so on. *Third*, the tagline contained in this advertisement explicitly invites worship from home via the Go-jek application.

At first glance, this advertisement reads like a kind of solution for Muslims to continue to worship in the pandemic era, which is reinforced by the tagline “*cara ibadah #dirumahaja pake Go-jek.*” As previously stated, commodification is “an effort to change use value into exchange value,” which simply means turning everything into a commodity, even something that is not material, which in this case is things related to religion. Although some physical elements of religious practice can be commodities such as prayer utensils, etc., worship itself is not a commodity. In other words, this advertisement basically promotes a number of new services from Go-jek, but the message that emerges is the practice of worship, so it gives the impression of selling “practices of religion.”

One of the characteristics of commodification is the mysterious nature of commodities where the exchange value is determined by the producer. Indeed, Go-jek does not sell religious

practices, but the public is invited to use Go-jek services to be able to enjoy all these services. This indicates that the Go-jek service is sold as a religious practice, giving the impression that those who use this service can continue to worship without any problems. Those who use this service will be assumed to be devout worshipers and always bound by religious orders.

On a broader scale, Fakhrurroji (2010) assesses that the practice of commodifying religion has provided its own challenges for the practice of Islamic da'wah and has redefined religion as a market commodity to be exchanged which is further expanded by the transnational connections of religious organizations and market networks (Kitiarsa, 2008). Even religious figures are often unconsciously involved in being part of this process, for example by starring in advertisements for certain products with religious nuances.

In Habermas' view, the increasing commodification of lifestyles, including culture and religion, has turned humans into irrational societies and indicates that everyday life has been colonized by 'system imperatives' (Barker, 2002, p. 164-165). Another critique of commodification is Adorno's perspective on the culture industry. *First*, Adorno saw a cultural pathology that hid the instrumental reason behind it. It demands unification and integration which is ultimately anchored in interventions that force universality and objectivity. *Second*, culture has entered into industrial logic. Culture has put together a flow scheme of production, reproduction, and is sensitive to the life of mass consumption. And, this logic is still under the shadow of integral freedom in the style of advanced capitalism. *Third*, cultural production is an integrated component of the capitalist economy as a unit where cultural production cannot be separated from the grip of the capitalist economy. *Fourth*, the culture of consumerism is cultural degradation.

At the same time, this advertisement is also a practical example of the mediatization of religion as a phenomenon of expanding religious practices with several characteristics. *First*, advertising as a medium has framed the word worship into a new terminology, namely “eBadah,” which also represents a combination of worship practices with media such as smartphones so that those who use this service not only worship but also engage in technologically mediated practices. *Second*, the “eBadah” service is a service that is surrounded by certain media so that the worship practices that emerge through it are in a certain media environment, including the technical mechanisms that must be followed by Go-jek service users. Instead of mediating the practice of worship, this service actually becomes a space where someone practices religion within certain limits.

Therefore, even though commodification and mediatization have different theoretical contexts, they often appear side by side, and can even be analyzed using separate settings and approaches from one another. The phenomenon of “eBadah” as one of Go-jek's services illustrates these two things. From the commodification aspect, eBadah services seem to make it easier for people to continue to practicing Islam within limitations by using Go-jek services. Meanwhile, the mediatization aspect is demonstrated by the use of terms produced by producers, which has the potential to give birth to new definitions of religion and suggests religious practices are facilitated by technical and mechanistic devices.

Conclusion

The context of the relationship between religion and media in the contemporary era is widely demonstrated through new phenomena, including the mediatization of religion. Meanwhile, even though it sometimes involves the media, the commodification of religion is actually mostly born as a phenomenon of the relationship between religion and political economy. However, in an era that is increasingly influenced by the media, commodification can hardly be separated from the importance of the media. Therefore, based on the brief description above, several conclusions can be put forward as follows:

First, the commodification of religion is a practice that describes a phenomenon where religion and related elements have been transformed into commodities. However, it is important to note that commodification is different from commercialization which is synonymous with economic practice. Commodification has a more complicated pattern which shows that religion seems to be a value connected to a particular commodity, as shown in the case of the eBadah-themed Go-jek advertisement. With this practice, Go-jek's services seem to become more meaningful and can even be interpreted as an instrument of religious practice, whereas for Go-jek, eBadah is just a certain product line that they market.

Second, in the era of media culture, the commodification of religion is closely related to the concept and practice of mediatization of religion, which is a practice where the media not only plays the role of a medium as previously understood in the context of communication theories, however, the media has developed to encompass almost all practices. social in everyday life. The media is no longer an intermediary for religious practices or activities, but the media itself, with various rules and certain mechanisms, provides a space that encompasses religious practices. In the case of eBadah, the religious mediatization perspective sees that what is happening is not the practice of worship being mediated, but the media itself is facilitating so that worship practices can be carried out. Apart from that, the mediatization of religion also has the potential to give birth to new meanings for religious practices because religion is no longer a single institution but is always related to the media as something that is no longer separate from all social practices, including religious social practices.

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Transnational In-Group Solidarity Networks in the Case of #Hellobrother

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Abstract

This paper examines the dynamics of one hashtag, #hellobrother, shared on Twitter following the Christchurch terror attack on 15th March 2019. It was analysed as part of a larger study #Contesting Islamophobia: Representation and Appropriation in Mediated Activism which explores the potentials and limitations of counternarratives against Islamophobia on Twitter. Using three 'trigger events' (Awan, 2014), Brexit, the Christchurch terror attack, and the Covid pandemic as its starting point, the study analysed six weeks of tweets at different points in time. The data on #hellobrother demonstrates an affective response which, through the affordances of Twitter, gave rise to strong networks of transnational solidarity. It illustrates both the limitations of its potentially transient solidarities but also the capacity of social media to offer visibility to counternarratives, which at specific moments, following specific events can become normative.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Twitter, Hellobrother, Christchurch Terror Attack, Affect

#Hellobrother Örneğinde Ulusötesi İç Grup Dayanışma Ağları

Öz

Bu çalışma, 15 Mart 2019'da meydana gelen Christchurch terör saldırısının ardından Twitter'da paylaşılan #hellobrother etiketi etrafındaki dinamikleri incelemektedir. Çalışma, İslamofobiye karşı karşıt anlatıları arařtıran ve Twitter'daki potansiyelleri ile sınırlılıklarını keřfetmeyi hedefleyen daha geniř kapsamlı #Contesting Islamophobia: Representation and Appropriation in Mediated Activism adlı çalışmanın bir parçası olarak ele alınmıştır. Çalışmada Awan (2014) tarafından tanımlanan üç 'tetikleyici olay' -Brexit, Christchurch terör saldırısı ve Covid pandemisi- bařlangıç noktası olarak ele alınmış, farklı zaman dilimlerinde altı haftalık tweet verisini analiz etmiştir. #hellobrother etiketiyle ilgili veriler, duygusal bir tepkiyi göstererek Twitter'ın imkanları aracılığıyla güçlü uluslararası dayanışma ağlarının oluşumuna zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu durum, potansiyel olarak geçici dayanışma biçimlerinin içsel sınırlarını sadece belirtmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda sosyal medyanın, belirli anlarda belirli olaylara yönelik olarak karşı anlatılara görünürlük sağlama yeteneğini vurgular. Bu anlar, belirli olaylara ilişkin takip eden özel zaman dilimlerinde normatif özellikler kazanabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslamofobi, Twitter, Hellobrother, Christchurch Terör Saldırısı, Etki

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Introduction

This paper examines the dynamics of one hashtag shared on Twitter following the Christchurch terror attack on 15th March 2019.¹ It was analysed as part of a larger study *#Contesting Islamophobia: Representation and Appropriation in Mediated Activism* which explores the potentials and limitations of counternarratives against Islamophobia on Twitter.² Using three ‘trigger events’ (Awan, 2014), Brexit, the Christchurch terror attack, and the Covid pandemic as its starting point, the study analysed six weeks of tweets at different points in time. For the Christchurch attack, this was for a month after the attack, then for a week at three months then six months later. In general, we noticed a demise in the use of hashtags across our datasets except for descriptive use (*#Brexit*, *#Christchurch terror attack*,) so the formation of *#helloworldbrother* was significant (see Table 1). Largely in contrast to the other datasets, we also found evidence of strong networks of transnational solidarity in the *#helloworldbrother* hashtag.

Literature Review

Hashtags have been widely discussed as having the potential ‘to create collective conversations in times of crisis, conflicts, and controversies, they also mark and declare identities in distinction to other groups and opinions’ (Giglietto & Lee, 2017 cited in Evolvi, 2019: 387). Our own previous analysis of the *#stopislam* showed how this went viral on Twitter due to people sharing opposition to its original negative intention (Poole et al, 2019). In this way it was ‘hijacked’ to counter dominant ideas about Islam and terrorism (see also Jackson and Foucault-Welles’s 2015 study of the hashtag *#myNYPD*). Many theorists have shown how the architecture of Twitter along with its political economy (which rewards sensational and emotional content), allows for counter-publics to form (Fraser, 1990). These studies show how hashtags can be used as an ideological and organising tool for harnessing collective power in racial politics, providing alternative frames to mainstream discourse (Evolvi, 2019; Jackson and Foucault-Welles, 2015, 2016).

#helloworldbrother gained traction following a campaign by TRT World Citizen (Turkish public service broadcaster) to highlight the kindness of the first victim of the terror attack (Daoud Nabi) who opened the door of Al Noor mosque to the terrorist with the words ‘hello brother’. The aim was, in their words, to ‘continue the conversation he never had chance to finish’ and ‘spread hope, unity and love’³. The larger dataset on Christchurch included over 3 million tweets, largely shared in the first 24 hours after the attack, (which was also the case with *#helloworldbrother*, see Figure 1) by high profile figures such as politicians and celebrities offering condolences. We describe these as affective solidarities (Papacharissi, 2014; Poole et al, 2023) in that they are mobilized through an outpouring of collective emotion and support. However, they were also limited, and criticized by other tweeters for their ‘non-performativity’ (Ahmed, 2004 NP), by their transience, quickly disappearing to give way to more critical (right-wing) debates around gun laws and censorship. In this article, we adopt a broad definition of solidarity to be inclusive but also to recognize its multiple dimensions, building on an argument we have made elsewhere (Poole et al, 2023). Social media platforms have been widely critiqued as providing a limited potential for solidarity due to ‘weak commitments’ underpinned by individualism and commerciality (see Nikunen, 2019). However, here we aim to show how, through this hashtag, Muslim voices were able to gain more centrality and visibility through transnational networks of connectivity to provide a counternarrative to stereotypical representations of Muslims as terrorists and construct an alternative discourse.

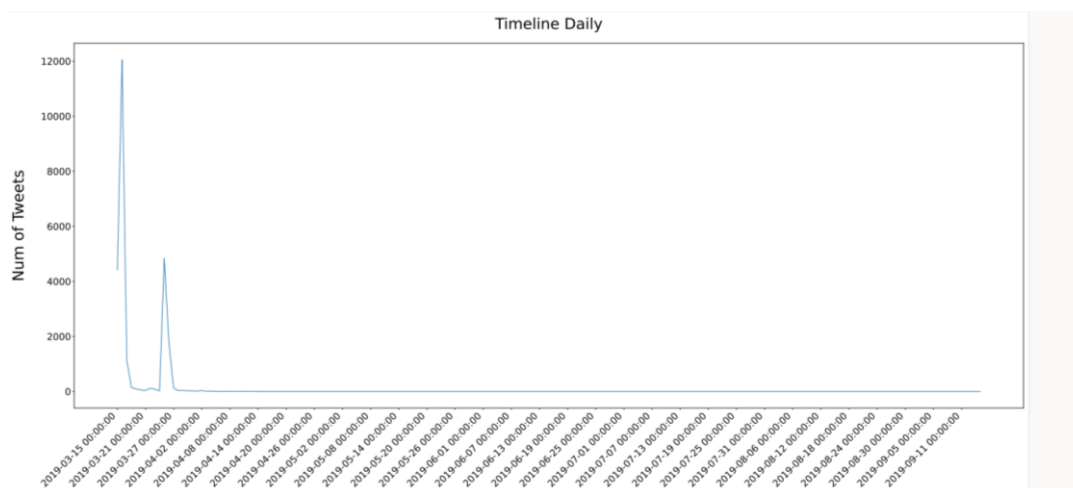


Figure 1. Timeline of the #hellobrother hashtag

Methods

The project used a multi-method approach to analyse the content of tweets, including a big data analysis (25084 tweets in the month after the attack, 25476 in total)⁴, and a manual quantitative (1000 of the most shared tweets) and qualitative (top 50 shared tweets) content analysis. As well as being complementary, in some of the datasets we looked at, the methods complicated, in particular, the big data analysis (see Giraud et al, forthcoming). Big data studies have been criticized for their assumed accuracy and lack of transparency (Boyd and Crawford, 2012), triangulating methods allowed us to test the validity of our analysis. In the case of this dataset, due to its homogeneity, the approach consolidated and enriched the findings of each method. We used broad search terms to collect our initial data on Christchurch, (Christchurch or New Zealand) AND (Islam* or Muslim(s) or Moslem(s) or “Religion of Peace” or Terror* or Mosque(s)).⁵ Our analysis of hashtags used in this dataset showed that #hellobrother was repeatedly used in relation to this event so we singled it out for analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. Hashtags of significance on Twitter after the Christchurch terror attack

Hashtag	Number
Christchurch	475031
NewZealand	130995
NewZealandshooting	75441
christchurchmosqueattack	74453
NewZealandterroristattack	59595
peacefulmosques ⁶	25904
hellobrother	25476
NewZealandmosqueshooting	24210
Islamophobia	23123
Terrorism	20252

Of the 25476 tweets, many were either Retweets (22803) or Quote tweets (1435), shared to show solidarity and circulate the story rather than add anything significant to the narrative. Figure 2 shows the most retweeted tweet in the dataset (8540 times at the time of capture). This image was retweeted often with only an emoji; the most frequently used emojis (crying, broken hearts, sad face) demonstrate an affective response: 😭❤️💔😭🙏🙏🙏😭.



Figure 2. Most retweeted tweet in #hellobrother

Figure 3 shows the keywords from the hashtag which clearly point to the circulation of the tweet shown in Figure 2.



Figure 3. Keywords

The second most retweeted tweet (6384) was from the Turkish footballer Mesut Ozil, who shared TRT's video tribute to the Imam with the words 'Terrorism has no religion' and #hellobrother; with 26m followers, this also explains its traction (and the reason for the second peak in figure 1). Figure 4 also shows a frequently shared tweet (292), an illustration used by City News Toronto, with a significantly more open (ethnically) and younger figure which would appeal to a wider audience (the Indonesian artist, who shared in on Instagram, claims to have drawn it

before an image of the victim was released). The network diagram shows the activity around the top retweeted tweets and how they are connected (Figure 5).



Figure 4. An illustration widely circulated with the #hellobrother (courtesy of Akbar Bisul)

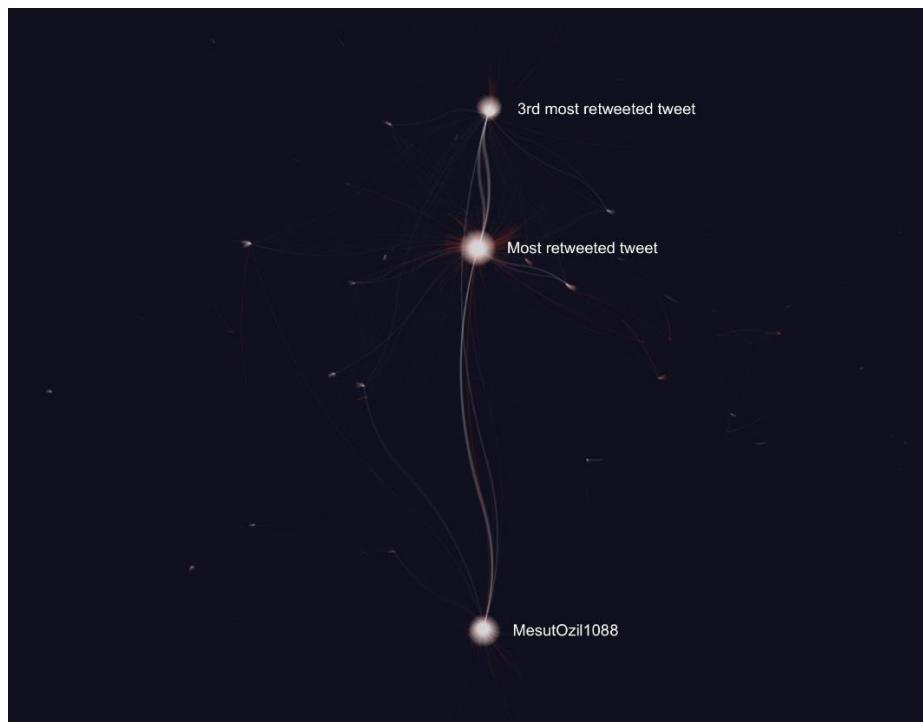


Figure 5. Retweet networks in #hellobrother

Key: White: Retweets, Red: Quote tweets

Where location can be identified (which is not always possible), this dataset shows more diversity than the others (particularly Brexit which is mostly British), as can be seen when compared to the larger Christchurch sample (see Table 2).

Table 2. Location of users in #helloworld and the Christchurch terror attack

#helloworld: Location	Number	Christchurch: Location Sample 1: 15/3-15/4/19	Number
Unknown	9349	Unknown	1046489
Malaysia	434	United States	31868
London, England	253	Malaysia	26181
Indonesia	252	London, England	21303
London	138	India	17594
Saudi Arabia	106	Pakistan	16500
Nigeria	106	London	15313
Lagos, Nigeria	97	California, USA	13419
Selangor, Malaysia	85	USA	11029
UK	82	Canada	11024
Nairobi, Kenya	81	Australia	11023

The diversity of the dataset is also illustrated by the top users both by number of followers and those sharing the most original tweets. In the wider Christchurch dataset the top users by the number of their followers tended to be Western news organisations, politicians and celebrities but in this hashtag, as well as Mesut Ozil, there is an Egyptian footballer, a Malaysian politician, another Malaysian account, a Danish football supporter, and a Saudi consultant. Most of the top tweeters accounts have Arabic names (190 of the tweets are in Arabic). This is also evident in the manual content analysis of the 1000 most shared tweets, many are from the Middle East (particularly Saudi Arabia), there are a large number of Arabic tweets (96 non-English tweets out of the 1000 original tweets). There are a significantly higher number of (self-identified) Muslim accounts in the sample (38.3% compared to 3.5% in the Brexit sample). This is illustrative of the collective identities that coalesced around this hashtag, important in the way discourse is amplified on Twitter, through affective solidarities (see Richardson et al, forthcoming, for more discussion on these affective politics).

At this stage we were also able to measure support towards Muslims; 95.4% of these tweets are outwardly supportive to Muslims, significantly higher than the other datasets, demonstrating the collectivity of hashtag politics. This is further evident when examining the primary topic of tweets which comprised largely of condolences or tributes to victims (68.1%, see Table 3). This demonstrates the affective response which outweighs attention to political issues; only 3.8% of the tweets specifically point out Islamophobia as a primary issue. While the emotional tone therefore is sympathetic, the apolitical response is typical of reactions to terrorism which largely avoid addressing systemic issues. There is also little evidence of contestation in this dataset which had some success on Twitter in spreading a positive message about Islam. However, a number of

tweets use the hashtags to give greater prominence/visibility to Islamic teachings, and proselytizing, (9.5%) further illustrating the appropriation of tweets for specific agendas. For example, the most shared URLs aim to show or teach about the religion such as Discoveritsbeauty, islamtomorrow.com and islamreligion.com

Table 3. Primary topics of tweets

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Condolences/support/tributes to Muslims	681	68.1	68.1	68.1
	Defending Muslims	190	19.0	19.0	87.1
	Global Politics/ Politics of RW terrorism	89	8.9	8.9	96.0
	Left wing politics	32	3.2	3.2	99.2
	Right wing politics	6	.6	.6	99.8
	Accusation of antisemitism	2	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion

This article speaks to debates about hashtag politics which suggest that hashtags are instrumental devices around which counter-publics can form (Jackson and Foucault Welles, 2016). We have previously shown how counter-narratives can coalesce on social media platforms to challenge dominant negative media coverage of Islam (Poole et al, 2019). In comparison to other datasets in this project, this hashtag shows how social media can offer ‘potentials for identity negotiation, visibility and influence’ (Jackson and Foucault Welles, 2015: 399) and in this case allowed for the transnational expression of collective solidarities to form. However, this visibility did not expand significantly into the wider mainstream media. Through an analysis of worldwide mainstream media sources that used the hashtag (using the Nexis database) we found only 17 articles, only 8 from Western countries. It is, however, likely that some media organisations reported on the story without using the hashtag. While this would appear to reinforce arguments that social media solidarities are transient and therefore lacking in impact, we would argue that the data from the project overall shows how through different events, anti-Islamophobic counternarratives can be sustained and even become normative in the right conditions (see Poole et al, 2023).

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Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Yazarların alıřmadaki katkı oranları eřittir.

The authors' contribution rates in the study are equal.

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Notes

¹ The Christchurch terror attack took place in New Zealand and was committed by a white-supremacist terrorist who attacked two mosques killing 51 people and injuring 40. As well as posting a document online before the attack which demonstrates his hate for Muslims, he lives streamed 17 minutes of the attack on Facebook before it was taken down.

² <https://www.keele.ac.uk/humanities/study/mcc/research/contestingislamophobia/>

³ <https://worldcitizen.trtworld.com/hello-brother/#:~:text=TRT%20World%20Citizen%20Hello%20Brother%20Campaign&text=The%20hashtag%20%23HelloBrother%20was%20born,had%20a%20chance%20to%20finish>

⁴ Again, this confirms that most of the activity took place in the first month.

⁵ * includes any derivatives. Some of the search terms we used reflected the lexicon of far-right users after consultation with our advisory group.

⁶ We discuss this in Richardson et al, 2024.



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Approaches to Silence through Scorsese's Silence Film: A Comparison between Western and Eastern Perspectives

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Abstract

Silence, the film, revolves around Christian missionaries who traveled to Japan in the 17th century to propagate Christianity and explores their interactions with the local population. The film portrays silence by strongly associating it with martyrdom and alludes to the suffering of Jesus Christ. This glorification of silence reveals findings related to Western perspectives and an Orientalist attitude. These findings will be analyzed according to Orientalist theory, a theory that investigates Western culture's tendency to exoticize and dominate Eastern cultures, in order to examine how the Western missionaries in the film observed and represented Japanese culture. The analysis will employ content analysis methodology to delve into the themes, symbols, and representations in the film. Additionally, it will draw upon Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and the concept of self-Orientalism. The film identifies instances where the Western representation associates silence with martyrdom and belittles Eastern culture. Examples such as the claim that the Japanese people do not understand Christianity, the depiction of Japan as a barren land, the presentation of Japanese characters as stereotypical figures, and the relegation of Eastern spiritual traditions to a lower status all demonstrate the denigration and marginalization of Eastern culture by the Western perspective. Furthermore, the fact that the film is based on a novel written by a Japanese author necessitates an examination of self-Orientalism.

Keywords: Japan, Christianity, Silence, East-West, Orientalism

Scorsese'nin Silence Filmi Üzerinden Sessizliğe Yaklaşımlar: Batı ve Doğu Perspektifleri Arasında Bir Karşılaştırma

Öz

Silence (Sessizlik) filmi Japonya'ya Hristiyanlığı yaymak için giden Hristiyan misyonerlerin 17. yüzyılda Japonya'da yaşadıklarını ve yerel halkla etkileşimlerini konu almaktadır. Film sessizliği şiddetle özdeşleştirerek yüceltmekte, sessizlik üzerinden İsa'nın çilesine atıfta bulunmaktadır. İsa'nın çilesi üzerinden yapılan bu yüceltme, batılı bakış açısına ve oryantalist bir tavra dair bulguları ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bulgular batı kültürünün doğu kültürlerini araştırarak hakimiyet kurma ve egzotikleştirme eğilimini araştıran oryantalizm kuramı üzerinden analiz edildiğinde, filmdeki batılı misyonerlerin Japon kültürünü nasıl gözlemlediği ve filmde Japon ve Japon olmayan kültürlerin nasıl temsil edildiği ortaya koyulabilir. Bu analiz yapılırken içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak filmdeki temalar, semboller ve temsiller üzerinden okumalar

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yapılacaktır. Aynı zamanda Edward Said'in oryantalizm teorisi ve self oryantalizm kavramından yararlanılmıştır. Filmde, batı temsilinin sessizliği çileyile ilişkilendirerek yücelttiği ve doğu kültürünü küçümsemeye yönelik önyargılar içerdiği tespit edilmiştir. Japon halkının Hristiyanlığı anlamadığı iddiası, Japonya'nın çorak toprak olarak tanımlanması, Japon karakterlerin stereotip tipler olarak sunulması ve doğulu spiritüel geleneklerin alt seviyede görülmesi gibi örnekler, doğu kültürünün filmde batı tarafından aşağılandığını ve ötekileştirildiğini göstermektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, filmin uyarlandığı romanın Japon bir yazar tarafından yazılması, self oryantalizm eleştirisinin yapılmasını gerektirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Japonya, Hristiyanlık, Sessizlik, Doğu-Batı, Oryantalizm

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Introduction

In addition to its universal meaning, silence carries symbolic value. The interpretation of silence has differed between Western and Eastern cultures. This study will analyze Martin Scorsese's film *Silence* (2016). through the Orientalist theory, focusing on the East-West binary, the Western perspective on the East, and the theory of self-Orientalism. Adapted from the novel *Silence* (1966) by Shūsaku Endō, a Japanese Catholic author, the film narrates the journey of Catholic missionaries in 1640s Japan, associating silence with violence and reverence. Such veneration sheds light on significant findings concerning Western perspectives on silence and the resulting Orientalist disposition. Consequently, the film serves as a suitable platform for investigating the perception of silence across different cultures and provides an opportunity for critiquing Orientalism. Additionally, the Japanese origin of the novel's author allows for a functional examination of the Self-Orientalism critique. Indeed, Endo's conversion to Christianity at the age of 11 due to the persuasion of his mother and aunt, as well as his education in France, provides a suitable framework for a Self-Orientalism analysis, and as such, this will be further discussed below. This study addresses the following inquiries: To what extent does Endo's novel adhere to historical accuracy? What aspects does Scorsese emphasize in the film adaptation? How is the concept of silence portrayed in the film? Why does silence translate into violence and torment for Japanese missionaries? How do orientalism and self-orientalism manifest in the film? Can these manifestations enable a general comparison between the West and the East?

1. Conceptual Framework

This study aims to analyze the film *Silence* (Scorsese, 2016) through both Eastern and Western perspectives, while also examining the concepts of orientalism and self-orientalism. The key concepts that the study focuses on include silence, the suffering of Jesus, the representation of Japan, and the analysis of violence and perception from the lens of this representation, along with efforts related to Orientalism and self-orientalism. Silence, which also serves as the film's title, constitutes the central theme of the movie. Before delving into the representation of silence in the film, it is essential to examine the historical perception of silence in both Eastern and Western cultures.

1.1. Perception of Silence in Western Perspective

Given page constraints and the article's specific focus, we cannot delve into extensive details; however, in Western thought, silence has not been associated with inner peace since ancient Greek civilization. Instead, the primary inspiration for the concept of silence in this study and the film is drawn from Christian sources, specifically the silence of Jesus, as portrayed in Roman Catholic teachings. This silence represents Jesus' silence towards God as he faces condemnation and death. Although named "silence" this silence is closely associated with torture and violence, as it culminates in Jesus' crucifixion. Thus, Jesus' silence reinforces the Western notion that silence is

linked to suffering, agony, and defeat. In Christianity, Jesus' silence is depicted as his acceptance of self-sacrifice for the sake of humanity, enduring his suffering in silence. The contrast between the Christian belief in Jesus' crucifixion and Islam's belief in his ascension into heaven clearly highlights the distinction between Islamic and Christian thought. In Christian belief, Jesus' silence leads to immense torment and death, while in Islam, it results in salvation. The silence that signifies submission to God is rewarded with liberation in the East, while Western constructs, particularly in Christianity, associate it with torture on the cross.

The notion of Jesus' silence as a representation of his self-sacrifice for the sins of humanity permeates all Christian thought, even extending into non-religious Western thinking, where silence is also equated with suffering. This idea is further perpetuated by Western religious scholars. Consequently, even in secular Western thought, silence is often associated with a form of inner conflict. The view of silence as a form of power and domination by Western thinkers can also be seen as a disregard for the depth of silence.

Ultimately, in Western culture, the concept of silence does not lead to a sense of fulfillment but instead deepens conflict. In this culture, the idea that only what is written in blood can endure summarizes much of Western thought, as Nietzsche's quote, "I love only what is written with blood. Write with blood: You will see that blood is spirit" (1989, p. 55) suggests. Similarly, the Western-centric discipline of psychoanalysis associates silence directly with illness, indicating a negative value attributed to silence (Freud, 1912, p. 12). According to this perspective, silence represents emotional suppression and pain. Hence, it is considered a form of illness.

In the forthcoming analysis, it will be shown that Scorsese's film *Silence* also treats silence within a similar context, sanctifying it through torture and the suffering of Jesus, while simultaneously perceiving it as a conflict resulting from emotional expression deficiency. In the East, the situation is entirely different.

1.2. Perception of Silence in Eastern Perspective

In contrast to its perception in the West, silence in the Eastern perspective is associated with inner peace, enlightenment, and spiritual transformation. The founder of Buddhism, Buddha, achieved enlightenment under a fig tree in solitude and silence, experiencing divine grace. From then on, he could not be disturbed by any external influence and remained in a state of inner tranquility (Schumann, 2004). Buddhism venerates silence as a path to deepening and enlightenment.

While Christianity holds the belief that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (The Holy Bible, New King James Version [NKJV], 1982/2023, *John* 1:1). In Hinduism, God is perceived as silence (*Upanishads*, 2023). Even before Western counterparts, the founder of Taoism, the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu developed a profound concept of silence. According to Lao Tzu (2021), silence is the source of inner peace and serenity. Noise, chaos, and incessant talking lead to the loss of mental and emotional balance. By being still and calming the mind, one can attain a natural and balanced state. Similarly, silence represents harmony with the natural flow. It transcends verbal expression and carries a depth of meaning beyond words' limitations. Silence embodies profound wisdom and understanding that words cannot convey. Moreover, in Laozi's philosophy, silence is connected to the principle of non-action (*wu wei*). Non-action refers to aligning oneself with the natural flow, moving without force or interference. Silence, by calming the mind and actions, allows inner strength to emerge. This philosophy emphasizes the significance of finding deep meaning and wisdom in silence.

Similarly, Prophet Muhammad received revelations in silence while secluded in a cave and experienced absolute and irreversible enlightenment. Hence, in the Islamic tradition, silence is considered a precursor and facilitator of divine revelation and profound understanding. Eastern thinkers also find profound wisdom in silence without any external influence, including torture.

Many Islamic scholars claim to have achieved a state of fulfillment in silence through their religious practices and call this state "mutmain" or content, which denotes a soul free from imperfections.

Despite the limitations in our brief exploration of this phenomenon, the film under study overlooks the experience and richness of Eastern silence and attributes silence to Western missionaries as a virtue. However, unlike the Eastern perspective, the silence depicted in the film becomes a source of internal conflict rather than reflecting a state of fulfilled spirit. At this point, the film's discourse can be characterized as orientalist and even self-orientalist in its construction.

1.3. Orientalism and Self-Orientalism

The theory of Orientalism examines the tendency of Western culture to exoticize, stereotype, and establish dominance over Eastern cultures. Therefore, Orientalism is an academic and cultural approach based on erroneous, romanticized, and derogatory perceptions of Western observers towards Eastern cultures. Edward Said (1998, p. 55-62) first exposed and articulated this thought system, which serves Western civilization in establishing absolute dominance over the Eastern world, relying on prejudices, fantasies, images, and illusions. The practice of Western othering of the East also serves the purpose of explaining Eastern existence and reinforcing the power and reputation of the West in the global world. In the process of writing its own life story, the West has portrayed the East with negative attributes as a way of envisioning its own future. This mechanism of othering is seen as a precondition in the process of making sense of its own existence.

Derived from the notion of Orientalism, Self-Orientalism refers to the tendency of a society or culture to conform its cultural elements or identity to the "Western perspective." This conformity, to some extent, distorts its own identity and culture (Bezci and Çiftci, 2014, p. 143). Self-Orientalism refers to Eastern individuals who embrace these Orientalist perceptions and try to integrate into Western societies by displaying behaviors that align with Western expectations. The stereotypes and expectations of the West about Eastern cultures also influence Eastern individuals while they try to shape their own cultures.

Endo's novel addresses Japan's relationship with Christianity and its place within Japanese culture, while also reflecting the Western gaze towards Japan. In this sense, the novel displays a self-orientalist attitude and is open to such an interpretation. The emergence of self-orientalism in East Asia and Japan's relatively more "Western" characteristics compared to other Eastern societies (Golden, 2009, p. 9) make it particularly interesting and significant in the context of the novel and the film. In this context, the film's exploration of silence, suffering, and related concepts through both Orientalism and self-Orientalism is likely to lead to insightful findings.

2. Method

As stated above, this analysis, which will discuss the construction of the concept of silence implied by the film's title in Japan, demands more than a limited perspective of a single method. Therefore, in this study, while the film is examined through content analysis, Edward Said's Orientalism theory will also be used as a theoretical perspective to interpret the ideological and cultural dimensions embedded in the background of the film. Content analysis is a frequently employed method for interpreting texts and revealing implicit messages within them. Accordingly, the analyzed text is deciphered and subjected to analysis based on classifications, symbols, signs, and themes (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 18). Given that Orientalism and self-Orientalism intertwine in the film, both forms of criticism will be taken into account during the analysis. The reason is that while the source material of the film belongs to a Catholic Japanese author, the adaptors are Western Catholics. Therefore, the analysis will consider both forms of criticism to understand the interplay of Orientalism and self-Orientalism in the film.

3. Silence Film

"Silence" is a 2016 monumental historical drama film directed by Martin Scorsese, with a screenplay by Jay Cocks and Scorsese, adapted from Shūsaku Endō's 1966 novel of the same title. The film features a stellar cast including Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver, Tadanobu Asano, Ciarán Hinds, and Liam Neeson. The narrative revolves around two 17th-century Jesuit priests who embark on a journey from Portugal to Edo period Japan via Macau. Their mission is twofold: to find their missing mentor and to propagate Catholic Christianity. The backdrop is a period when Japanese adherents of the faith concealed their beliefs to evade persecution stemming from the suppression of Christianity in Japan, particularly following the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637-1638 against the Tokugawa shogunate. These covert believers are now referred to as the "hidden Christians," or *kakure kirishitan*. Notably, this film marks the second cinematic adaptation of Endō's novel, following a 1971 production of the same title. The pre-production phase of "Silence" experienced more than two decades of challenges and reevaluations. Martin Scorsese, driven by his enduring passion for the project, commenced work on it after completing "The Wolf of Wall Street" in January 2013. In April 2013, he confirmed his intention to commence filming in 2014. Irwin Winkler was announced as a producer, with Randall Emmett and George Furla providing financial support through their company, Emmett/Furla Films. The decision to shoot the film in Taiwan was also made. A labor of love for Scorsese that he had nurtured for over 25 years, "Silence" premiered in Rome on November 29, 2016, and was released in the United States on December 23, 2016. It garnered significant critical acclaim, with recognition from esteemed institutions such as the National Board of Review and the American Film Institute, both of which included "Silence" in their respective top ten films of the year lists. The film also secured an Academy Award nomination for Best Cinematography. However, commercially, "Silence" fell short, grossing only \$22 million against a budget of \$50 million (Wikipedia, 2023).

3.1. Silence as an Adaptation

The novel on which the film *Silence* is based belongs to Shūsaku Endō, a prominent Japanese Catholic author born in Tokyo, Japan in 1923. Growing up in a Catholic family, Endō developed an interest in Christianity from a young age. Throughout his literary career, he frequently explored religious themes in his works, heavily influenced by his Catholic faith. Endō's literary works encompassed various aspects of Japanese society and culture, including novels, short stories, plays, and essays. He delved deep into and critiqued religious, historical, and social issues in Japan, addressing topics such as the Christian minority in Japan, the influence of Western culture, and the individual's relationship with faith (Endo, 1974). One of his most famous works is the novel *Silence*, first published in Japan in 1966 and later translated into English in 2015. This novel narrates the period in Japan when Christian missionaries faced persecution and Christianity continued to be practiced underground. It explores profound themes such as religion, faith, suffering, and silence while shedding light on the tension and conflict between Japanese and Western cultures.

In the early years of his writing career, Endō, who was once a fervent Catholic, extensively incorporated religious themes in his works. However, towards the end of his life, some reliable sources suggest that Endō experienced changes in his beliefs. Shortly before his death, he reportedly developed a closer relationship with Buddhism and questioned his commitment to Catholicism. This complexity added further layers to Endō's exploration of religious themes and his relationship with faith in his works (Bayer, 2017). This complexity is not confined to Endō's biography alone but also reflects the self-orientalist inclination of a Catholic Japanese author who felt Western and looked down upon his own culture, which is also evident in the film.

3.2. Silence Plot

Cristóvão Ferreira is an experienced Portuguese Jesuit priest who, in the 17th century, witnesses the persecution and execution of Japanese converts who refuse to renounce their Christian faith in Japan. Two young Jesuit priests, Sebastião Rodrigues and Francisco Garupe, who were Ferreira's students, learn about his rumored apostasy and decide to travel to Japan to find him. Upon their arrival in Japan, they discover that underground Christian communities are living under oppression. The policies of persecution aimed at stopping the spread of Christianity in Japan keep the Japanese Christians in fear and danger. While visiting secret Christian villages, Rodrigues and Garupe witness conflicts between the Shogunate officials and the villagers. The authorities frequently apply pressure to reveal hidden Christians and force them to trample on images of Jesus, known as *fumi-e*.

Rodrigues travels to Gotō Island, where Ferreira was last seen, while Garupe goes to Hirado Island. In Gotō Island, Rodrigues finds the Christian village in ruins and attempts to locate the hidden Christians, but he is eventually captured by Japanese authorities and imprisoned in Nagasaki. In prison, Rodrigues is pressured by Japanese officials to renounce his Christian faith, and his loyalty is questioned. When Rodrigues finally meets Ferreira, he is shocked to see that Ferreira has renounced his faith and assimilated into Japanese society. However, he faces an inner struggle, torn between holding onto his faith and ending the suffering of other Christians who are also undergoing torture and pain. Ultimately, Rodrigues believes that abandoning his faith is the right thing to do to end the suffering of others, and he tramples on the *fumi-e* in acceptance.

Rodrigues adopts a Japanese name, marries a Japanese woman, and begins to live in Japanese society. As his faith is questioned and his loyalty criticized, Rodrigues continues to live in Japan, and after his death, he is given a traditional Japanese funeral. At his funeral, Rodrigues' wife places a small cross, symbolizing his Christian faith, in his hand. This gesture emphasizes that Rodrigues had retained his Christian faith in his heart throughout his life. The scene highlights the spirituality of Christianity, emphasizing that the essence lies in the soul and cannot be distorted or separated from one's nature. Rodrigues' story is presented as a test of faith and a narrative of Christian history in Japan, centered around the Christian faith he upheld until his silent death, making a reference to Jesus' silence on his way to crucifixion.

4. Discussion

4.1. The Two Aspects of Silence: Representations of East and West in the Film

As evident from the plot, the silence chosen by Rodrigues in the film is associated with the silence of Jesus on his way to crucifixion. This silence is revered and equated with the suffering of Jesus. Contrary to its perception in the East, the film presents silence as a source of agony. Similarly, violence is acknowledged as one of the most intense manifestations of God. When Jesus speaks and declares, "I suffer in your suffering" at the peak of his spiritual torment, it can be considered the pinnacle of metaphysical tension and manifestation. In this regard, the film seems to reenact the concept of salvation and exaltation in Christian belief through the repetition of suffering. The film's protagonist, Father Rodrigues, finds salvation in suffering. The divine manifestation in violence is exaggerated to the extent that the extensive scenes of torture in the film turn into a form of "violence pornography" (Rappo, 2017, p. 7). This glorification of suffering is already familiar in Christian tradition, as evidenced by the annual commemoration of the crucifixion as the *Holy Week*.

Moreover, the fundamental aspect of identity construction for the priest characters in the film is "suffering". In this context, Jung's expression "without suffering, there is no identity" (2018, p. 223) becomes significant. This statement succinctly captures the idea prevalent in Western thought that associates violence with identity and considers experiencing violence as elevating an

individual. When looking at the historical roots of the glorified violence represented through Jesus, ancient Greek mythology comes to the forefront. Prometheus, a deity in Greek mythology, is a fitting example. According to the myth, Prometheus supports humanity's progress and civilization by providing them with fire, which challenges Zeus' rule. Consequently, Zeus punishes Prometheus for his actions. Prometheus is sentenced to have his liver pecked by an eagle every day, only to regenerate at night. This perpetual cycle of suffering and torture represents the myth of Prometheus. It illustrates his self-sacrifice for humanity's progress and knowledge, even though he must endure personal suffering. While believing in the advancement of humanity, Prometheus risks himself and makes a great sacrifice.

This story aligns remarkably well with the suffering of Jesus. The portrayal of Jesus, who is originally Eastern, as a Western figure like Prometheus condemns him to perpetual suffering. Thus, when Jesus dies on the cross, he asks his God, "Why have you forsaken me?" (The Holy Bible, New King James Version [NKJV], 1982/2023, Ps (s) 22: 1). In Eastern traditions, it is rare to encounter prophets having such a relationship with God; they usually appear completely content and enlightened, overcoming all earthly troubles through divine help. This difference is clearly illustrated by Jesus being raised to heaven without the crucifixion in Islamic belief, while in Christianity, he dies on the cross.

The silence and suffering of the main protagonist in the film directly align with the suffering of Christian Jesus. Though he lives a life of silence, Rodrigues remains perplexed and unsatisfied until the end, resembling a believer seeking answers. In contrast, figures from Eastern traditions, like Hallaj-ı Mansur, who is described by Massignon as perhaps being similar to Jesus, retain their composure even while facing torture, exhibiting complete contentment as they merge into the vast ocean during their martyrdom (Said, 1998, p. 366). In Eastern traditions, enlightenment attained through silence is an irreversible experience, while in the West, it is coded as a constant struggle and an ongoing process of suffering. The silence in the film essentially contains an inherent violence, symbolizing humanity's struggle and an unending conflict with its creator that has been evident since ancient Greek times. This is why Endo's novel, and consequently the film, portrays parallel themes of belief and denial, loyalty and betrayal. This silence does not offer salvation; instead, it leads to an unending ordeal and confrontation with death. When we consider the location of this confrontation between the East and the West, the film takes place in the Far East, in Japan, even though it should belong to the Middle East and the West. This highlights the critique of Orientalism. Indeed, while Jesus, originally a prophet from the Middle East, was universalized with a new design by Westerners, thus becoming a religious and cultural icon of the West, detached from his Eastern roots, he was ultimately reinterpreted by the West in its own image. This resulted in distancing his Eastern origins and 'Westernizing' him, sending the universalized Savior, in this case, to the Far East. When looking at this entire operation, it becomes apparent that it's not merely a missionary endeavor but also the West's assignment of other cultures as 'the other,' thereby reconstructing itself as the true norm. As a result, while the West consistently seeks to construct its identity by seeking an "Other" it has now found this "Other" in Japan. These manipulative tactics are not limited to a specific location but can be found throughout the entire Eastern geographical spectrum where the West has made contact.

4.2. Hidden Arrogance in the Sacred Agony: Dual-Layer Orientalism

When analyzed through the lens of Orientalism theory, this theory examines how the West observes the East and analyzes the observer-observed relationship. By examining how the Western missionaries in the film observe, interpret, and represent Japanese culture and beliefs, we can identify certain negative representations that position the East as an exotic other. These can be listed as follows:

Allegation of Japanese Misunderstanding of Christianity: In the film, it is claimed that the Japanese people do not understand Christianity, and therefore, they cannot relate to it with

genuine faith. Christianity is presented as a superior religion, foreign to Japanese culture, and the implication is that the Japanese cannot grasp it. Hence, the film's protagonist, the Japanese priest, chooses to conceal his faith rather than sacrificing himself, implying that Japanese Christians are not worthy of such sacrifice. As a result of witnessing torture without divine intervention, the priest decides to live his faith in silence, keeping the valuable salvation recipe from the Japanese. This portrays the Japanese as primitive masses deprived of the divine favor of the Christian god, and they are left to their own devices.

Depiction of Japan as Barren Land: The film suggests that Japan is spiritually dry and barren, unlike the lands where Christian missionaries came from. This judgment reflects the belief that Japanese culture and religion are not suitable for the direct acceptance of Christianity. This discriminatory discourse suggests a vast gap between Christianity and Western society and Japanese culture and society, with the Japanese being "uncivilized" and lagging behind in terms of civilization. It asserts that the West is continuously changing and developing, while the East is perpetually stagnant, resistant to change, and devoid of progress. Engaging in an Orientalist approach, they attribute the difficulties encountered in conveying their message to the recipients rather than examining the message itself and the means of its communication. They label the Japanese as primitive, ignorant, and despotic, and they choose to solve the issue from their own perspective, embracing a kind of "hypocrisy".

Stereotypical Portrayal of the Japanese as Monolithic Types: The film represents Japanese characters in two ways: as barbaric torturers and as waiting victims seeking salvation. The first representation encompasses Japanese officials who torture Japanese Christians in an attempt to make them renounce their faith. The second representation includes the simple Japanese people, especially the villagers, who desire salvation as Christians. Both representations distort Japanese culture and sociology. The film asserts that Japanese culture is unable to combat Christianity culturally. Simultaneously, it portrays the Japanese people as ignorant masses, passively waiting for a savior. While emphasizing the overwhelming superiority of Western culture, the film also highlights the weakness, barbarism, and "backwardness" of the Eastern world. This sharp emphasis establishes a hierarchy of civilizations, with the West reconstructing itself as the superior "first" civilization over the East through an Orientalist gaze.

Another character portrayed exceptionally in the film is Kichijiro, equated with Jesus' betraying apostle, Judas (The Holy Bible, New King James Version [NKJV], 1982/2023, Ps (s) 10:2-4). Kichijiro constantly repents but commits the same sin again on the same day. Interestingly, the film's language exalts this character, who survives by betraying, rather than the ordinary Japanese Christians who martyr themselves for Christianity. Moreover, what is even more intriguing is that when Scorsese explains why he chose to adapt Endo's novel into a film, he references both Kichijiro and Judas. According to Christian belief, Judas is one of Jesus' 12 apostles and is known for betraying Jesus. In the New Testament, Judas handed Jesus over to Roman authorities for money, ultimately leading to Jesus' crucifixion. Judas is regarded as a dark figure in Christian history and has become a symbol of betrayal.

According to Scorsese, the novel understands Judas' problem better than anyone else because, just like Judas, Kichijiro also informs the authorities about the location of the missionary priests. What deeply affects Scorsese is that Christianity needs not only the figure of Jesus but also the figure of Judas equally to exist in other cultures and historical periods (2016, p. 7). Such an interpretation reveals the director's view of non-Christian societies as being placed hierarchically beneath them, indicating the necessity of possessing negative attributes like betrayal and denial, as required to deal with them. When Endo identifies himself with Kichijiro (Rappo, 2017, p. 4), it can also be read as a strong desire to willingly inhabit the position assigned by the West and even to strengthen and reconstruct that position. This attitude corresponds to Turner's observation about

Orientalism, as he argues that the mission of Orientalism is to transform the infinite complexity of the East into specific types, characters, and institutions, presenting the exotic East as an accessible systematic knowledge table to Western dominance (Turner, 2003, p. 45), which is reflected in the novel.

Underestimation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: In the film, local Japanese religions and spiritual traditions are demeaned or considered secondary. This is an example of how Eastern traditions are represented with disdain and condescension against Western-originated religions and thought systems. As Hanefi points out, the film centers on the Christian West as the enlightener and educator, while the Japanese are presented as the periphery, the needy, and the mass that needs to be educated (2007, p. 81). In fact, when Catholic priests go to Japan to preach their religion, they do not even feel the need to learn Japanese, assuming that the Japanese should understand them somehow.

Positive Portrayal of Missionary Priests: The missionary priests who come to Japan continuously put their lives at risk in secret, trying to live Christianity there. The film extols this dedication. But it despises silence of God despite the priests' dedication. The priests, in a way, take revenge from God by becoming silent, making a decision to keep both the traitor and the faithful alive at the same time. Therefore, they can never find inner peace.

Ignoring the Connection between Missionary Work and Colonialism: The film disregards Bayer's accurate observation that Christian missionary activities played a role in Spain's efforts to colonize the Pacific. Additionally, it overlooks the sectarian-related Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) within Europe during that time. In this war, thousands of people were burned and executed by both Catholics and Protestants. It is unthinkable that Japanese authorities hostile to the Catholic priests in the film were unaware of these wars. However, the film does not address these wars, as acknowledging them would weaken the missionaries' discourse and ultimately the film's message. Nevertheless, a historically accurate perspective reveals that the first missionaries who went to Japan, portrayed as barbarians in the film, in 1547 were entirely free to preach their religion, while tensions between Protestants and Catholics began to rise immediately after Martin Luther's death in Europe, portrayed as civilized in the film (Bayer, 2017). Furthermore, apart from colonialism, the Japanese had other valid reasons to ban Christianity in Japan. Most importantly, the Christian denominations conducting missionary activities in Japan were themselves at odds, and there was a risk of bringing this conflict into Japan. After experiencing what happened in the Philippines and South America, the Japanese feared that the missionaries would be followed by armies, and indeed, some prominent historical figures like Christian missionary Francisco Cabral argued that the best way to Christianize Japan was to invade it (Rappo, 2017, p. 8).

These examples indicate the presence of negative representations of Japanese culture and beliefs in the film "Silence." These representations can be interpreted as the film expressing a Western-centric perspective that belittles and disrespects Eastern culture. This aligns with the Ersoy's observation about the non-scientific, ignorant, and barbaric view of Eastern societies prevalent in Orientalist thought (2003, p. 85-86). Additionally, the film's focus on an adventurous journey coincides with the Kirel's observation about the portrayal of the East as a land of fairy tales and adventures in films containing Orientalist elements (2012, p. 459). The fact that the novel on which the film is based is written by a Japanese author further demonstrates a form of self-Orientalism, where the novel is a product of internalized Orientalism.

4.3. From Orientalism to Self-Orientalism: Japanese Representations Constructed in the Film

As mentioned earlier, Silence is a film adapted from the novel of the same name by Shūsaku Endō. Endō, being a Japanese writer and a Catholic, addresses the events of Christianity in Japan's history in his novel. From this perspective, the novel can be evaluated in the context of self-

orientalism, as it represents a Japanese writer narrating the interaction between Japan and Christianity, sharing the same representations as the film analyzed above. In this regard, a closer examination of this topic is required. As Aizura pointed out, Orientalism inherently involves self-Orientalism (2010, p. 14-15).

Endō, being Japanese himself, has thoroughly studied the historical period he deals with in his work. He particularly selects his characters from real historical figures, while skillfully reconstructing them to convey the desired message effectively. For instance, in the film, Ferreira (1580-1650) is a real historical figure, but the letter he supposedly wrote in the film is entirely constructed in accordance with the writer's intentions (Rappo, 2017, p. 2). Similarly, in the novel, Rodrigues, representing the real-life Giuseppe Chiara (1602-1685), indeed abandoned his Christian faith, took on a Japanese name as Okamoto San'emon got married, and lived in Japan for forty years (Rappo, 2017, p. 3). However, in the novel, the character is detached from historical facts, turned into a secret Christian during those forty years, and a cross is placed in his hand upon his death. Additionally, Inoue (1585-1661), who was a quite moderate ruler in reality, is transformed into a cruel torturer in the novel. This departure from historical accuracy reflects the Orientalist tendency of the West to encode Eastern societies with despotism, and when a Japanese individual accepts and internalizes this perspective, it becomes self-Orientalism. The portrayal of Japanese resistance against Christianity by the Japanese government in the novel neglects all social and political justifications for this opposition and presents it from an Orientalist view as an arbitrary imposition by an Eastern despot (Turner, 2003, p. 47).

Moreover, Endō, in his representation of Jesus' suffering in Japan, selectively chose the most suitable torture methods for his message, disregarding historical realities. The most prevalent method of persuading Christian missionaries to renounce their faith in Japan during that period involved priests being left alone in a room with a beautiful Japanese woman to be enticed and married to her, which is not depicted in the novel. Similarly, the novel also depicts the Japanese cruelty previously imagined through an Orientalist lens to reconstruct the sufferings of Jesus. It is known that over 7,000 plays portraying the cruelty of the Japanese towards Christian missionary priests were performed in Europe. The widely popular idea of Eastern cruelty in European literature during the 18th century (Rappo, 2017, p. 7-8) finds its place in a novel written by a Japanese author through a Westerner's perspective.

Indeed, both the novel and the film "Silence" depict Japan's attitude towards Christian missionaries' activities and conflicts associated with Christianity, yet they approach these subjects from a Western perspective by distorting them. This reflects Endō's effort to present Japanese culture and history in a comprehensible and appealing manner for a Western audience rather than from his own cultural background. Consequently, the novel receives admiration in the Western world.

Self-Orientalism occasionally brings forth the criticism that a culture may evaluate itself based on Western standards and weaken its own unique elements to adapt to the West. In this context, it can be argued that Endō's novel aimed to make Japanese culture conform to Western expectations or to please Western readers, particularly through the revisionist approach brought by Scorsese in the film adaptation. Endō once remarked that with this novel, he recreated the image of Jesus with the hands of a Japanese, thus self-orientalizing Jesus and reconstructing him in a way that Japanese could also carry his suffering (1974, p. 181). Consequently, Endō, as an internalized Western-oriented Eastern intellectual, engaged in a form of mediation between the esteemed Western civilization and the primitive Japanese civilization, indicating the possibility of inventing a type of Christianity that would appeal to the primitive perceptions of the Japanese. Dirlik's notion of self-orientalism, involving the misrepresentation of one's own values and the creation of an internal other, particularly in daily cultural evolution (1998, p. 168-169), fits well with this context.

The claim made by Japanese academician Iwabuchi (1994) that Japanese self-Orientalism unconditionally accepts the hierarchy of civilizations constructed by Orientalism is exemplified by Endō's case. Similarly, the act of making Japan exotic even for the Japanese, as discussed in the context of self-orientalism, is observed here.

As extensively analyzed above, both the author and the director distorted historical realities to suit the Western perception, acting as a form of missionary endeavor to convey their intended message. In this sense, Said's criticism of Orientalism summarized as "All studies and works concerning the East create the East according to the West's needs" (1998, p. 95) becomes a reality. The fact that this is done by an Eastern hand exemplifies self-orientalism remarkably. In fact, the image of the East created in the novel and the cinema world is largely a distortion of the facts.

5. Conclusion

In the film *Silence*, Western missionary priests associate silence with pain, suffering, and desolation. These representations reflect Western culture's understanding of silence. While Western priests struggle within silence, they experience it as a period of distress and questioning. Consequently, Western representations embodied in missionary priests link silence with power relations and religious authority. In this context, silence is employed as a tool of control and discipline. Although this approach is entirely characteristic of Western thought, it is attributed to Japan through its geography and culture. As a result, the film particularly places Christians and Western civilization in high regard, while positioning the Japanese and Eastern civilization in a lower status.

Similarly, it has been determined that the Western representation associates silence with suffering and contains biases aimed at belittling Eastern culture. Examples such as the Western perspective defining Japan as a desolate land due to the alleged inability of the Japanese people to understand Christianity, the presentation of Japanese characters as stereotypical figures, and the lower appreciation of Eastern spiritual traditions demonstrate that Eastern culture is denigrated and otherized by the West. Furthermore, considering that the film is adapted from a novel written by a Japanese author, the tendencies of the Japanese characters in the film to conform to the Western perspective and the findings related to self-orientalism are also noteworthy. On the other hand, as identified here, while Japanese territories are stigmatized as desolate lands, the film emphasizes that there can be no belief strong enough to resist Christianity in these lands. However, in its current state, the film cannot answer the question of which belief system would prevail in a cultural clash between Christianity and Buddhism. Yet perhaps the answer to this question can be found in the personal life of the author of the novel on which the film is based. Towards the end of his life, the novel's author, Endo, converted to Buddhism... Moreover, it should not be forgotten that some of the most influential instructors of Zen Buddhism in the West are Christian priests, such as Hugo Enomiya-Lasalle (Bayer, 2017).

In conclusion, as evident from this study, it is clear that the relationship between the East and the West operates differently in reality compared to Orientalist designs and constructs. Eastern culture, with its millennia-old history and a heritage of wisdom, often assimilates or reshapes Western culture upon encounter, as seen in the biography of Endo, who converted to Christianity at the age of 11 but turned towards Buddhism in his later years. Therefore, practices such as yoga, meditation, traditional Chinese medicine, and other Eastern-originated practices, overlooked by the film, have become widely adopted in the West, influencing people's lifestyles. As observed in this study, Orientalism disregards intricate, multi-faceted, and interactive social relationships to meet Western needs, crafting a fictional narrative detached from reality. It imposes its own perspective with an almost imperialistic attitude, categorizing the East as 'the other'.

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Approaches to Silence through Scorsese's Silence Film: A Comparison between Western and Eastern Perspectives

Mehmet Ali AYDEMİR *

Kemal ÇELİK**

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Giriř

Sessizlik, Shusaku Endo'nun aynı adlı romanından uyarlanan, Martin Scorsese tarafından yönetilen 2016 yapımı bir filmdir ve 17. yüzyılda baş keřiři bulmak ve Hristiyanlıęı yaymak için Japonya'ya giden iki Cizvit rahibin hikayesini anlatır. Film, inancın doęası, dinin toplumdaki rolü ve Doęu ile Batı arasındaki kültürel farklılıklar hakkında sorgulamalar barındırıyor. Bu makale ise filmde tasvir edildięi řekliyle Doęu ve Batı arasında sessizlięe yaklařımlardaki kültürel farklılıkları karşılařtırmalı olarak analiz etmektedir.

Kavramsal Çerçeve

Bu yazıda kullanılan yöntem, temaları, sembolleri ve motifleri belirleyerek metinleri analiz etme amacında olan içerik analizidir. Batı'nın Doęu'yu tarihsel olarak egzotik, ilkel ve ařaęı olarak temsil etme biçimini inceleyen Edward Said'in řarkiyatçılıęının teorik çerçevesine dayanan bir içerik analizi yapılmıřtır. Analiz ayrıca, Batılı olmayan kültürlerin kendi kültürlerine iliřkin Batılı kliřeleri içselleřtirme ve yeniden üretme biçimini ifade eden Self-Oryantalizm kavramı açasından da deęerlendirilmektedir.

Batının Zaviyesinden Sessizlik

Batı düşüncesinde sessizlik, antik Yunan medeniyetinden beri iç huzurla iliřkilendirilmemiřtir. Çalıřma konusu filmde de sessizlięin temel ilhamı, özellikle Hristiyan kaynaklarından gelir; özellikle İsa'nın sessizlięi, Roma Katolik öğretilerinde tasvir edildięi gibi. Bu sessizlik, İsa'nın Tanrı'ya yüzleřirken suskunluęunu ve ölüm karşısındaki sessizlięini ifade eder. Adı "sessizlik" olan bu sessizlik, İsa'nın çarmıha gerilmesiyle sonuçlanan iřkence ve řiddetle yakından iliřkilidir. Bu nedenle, İsa'nın sessizlięi, Batı düşüncesinde sessizlięin acı, sıkıntı ve yenilgi ile baęlantılı olduęu fikrini güçlendirir.

Doęu Zaviyesinden Sessizlik

Batı'daki algısının aksine, Doęu bakıř açasında sessizlik iç huzur, aydınlanma ve ruhsal dönüşümle iliřkilendirilir. Doęu düşünürleri, diř etkilerden baęımsız olarak sessizlikte derin bilgelik bulurlar ve birçok İslam alimi dini pratikleriyle sessizlikte "mutmain" veya kusurlardan arınmiř bir ruh durumu yařadıklarını iddia ederler.

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Bu olguyu kısa bir incelemeyle ele almanın sınırlamalarına rağmen, incelenen film Doğu sessizliğinin deneyimini ve zenginliğini göz ardı eder ve sessizliği Batılı misyonerlere bir erdem olarak atfeder. Ancak Doğu perspektifinin aksine, filmde tasvir edilen sessizlik, tamamlanmış bir ruh halini yansıtmak yerine içsel çatışmanın bir kaynağı haline gelir. Bu noktada, filmin söylemi oryantalist ve aynı zamanda self-oryantalist olarak nitelendirilebilir.

Oryantalizm ve Self-Oryantalizm

Oryantalizm teorisi, Batı kültürünün Doğu kültürlerini egzotikleştirme, klişeleştirme ve onlar üzerinde hakimiyet kurma eğilimini inceler. Bu nedenle Oryantalizm, Batılı gözlemcilerin Doğu kültürlerine yönelik hatalı, romantize edilmiş ve aşağılayıcı algılarına dayanan bir akademik ve kültürel yaklaşımdır. Edward Said (1998) bu düşünce sistemini ilk kez açığa çıkaran ve ifade eden kişidir. Bu düşünce sistemi, Batı medeniyetinin, önyargılara, hayallere, imgelere ve yanılsamalara dayanarak Doğu dünyası üzerinde mutlak bir egemenlik kurmasına hizmet eder. Oryantalizm kavramından türetilen Self-Oryantalizm kavramı ise Bezci ve Çiftçi'nin belirttiği üzere (2014, s. 143), bir toplumun veya kültürün kültürel unsurlarını veya kimliğini "Batı perspektifine" uydurma eğilimini ifade eder. Bu uyum, bir bakıma kendi kimliğini ve kültürünü bozar.

Yöntem

Bu nedenle bu çalışmada, film içerik analizi ile incelenirken, Edward Said'in Oryantalizm teorisi de film arka planında gömülü olan ideolojik ve kültürel boyutları yorumlamak için teorik bir perspektif olarak kullanılacaktır. Filmde Oryantalizm ve Self-Oryantalizmin iç içe geçtiği göz önüne alındığında, analiz sırasında her iki eleştiri biçimi de dikkate alınacaktır. Bunun sebebi, filmin kaynak materyalinin Katolik Japon bir yazarın eseri olmasına rağmen, uyarlayanların Batılı Katolikler olmasıdır. Bu nedenle analiz, filmde Oryantalizm ve Self-Oryantalizmin etkileşimini anlamak için her iki eleştiri biçimini de göz önünde bulunduracaktır.

Bir Uyarlama Olarak Sessizlik

Endo'nun romanı, Japonya'nın Hristiyanlıkla ilişkisini ve Japon kültürü içindeki yerini ele alırken aynı zamanda Batı'nın Japonya'ya bakışını yansıtır. Bu bağlamda roman, bir tür Self-Oryantalizm tutumunu sergiler ve böyle bir yoruma açıktır.

Tartışma

Film boyunca Japon kültürü, onu karalayan ve marjinalleştiren Batılı bakış açılarıyla tasvir edilmiştir. Batılı misyonerlerin "Sessizlik" filmindeki Japon kültürü ve inançlarına ilişkin gözlemleri, yorumları ve temsilleri incelendiğinde, temsilin Doğu'yu egzotik bir "öteki" olarak konumlandığı ve Japon kültürünün bazı olumsuz tasvirlerini içerdiği ortaya çıkıyor.

Kutsal Çilede Saklı Kibir: Çift Katmanlı Oryantalizm

Japonların Hristiyanlığı Yanlış Anladığı İddiası: Film, Japon halkının Hristiyanlığı anlayamadıklarını iddia ederek, onların gerçek inançla bağlantı kuramadıklarını ima etmektedir. Filmde Hristiyanlık, Japon kültürüne yabancı üstün bir din olarak sunuluyor ve Japonların Hristiyanlığı medeni dünyaya mahsus, ilkel yerel halk için anlaşılabilir bir din olarak görerek kavramaktan aciz olduklarını öne sürmektedir. Bir Japon rahip olan kahramanın, kendisini şehit etmektense inancını gizlemeyi seçerek Japon Hristiyanların böyle bir fedakarlığa layık olmadığına dair inancını ima ediyor.

Japonya'yı Çorak Ülke Olarak Etiketlemek: Film, Japonya'yı, Hristiyan misyonerlerin ortaya çıktığı toprakların aksine, ruhen kuru ve çorak olarak tasvir ediyor. Bu tasvir ile Japon kültürü ve dininin, Batı medeniyeti ile arasında önemli bir kültürel uçurum olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Film, Japonya'yı durağan, değişmeyen ve sürekli gelişen Batı'ya kıyasla doğası gereği aşağı olarak tasvir ederek, Hristiyanlığın doğrudan kabulü için uygun olmadığını ima etmektedir.

Japonların Basmakalıp Karakterler Olarak Sunumu: Filmdeki Japon karakterler iki ana kategoride temsil ediliyor: Barbar işkenceciler veya kurtuluşu bekleyen pasif kurbanlar. Bu temsil,

Japon kültürünü ve toplumunu çarpıtarak, onların Hristiyanlıkla kültürel bir savaşa giremediklerini gösteriyor. Ayrıca film, Japon halkını bir kurtarıcıya özlem duyan cahil kitleler olarak resmediyor, Batı kültürünün ezici üstünlüğünü vurguluyor ve Doğu dünyasının sözde geri kalmışlığına dikkat çekiyor.

Doğu Manevi Geleneklerinin Önemini Azaltmak: Film, Doğu geleneklerini ve manevi uygulamalarını Batı kökenli din ve ideolojilere göre ikinci plana atmakta ya da küçümsemektedir. Bu temsil, Oryantalist anlayışın aydınlanmış Batı'yı bilginin merkezi, Doğu'yu ise aydınlanmaya muhtaç periferi olarak yansıtmaktadır.

Misyoner Rahiplerin Pozitif Tasviri: Batılı misyoner rahipler, Japonya'da gizlice Hristiyanlığı yaymak için hayatlarını riske atan kahramanlar şeklinde olumlu bir imaj içinde tasvir ediliyorlar. Ancak film aynı zamanda onların iç huzurundan yoksun olduklarını göstererek Tanrı'nın sessizliğiyle mücadelelerini de sergiliyor.

Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ile Sömürgecilik Arasındaki Bağlantıyı Görmezden Gelmek: Film, İspanya'nın Pasifik'teki sömürge çabalarında Hristiyan misyonerlik faaliyetlerinin rolünü ihmal ediyor. Aynı zamanda, Japonya'nın Hristiyanlığa karşı direnişini anlamak için daha geniş bir tarihsel bağlam sağlayabilecek olan, dönem boyunca Avrupa'daki dini çatışmaları da göz ardı ediyor.

Oryantalizmden Self-Oryantalizme: Filmde İnşa Edilen Japon Temsilleri

Bu örnekler, Doğu'yu bilim dışı, cahil ve barbar olarak gören Oryantalist bakış açılarıyla uyumlu olarak *Sessizlik* filmindeki Japon kültürü ve inançlarının olumsuz temsillerini göstermektedir. Dahası, romanın yazarının Japon olması, Oryantalist fikirleri devam ettiren bir eser üreten içselleştirilmiş bir Oryantalizm biçimini düşündürmektedir.

Self-Oryantalizm göz önüne alındığında, filmin Japon bir yazarın yazdığı bir romana dayanması, Japon karakterlerin Batılı bakış açılarını nasıl içselleştirdiği veya direndiği konusunda soru işaretleri uyandırıyor. Self-Oryantalizm, Doğu kültürlerinden bireylerin, filmdeki Japon karakterlerinin tasvirini potansiyel olarak etkileyebilecek şekilde Batı klişeleriyle aynı hizaya gelebileceğini öne sürüyor. Sessizliğin analizi, Doğu ve Batı'nın sessizliğe yaklaşımlarındaki kültürel farklılıklara ve aralarında var olan güç dinamiklerine dair içgörü sağlamaktadır. Film, kültürel farklılıkları anlamının önemini ve kültürler arası etkileşimlerde kültürel duyarlılığa duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca dinin toplumdaki rolü, baskı ve şiddeti haklı çıkarmak için nasıl kullanılabilirdiği hakkında sorular da gündeme getiriyor. Sessizlik analizi, kültürel farklılıkların ve güç dinamiklerinin uluslararası ilişkileri şekillendirmeye devam ettiği mevcut küresel bağlamla da ilgilidir. Film, kültürel farklılıkların karmaşıklığına ve kültürler arası etkileşimlerde diyalog ve karşılıklı anlayışa duyulan ihtiyaca dair nüanslı bir anlayış sunuyor.

Sonuç

Sessizlik filmi üzerinden üretilen analiz, Doğu ve Batı'nın sessizliğe yaklaşımlarındaki kültürel farklılıkların karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirmesini içermektedir. Film, baskın kültür ile azınlık kültürü arasında var olan güç dinamiklerini ve kültürler arası etkileşimlerde kültürel farklılıkları anlamının önemini vurguluyor. Sessizlik, Batılı bakış açılarının ve Oryantalist tutumların Japon kültürünün temsilini nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair değerli bilgiler sunuyor. Sessizliğin şehitlikle güçlü ilişkisi, dini bağlılığın Batılı bir yorumunu yansıtmaktadır. Filmde Doğu kültürünün aşağılanması ve marjinalleştirilmesinde Oryantalizmin etkisinin altı çiziliyor. Dahası, Self-Oryantalizm kavramı, Japon karakterlerinin Batılı temsillerle nasıl aynı çizgide olduğunu veya bunlara nasıl meydan okuduğunu eleştirel bir şekilde incelemeye davet etmektedir. Analiz, Edward Said'in Oryantalizminin teorik çerçevesine ve Self-Oryantalizm kavramına dayanmaktadır. Analiz tarafından sağlanan içgörüler, mevcut küresel bağlamla ilgilidir ve kültürler arası etkileşimlerde kültürel duyarlılık ve karşılıklı anlayış ihtiyacını vurgulamaktadır.

Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Yazarların alıřmadaki katkı oranları eřittir.

The authors' contribution rates in the study are equal.

ıkar atıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

alıřma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile ıkar atıřması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geirilmiřtir ve dergi beklentilerini karřılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etięi Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu alıřmada "Yükseköęretim Kurumları Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etięi Yönergesi"

kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuřtur.

In this study, the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed.

News Frames as Islamophobic Narratives: Radicalized Concepts

Mustafa TEMEL*

Abstract

Media meets individuals' information/news needs, entertains them, and influences their political preferences through the content it produces. In addition to these fundamental functions, media, which also has many functions that can shape everyday life, plays an important role in constructing/determining meaning in an individual's mental world. The increase in Islamophobia, which has become a global problem, has also been influenced by the problematic nature/editorial policies of international and national media outlets. The media, which produces content with a form that dictates how individuals should think about Islam and Muslims, and what meanings should form in their minds, shapes the mental world of individuals with the meaning frames it creates. This study aims to understand in what frames news about elements known as Islamic clothing/appearance, such as headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah, and beard are presented in the Turkish media. Therefore, news articles on the websites of media organizations named Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV, which were selected through purposive sampling, were analyzed using the framing technique. The research findings indicate that concepts related to Islam and Muslims are presented in a radicalized manner, framed with negative narratives and that Islamophobic thinking patterns are conveyed to individuals.

Keywords: Framing Theory, Islamophobia, Anti-Islamism, Islamophobia in Türkiye

İslamofobik Anlatılar Olarak Haber Çerçevesi: Radikalize Edilen Kavramlar

Öz

Medya, üretmiş olduğu içerikler ile bireylerin bilgi/haber ihtiyacını gidermekte, onları eğlendirmekte ve siyasi tercihlerini belirlemede etkili olmaktadır. Bu temel işlevlerin yanı sıra, gündelik hayatı şekillendirebilecek pek çok işleve de sahip olan medya, aynı zamanda bireyin zihin dünyasında oluşacak anlamı inşa etmede/belirlemede de önemli rol oynamaktadır. Küresel bir problem haline gelen İslamofobinin artış göstermesine de uluslararası ve ulusal medya araçlarının bu sorunlu doğası/yayın politikası etkili olmuştur. İslam ve Müslümanlar ile ilgili bireylerin nasıl düşünmesi gerektiğini, zihinlerinde oluşması gereken anlamları belirleyici bir form ile içerik üreten medya, oluşturduğu anlam çerçevesi ile bireylerin zihinsel dünyasını şekillendirmektedir. Bu çalışma da Türkiye medyasında, İslami giyim/görünüm unsurları olarak bilinen, başörtüsü, turban, çarşaf, örtünme, sarık, cüppe, takke ve sakal ile ilgili haberlerin hangi çerçevelerle sunulduğunu anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu sebeple, amaçlı örneklem ile seçilen Sözcü, Cumhuriyet ve Halk TV isimli medya kuruluşlarının web sitelerinde yer alan haberler çerçeveleme tekniği ile incelenmiştir. Yapılan araştırma sonucunda, İslam ve Müslümanlar ile ilgili kavramların radikalize edilerek sunulduğu, olumsuz anlatımlarla çerçevesi ve İslamofobik düşünme pratiğinin bireylere aktarıldığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerçeveleme Kuramı, İslamofobi, İslam Karşıtlığı, Türkiye'de İslamofobi

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1. Introduction: Reflections of Anti-Islamism in Türkiye

Islamophobia refers to prejudice-based discrimination and fear towards Islam and Muslims. Additionally, the term Islamophobia is associated with xenophobia, which denotes hostility towards foreigners, and shares similarities with feelings of exclusion and hostility towards outsiders.

Islamophobia, which becomes more apparent through negative definitions/descriptions/depictions constructed around the fear of the Other, also encompasses attitudes/behaviors of avoidance, evasion, and fear towards the Islamic religion and Muslims. The Islamophobic perspective and attitudes, which involve a violation of the basic rights of Muslims, lead to elements of crime such as discrimination, exclusion, violence, marginalization, and hate speech in social, political, economic, and cultural domains directed towards Muslims.

Islamophobia, primarily shaped by the historical political, social, economic, and theological relations between Western and Eastern countries, has evolved into a global issue, particularly in Western countries, posing a threat to social life. The processes of defining, describing, and shaping the East by the West in the historical context have recently progressed in a more institutionalized manner, and after September 11, 2001, Islamophobia re-emerged with new forms expressed in explicit terms. The Islamic religion and Muslims have been homogenized and made explicit targets. Negative content, hostility, and hatred-based intellectual products have been produced in theological, political, and cultural spheres directed towards Islam and Muslims, using political language and media content.

Especially in recent times, the influence of the media cannot be denied. In fact, the media, which has a role in shaping everyday life and becoming a fundamental source of information/reference, reaches a level where its content about Islam and Muslims triggers Islamophobia (Rehman and Hanley, 2023, p. 139; Nasiri and Eken, 2023, pp. 186-187). Television programs, magazine and newspaper articles that consistently associate acts of terrorism and violence with the Islamic religion and Muslims; cinema productions that depict Muslims as lustful, reactionary, conservative, and barbaric, creating various stereotypes; productions focusing on Muslims that are brought to the forefront during times of crisis and framed with clichéd judgments; computer games that radicalize and associate Islamic words and concepts, as well as Muslims with Islamic clothing and appearance, with terrorism; satirical publications producing content contrary to basic human rights clearly demonstrate the functional character of the media in the production of Islamophobia. Especially, the frequent encounters with Islamophobic content in international media and the national/international scientific studies conducted on this issue are the most significant indicators of this situation.

Instances of Islamophobia, characterized by attitudes contrary to human rights such as xenophobia and cultural racism, have become commonplace in societies outside the West, such as Türkiye, where the majority of the population is Muslim (Rashid, Iqbal, and Tanvir, 2023, p. 608). In these countries, the Western perspective towards Islam/Muslims has also been internalized, and the visibility of Islam/Muslims has come to be defined from a threatening perspective.

In Türkiye's history, the cultural and political developments that began with the final modernization efforts of the Ottoman Empire and continued after the modernization process of the Republic of Türkiye are the most significant indicators of this situation. The Islamic religion, interpreted through a lens of opposition, has been framed within the context of conservatism/reactionism. In line with this, the visibility of Muslims, Islamic rituals, and worship has been positioned as a threatening element to social, political, and economic life, and attempts have been made to restrict them, leading to practical decisions (Karpat, 2011, p. 245; Kara, 2016, pp. 35, 41-44; Bayraklı and Yerlikaya, 2007, p. 52; Temel, 2020; Temel, 2023). While these political developments also have a guiding influence in social life, the fact that this political discourse has a

media dimension opens up a discussion about the role of the Turkish media in generating an Islamophobic discourse. Therefore, the language used by the media in Türkiye, which has a significant impact on the construction of the perception of Islam, holds a separate importance in relation to Islam and Muslims. However, it is worth noting the scarcity of texts and academic studies that examine, question, and discuss this problematic area in the literature.

This study aims to discuss the ways in which the media in Türkiye represents Islam and Muslims, using the example of Islamic clothing/appearance elements. Specifically, opening a discussion on how Islamic clothing/appearance elements are narrated/framed in media content will reveal how the Turkish media portrays Islam and Muslims. In this context, prominent media outlets in Türkiye, such as Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV, which play a significant role in the Turkish media and have come to the forefront, especially with their controversial publications on Islamic topics and issues, will be examined. Due to the shift from traditional media to new media in the process of news and information acquisition, the publications on the websites of these relevant outlets will be evaluated using the framing method.

2. The Design of the Study

2.1. The Aim and Significance of the Study

Islamophobia, which has become a global issue, has garnered the interest of many disciplines in recent years. It continues to be a subject that is extensively researched and generates academic publications. Its relationship with the media also attracts the attention of disciplines such as communication and theology.

This study aims to open a discussion on how Islamic clothing/appearance elements find a discursive space in the Turkish media within the context of Islamophobia and its relationship with the media. Revealing the ways in which Islamic clothing/appearance elements are represented/interpreted and the frames presented in the news holds significant importance in shedding light on the portrayal of Islamophobia in the Turkish media, especially with an example from new media.

2.2. Research Questions

The study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1:** In what framework are Islamic clothing/appearance elements presented in the media?
- 2:** How is the transmission of news headlines conducted?
- 3:** How are news introductions structured?
- 4:** What emotions/attitudes are highlighted/framed in the news?
- 5:** What frames/main themes are presented to the audience in the news?

2.3. The Methodology of the Study: Framing Theory

The concept of framing holds significant validity for both descriptive and analytical purposes in social sciences, and it is utilized in fields such as psychology, cognitive psychology, discourse analysis, communication studies, and political science. The framing method has been analytically researched and empirically applied in the field of sociology (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 611). Frame analysis has been developed as a way to depict and interact with a series of arguments and counterarguments surrounding complex social issues in sociology and political analysis. Later, this method was further developed by different disciplines within the context of social movements (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, pp. 35-36).

In the field of sociology, Erving Goffman's book "Frame Analysis," published in 1974, demonstrated that the theory of framing can also serve as a reference in mass communication studies (1974). According to Goffman (1974), definitions about a situation are constructed in harmony with the governing principles of events (at least social events) and our subjective interest in these events. From a sociological perspective, frames assist individuals in "finding, understanding, defining, and labeling" the information flowing in their surroundings. In this regard, the theory of framing has been defined as "an interpretive pattern" that allows individuals to determine, understand, define, and label events in their living space and the world they are part of (Özarslan and Güran, 2015, p. 34).

In Goffman's (1974) work, the roots of frame analysis are emphasized, highlighting how frames in everyday life organize and arrange complex stimuli. Goffman presents framing as a technique of everyday interpretation; individuals create and rely on them. Frames are used to interpret everyday interactions, traditional rituals, discourse, advertisements, and other elements of social experience. Virtually every aspect of the ordinary can be dissected through frames (Goffman, 1974; Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, p. 36).

The concept of framing, which began to appear in the literature from the 1970s onwards, has now become a frequently used text analysis model in political communication studies (Akdoğan, Uğuş, and Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 78-79). Subsequent researchers, inspired by Goffman's approaches (e.g., Tuchman in 1978 and Gitlin in 1980), applied framing to American communication studies in line with these main principles (Özarslan and Güran, 2015, p. 34).

In the field of communication, framing is generally used to denote one of the ways in which the media reconstruct social reality and guide public opinion. The framing technique applied to news texts is the process of consciously presenting events and issues that occur in everyday life to the public from a specific perspective, thereby directing public opinion on social reality (Akdoğan, Uğuş, and Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 78-79). In this context, frames highlight certain aspects of reality, diverting attention from others. Frames serve an important function by not only including but also excluding interpretations (Özarslan and Güran, 2015, p. 36).

Another significant work related to framing theory is Entman's "Framing as a Fractured Paradigm," published in 1993. This work focuses on framing and media issues. According to Entman, frames consist of four dimensions: 1) they portray events in terms of benefit or harm, 2) they establish cause-and-effect relationships, indicating the source of the problem, 3) they make moral judgments, and 4) they propose solutions to the problem. Therefore, frames make accusations, victimize, and pass moral judgments on others' behavior (Entman, 1993; as cited in Güran and Özarslan, 2022, p. 1233).

According to Entman (1993, p. 52), framing essentially involves choices and salience. Framing is the act of selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more prominent in a communication text: to clarify the definition of a specific issue, provide a causal interpretation, make a moral evaluation, and/or support a proposed solution. Frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe. When preparing communication texts, conscious or unconscious framing judgments are made. Texts contain frames that ensure the presence of specific keywords, template expressions, standardized images, information sources, and thematically reinforcing facts or judgment sentences.

The process of framing takes place within the continuous interaction between journalists and elites, as well as social movements. The frames in the news can influence the learning, interpretation, and evaluation of topics and events (Vreese, 2005, pp. 51-52). The framing model in the media field can be expressed as follows (Vreese, 2005, p. 52):

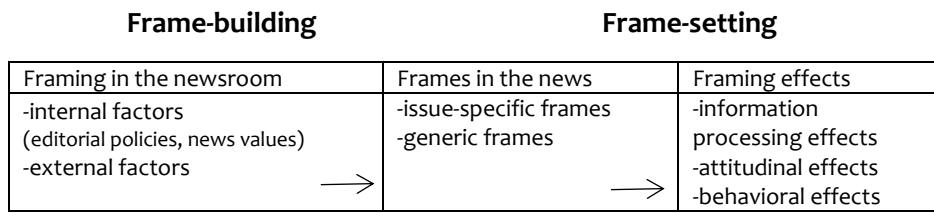


Figure 1. An integrated process model of framing

There are four criteria that a frame must meet: First, a news frame should have identifiable conceptual and linguistic features. Second, a news frame should be commonly observed in journalistic practice. Third, a news frame should be reliably distinguishable from other frames. Fourth, a frame should have representational validity (e.g., being noticed by others) and should not be purely speculative on the part of a researcher. Aspects such as headlines/subheadings, photographs/captions, headlines, source selection, quote selection, introductions, logos, statistics, diagrams, final sentences, and paragraphs can be used to define and measure news frames (Vreese, 2005, pp. 53-54).

The essence of framing can be described as presenting information to the public in a way that attracts their attention and ensures that the public notices this information. Each frame is consciously used to ensure that the given news is noticed according to established references. How news is framed or presented within which frames is related to how the audience should perceive that issue. Frames, in a way, serve as references that determine how viewers should approach the issue, how they should view it, and how they should react to it. When frames are discussed in the context of television news, the feature of using both image and sound together, unlike other mass media, necessitates the evaluation of the visual element within the dimensions of framing. It is observed that in television news, the visual and auditory elements used in framing play a decisive role in reinforcing these ideas and shaping perspectives (Akmeşe, 2020, p. 48). A news frame is the general context that is created to make news about an event or issue meaningful; it determines what the news will include and what will be excluded (Atabek and Uztuğ, 1998, p. 100).

The framing theory is often expressed in parallel with the agenda-setting model. In some studies, it is presented as the continuation or second stage of the agenda-setting model. However, the agenda-setting model concerns itself with how much information or data the public needs to know. On the other hand, framing theory establishes how the message presented through a communication medium should be perceived and constructs meaning.

A frame is an emphasis placed on different aspects of a topic to capture attention. While the agenda-setting theory is concerned with drawing attention to topics, framing deals with the presentation of those topics. This brief definition is typically applied to studies focused on news frames and encompasses a more intuitive understanding compared to the narrow definition of frames as the 'writing style of the issue' (Vreese, 2005, p. 53).

In the framing approach, it is essential to select and highlight certain aspects of a specific topic. It focuses on how viewers should perceive a certain topic, rather than how frequently that topic appears in the media agenda. This means that it is crucial how the media determines the perspective on the topic, which features of the topic are emphasized in the content produced, and how it is presented. It is based on the idea that the media guides individuals and, consequently, societal perspectives on how to view and think about a particular issue through the frame it constructs (Akmeşe, 2020, p. 41).

Frames, much like in the expressions "picture frame" or "window frame," establish boundaries and direct our attention towards which events and texts are relevant to our understanding of a subject. Just like a window, we view the world and thus shape our perspective,

through frames that define and limit our perception of the complex world around us (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, p. 36-37).

Framing, briefly:

a) It serves a cognitive function by reducing the burden of analytical thinking through recurring patterns (Güran and Özarlan, 2022, p. 1226).

b) Frames that guide the recipient's thoughts and conclusions can also reflect their intentions (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

c) By placing or repeating texts or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols, it makes them more prominent (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

d) It can be stated that framing possesses characteristics such as shaping the way media texts are conveyed to the reader and the public, guiding and directing them on how to think, and constructing meaning (Güran and Özarlan, 2022, p. 1226).

In this context, the focus is on the 'frames of meaning' presented in media texts regarding Islamic clothing/appearance in order to question the traces of Islamophobia in Türkiye. Within this scope, the framing analysis method has been preferred to reveal the meaning of the hidden texts in media texts related to Islamic clothing/appearance, to interpret the drawn roadmap on how it should be perceived, to question the existence of judgmental hate speech, and to explore the judgment produced regarding a societal issue.

The choice of the framing analysis method was influenced by reasons such as the technique being used to approach a text by paying attention to its characteristics (Creed, Langstraat, and Scully, 2002, p. 37), its key role in understanding how specific issues are framed and presented to the public, and its contribution to knowing how problems have developed/ emerged over time (Atabek and Uztuğ, 1998, p. 100).

When conducting frame analysis, as in any research, research questions that are suitable for the research purpose are formulated, followed by a preliminary research on the data to be examined. Categories are established, and the selected content is examined as a sample.

In this context, after conducting a literature review/evaluation on the research topic, a preliminary investigation was carried out. A categorization related to the mentioned words and concepts was made on the news websites to be examined. After determining the headline selection, the way news articles were introduced, the highlighted meanings, and thematic inquiries of the identified news, the news related to the concepts such as headscarf, veil, veiling, turban, robe, taqiyah, and beard, known as Islamic clothing/appearance, published on the websites of the selected media outlets, namely Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV, between January 1, 2023, and September 30, 2023, was examined.

2.4. Sample, Scope, and Limitations of the Study

The purposeful sampling method¹ (Etikan et al., 2016, pp. 1-3; Campbell et al., 2020, pp. 652-653) was employed to measure the Islamophobic attitude of the Turkish media. The websites of Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV, which operate in the news and media sector, were identified for the study. In order to scrutinize the representation of issues related to Islam and Muslims by means of current examples, the news articles on the respective websites were examined for the period between January 1, 2023, and September 30, 2023.

In determining the news, the concepts of "headscarves, hijab, veiling², turban, thobe³, taqiyah and beard⁴" were influential. News related to Islam and Muslims, which is relevant to the research topic, were included in the scope of the evaluation.

2.5. Research Findings

Table 1. The Quarterly Traffic Data of Websites⁵

The Examined Websites	Monthly Average	Total
Sözcü	92.67	278.0 Million
Cumhuriyet	47.62	142.8 Million
Halk TV	16.16	48.48 Million
Total	156.45	469.25 Million

Access to the traffic data of the websites for the period between July 1, 2023, and September 30, 2023, has been provided. According to the obtained data, it can be stated that media organizations, through their presentation and narrative style regarding Islamic attire/appearance, have the potential to shape public opinion and potentially alter perceptions in the minds of their audience.

Table 2. Number of Examined News and Categories

Examined Websites	Categories			
	Headscarves/Hijab Veiling	Beard	Thobe/Turban/Taqiyah	Total
Sözcü	26	1	9	36
Cumhuriyet	60	5	36	101
Halk TV	13	1	12	26
Total	99	7	57	163

The number of news articles on the mentioned concepts by websites is quite substantial. However, within the scope of this research, only content directly related to the topic was taken into consideration. In this context, news articles containing the mentioned words and concepts were individually evaluated, and a total of 163 unique news articles were included in the analysis.

As seen in Table 2, all three news organizations have published a considerable number of news articles related to Islamic clothing/appearance on their websites. It has been determined that there are notably more news articles specifically related to headscarves, turban, veiling and hijab.

Within the scope of the research, a total of 163 news articles were examined, with 99 related to headscarves/turban/veiling, 7 related to beards, and 57 related to thobe/turban/taqiyah.

Table 3. Transfer of News Headlines

Examined Websites:	Categories									
	Headscarves/Hijab Veiling			Beard			Thobe/Turban/Taqiyah			Total
	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	
Negative Word Usage	8	8	3	-	1	-	2	4	2	28
Exaggeration	4	14	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	23
Misrepresentation	6	20	6	1	2	1	5	21	4	66
Criticism	2	7	2	-	1	-	1	5	2	20
Neutral	3	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	11
Other	3	7	1	-	1	-	-	3	-	15
Total	26	60	13	1	5	1	9	36	12	163

Out of the examined 163 news articles, it was determined that 66 articles contained a distorted narrative within their headlines, 28 articles used negative language in their headlines, 23 headlines were exaggerated in their description, and 20 headlines carried a critical tone.

Considering that headlines are the first attention-grabbing part of a news article, the presence of distortions, exaggerations, and negative language in headlines related to Islamic clothing/appearance elements creates an Islamophobic perception.

Table 4. The Nature of News Introductions

Examined Websites: The Nature of News Introductions	Categories									Total
	Headscarves/Hijab Veiling			Beard			Thobe/Turban/ Taqiyah			
	Sözcü	Cumhuriye	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriye	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriye	Halk TV	
Explanatory / Informative	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Critical	2	7	1	1	2	-	1	3	-	17
Exaggerated	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8
Anxiety/Intriguing	3	5	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	11
Scary	5	12	2	-	-	-	2	5	2	28
Provocative	-	4	2	-	-	-	1	3	-	10
Sensational / Tabloid	5	6	3	-	2	1	2	12	2	33
Stimulating	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	9
Judgmental	2	5	-	-	-	-	1	6	2	16
Comparative Statements	2	7	4	-	-	-	1	4	3	21
Neutral	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Other	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	4
Total	26	60	13	1	5	1	9	36	12	163

The news introductions are the section of the news article that provide essential information about the news and ensure its readability. Table 4 illustrates the nature of the introductions of news articles related to Islamic clothing/appearance elements.

In this context, it has been determined that the news articles are presented with sensational/tabloid-like (33), fear-inducing (28), comparative (21), critical (17), and judgmental (16) characteristics. It was particularly observed that the introductions of the articles are made in a manner that mocks Islamic clothing/appearance, presents them as a tabloid-like issue, portrays them as something to be feared or worried about, compares them with other styles of clothing, and uses a critical and judgmental tone.

This Islamophobic tone in the news language also poses a danger in terms of guiding the readers on how to interpret the news with a particular frame/perspective.

Table 5. Emotions/Attitudes Emphasized in the News

	Categories									
	Headscarves/Hijab Veiling			Beard			Thobe/Turban/ Taqiyah			
Examined Websites:	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Total
Emotions Attitudes										
Fear	7	7	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	19
Hatred	2	13	4	-	-	1	4	8	2	34
Exclusion Othering	6	24	6	-	2	-	3	15	5	61
Discrimination	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	7	4	19
Other	5	5	1	-	1	-	-	2	-	14
Neutral	4	5	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	16
Total	26	60	13	1	5	1	9	36	12	163

It is evident that news articles convey a message or emotion, and it is clear that not only the subject matter but also the journalist/editor and other news production/distribution professionals have an influence on the content of the news. In this context, when the content related to Islamic clothing/appearance of the examined news organizations was subjected to preliminary analysis, it was observed that categories such as fear, hatred, exclusion/othering, discrimination, other, and neutral exist.

As a result of the coding conducted in this context, it has been determined that an exclusionary/othering tone (61) prevails in the news articles related to Islamic clothing/appearance on the websites of Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV organizations. Additionally, the presence of a discourse characterized by explicit feelings of hatred, fear-inducing language, and encouragement of discrimination is noteworthy.

Table 6. Frames/Main Themes Presented to the Audience in the News

Examined Websites:	Sözcü	Cumhuriyet	Halk TV	Total
Prominent Themes in the News News Frames				
The political discourse asserting that individuals dressed in Islamic attire/appearance are reactionary/conservative and that the elements of Islamic attire/appearance are incompatible with secularism/modernity exists.	11	45	9	65
The elements of Islamic attire/appearance are being narrated by associating them with specific individuals, groups, and events, and are being generalized.	8	25	4	37
Individuals with Islamic attire/appearance are being associated with acts of violence and terrorism.	4	4	2	10

When examining the subject of a news article along with the way it is presented and the carefully selected words and concepts used throughout the text, one can discover the intended meanings emphasized in the texts. This aspect also carries the quality of revealing the integrity of the news and the frame presented in the news.

From this perspective, when the news articles published by Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV organizations regarding Islamic clothing/appearance were examined, it was determined that the

majority positioned Islamic clothing/appearance elements as reactionary/fundamentalist activities. Additionally, individuals with this appearance (wearing headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah and beard) were often portrayed as conservative, non-modern, and incompatible with secularism and modernity. This framing was identified in 65 of the examined news articles.

The number of news articles depicting Islamic attire/appearance by associating them with specific individuals, groups, and events, and generalizing them is also 37. Particularly, the presence of news articles attempting to portray Islamic attire/appearance, especially in countries like Iran and Afghanistan, and trying to depict the internal issues of these countries as Islamic situations, as well as the existence of news articles that seek to create perceptions by generalizing negative situations and individuals, demonstrates the increasing state of Islamophobia.

Furthermore, in the news, there are accusatory statements implying that individuals with Islamic attire/appearance are supporters of violence or potential perpetrators of terrorist activities. 10 news articles with such a worldview have been identified.



(Cumhuriyet, 2023a)

(Sözcü, 2023)



(Cumhuriyet, 2023b)



(Cumhuriyet, 2023c)



(Halk TV, 2023)



(Cumhuriyet, 2023d)

Photos: Examples of Visual Frames in the News

The images obtained from the websites of Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV, and used in the study, provide significant examples of how the headscarf/turban/veil is represented. The use of the term "black headscarves/hijab" in many news articles alongside these photos in a threatening/fear-inducing frame can lead the reader to construct a frame through an Islamophobic lens, shaping their understanding of events in an Islamophobic manner.

General Evaluation and Discussion

The media plays a significant role in constructing Islamophobic language and creating a discourse space for itself in political, social, and economic domains. In Western countries and in Türkiye, communication tools play an influential role in promoting Islamophobic language, which results in a discriminatory, exclusionary, negative, and hateful perspective towards Islamic

clothing/appearance elements such as headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah, beard in social, political, and economic life.

This inquiry involved the examination of news articles related to "headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah, beard" published on the websites of the Turkish media organizations Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, and Halk TV between January 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023, using the framing technique.

The research findings indicate that:

a-It was found that media outlets found content related to headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah, beard, particularly engaging, and produced news articles specifically about these topics and concepts,

b-It was observed that news headlines were predominantly presented in a distorted, exaggerated, and negative manner.

c-The introductions of the news articles were particularly characterized by a sensational/tabloid-like, fear-inducing, comparative, critical, and judgmental tone.

d-The news articles related to Islamic clothing/appearance elements contained exclusionary/othering language, with a clear presence of feelings of hatred, fear-inducing language, and the promotion of discrimination.

e-Particularly, it was identified that there are news articles that exaggerate developments related to the use of headscarves in countries like Iran, presenting events in these countries with an alarming tone. These articles attempt to construct the notion that Türkiye is starting to resemble countries presented negatively in terms of Islamic clothing/appearance. They also link individuals' fundamental preferences, clothing styles, or religious practices with politics, serving political concerns. Furthermore, there are news articles that portray individuals wearing headscarves, hijab, veiling, turban, thobe, taqiyah, beard, as reactionary and primitive, associating them with terrorism or violence.

This research opens up a discussion on the Islamophobic language used by media outlets. Considering that the news frames created by these media outlets provide a pattern of interpretation for the public to understand, recognize, label events/concepts, and determine how to position them in their own lives and mental worlds, the significance of this inquiry becomes even clearer. However;

These statements describe various aspects of Islamophobia occurring through the media:

1-By emphasizing specific aspects, they selectively highlight events/developments related to Islam and Muslims, and tell viewers how to perceive the issue.

2-By consistently using repetitive patterns and narratives, they create a particular typology/profile of Muslims and shape the perception of Islam.

3-Media content adorned with negative narratives contributes to the construction of hostility and antagonism towards the Islamic religion and Muslims, especially with the use/replication of selected/repeated concepts. It should be remembered that this has a cognitive function in generating Islamophobia and producing an Islamophobic language.

Additionally, the traces of Islamophobia that become visible in the words, sentences, and between the lines of news articles may indicate an internalized Islamophobic perspective/intention in media professionals.

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İslamofobik Anlatılar Olarak Haber Çerçevesi: Radikalize Edilen Kavramlar

Mustafa TEMEL*

Geniřletilmiş Özet

İslamofobi, İslam'a ve Müslümanlara karşı ön yargı dayalı ayrımcılığı ve korkuyu ifade etmektedir. Bununla birlikte İslamofobi kelimesi, yabancı düşmanlığı olan xenophobia kelimesi ile ilişkilendirilmekte ve yabancılara karşı duyulan dışlama, düşmanlık gibi anlamlarla benzerlik taşımaktadır.

Yabancı düşmanlığı, kültürel ırkçılık gibi insan haklarına aykırı tutumlarla görünür olan İslam karşıtlığının/İslamofobinin (Rashid, Iqbal ve Tanvir, 2023, s. 608) benzer tonlarına Batı dışındaki, nüfusunun büyük çoğunluğunu Müslümanların oluşturduğu Türkiye gibi toplumlarda da rastlamak olağan hale gelmiştir. Bu ülkelerde de İslam'a/Müslümanlara yönelik Batı bakış açısı içselleştirilmiş ve İslam'ın/Müslümanların görünürlükleri tehdit edici bir perspektifle tanımlanır hale gelmiştir.

Türkiye tarihinde de Osmanlı Devleti'nin son modernleşme çalışmalarından başlayan ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti modernleşme süreci sonrası devam eden kültürel ve politik gelişmeler bu durumun en önemli göstergesidir. Bir karşıtlık ilişkisi ile yorumlanan İslam dini, gericilik/yobazlık ile çerçevesi, bu doğrultuda Müslümanların görünürlükleri, İslami ritüeller ve ibadetler sosyal, siyasal ve ekonomik hayatı tehdit eden bir unsur olarak konumlandırılmış, kısıtlanmaya çalışılmış ve bu doğrultuda pratik kararlar alınmıştır (Karpuz, 2011, s. 245; Kara, 2016, s. 35, 41-44; Bayraklı ve Yerlikaya, 2007, s. 52; Temel, 2020). Bu siyasal gelişmeler sosyal hayatta da yönlendirici etkiye sahip bir görünüm taşımakla birlikte, bu siyasal dilin medyatik bir boyut taşıması da Türkiye medyasının İslamofobik bir dil üretimindeki rolünü tartışmaya açmaktadır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye'deki İslam algısının inşasında önemli bir etkisi olan medyanın İslam'a ve Müslümanlar yönelik kullanmış olduğu dil ayrı bir önem taşımaktadır. Fakat literatürde, söz konusu problem alanını inceleyen, sorgulayan ve tartışan metinlerin, akademik çalışmaların azlığı dikkat çekicidir.

Bu çalışma da Türkiye'deki medyanın İslam'ı ve Müslümanları temsil etme biçimlerini, İslami giyim/görünüm unsurları örneğinde tartışmaya açmaktadır. Özellikle İslami giyim/görünüm unsurlarının medya içeriklerinde nasıl anlatıldığını/çerçevesi tartışmaya açılması, Türkiye'deki medya araçlarının İslam'ı ve Müslümanları temsil etme biçimini ortaya çıkaracaktır. Bu kapsamda, Türkiye medyası içerisinde önemli bir role sahip olan ve özellikle İslami konu ve meselelerle ilgili aykırı yayınlarıyla gündeme gelen Sözcü, Cumhuriyet ve Halk TV gibi yayın organları incelenecektir. Haber ve bilgi edinmenin, geleneksel medyadan yeni medyaya doğru bir evrilme yaşanması sebebiyle de ilgili yayın organlarının internet sitelerindeki yayınları haber çerçevesi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir.

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Çerçeve, bir konunun farklı yönlerinin dikkati çekmesi için yapılan bir vurgudur. Gündem belirleme kuramı, konuların dikkati çekmesi ile ilgilenirken, çerçeveleme, konuların sunumu ile ilgilenmektedir. Bu kısa tanım, genellikle haber çerçeveleri üzerine yapılan çalışmalara uygulanmakta ve çerçevelerin 'meselenin yazılış tarzı' şeklindeki dar tanımına nazaran daha fazla sezgisel anlam içermektedir (Vreese, 2005, s. 53)

Yine çerçeveleme yaklaşımında belirli bir konunun bazı yönlerinin seçilerek ön plana çıkarılması esastır. Belli bir konunun veya nesnenin medya gündemindeki sıklığından ziyade izleyicilerin konuya nasıl bakması gerektiği üzerinde odaklanır. Yani medyanın konuya nasıl bakılması gerektiği konusunda belirleyici olduğu, üretilen içerikte konunun hangi özelliklerinin ön plana çıkarıldığı ve sunumu önem taşımaktadır. Bireylerin o konuya nasıl bakması gerektiğini, o konu ile ilgili nasıl düşünmesi gerektiği ve medyanın kurduğu çerçeve ile bireyleri dolayısıyla toplumsal bakışı yönlendirdiği görüşüne dayanmaktadır (Akmeşe, 2020, s. 41).

Çerçeveler, "resim çerçevesi" veya "pencere çerçevesi" ifadelerinde olduğu gibi sınırları tanımlar ve dikkatimizi hangi olayların ve metinlerin bir konuyu anlamamızla ilgili olduğuna yöneltir. Tıpkı bir pencere gibi, dünyayı, yaşamımızı belirleyen çerçeveler aracılığıyla görür, bakış açımızı çevremizdeki karmaşık dünyanın yalnızca bir parçasıyla sınırlandırırız (Creed, Langstraat ve Scully, 2002, s. 36-37).

Kısaca çerçevelemenin;

a) Bilişsel bir işlev göstererek tekrar kalıpları sayesinde analitik düşünme yükünü azaltması (Güran ve Özarslan, 2022, s. 1226);

b) Mesajı alan kişinin/alıcının düşüncesine ve vardığı sonuca rehberlik eden çerçevelerin, niyetleri de yansıtabilmesi (Entman, 1993, s. 52);

c) Metinleri yerleştirme veya tekrarlama yoluyla ya da kültürel olarak tanıdık sembollerle ilişkilendirilerek belirgin hale getirmesi (Entman, 1993, s. 53);

d) Medya metninin aktarılabileceği biçimi ile okura, kamuoyuna bir alan çizilmesi, yol gösterilmesi ve bu şekilde de nasıl düşünmesi gerektiği ile ilgili bakış açısı sunması, anlam inşa etmesi gibi özelliklere sahip olduğu ifade edilebilir.

Bu bağlamda, İslam karşıtlığının Türkiye'deki izlerini sorgulayabilmek amacıyla, medya metnindeki İslami giyim/görünüm unsurları ile ilgili sunulan 'anlam çerçevelerine' odaklanılmıştır. Bu kapsamda İslami giyim/görünüm ile ilgili medya metnindeki, görünmez hale getirilen metinlerin anlamını ortaya çıkarmak, nasıl düşünülmesi gerektiği ile ilgili çizilen yol haritasını anlamlandırmak, yargılayıcı nefret dilinin varlığını sorgulamak, toplumsal bir meseleye ilişkin üretilen yargıyı keşfedebilmek amacıyla çerçeveleme analizi yöntemi tercih edilmiştir.

Çalışma kapsamında aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap aranacaktır:

S. 1. İslami giyim/görünüm unsurları medyada hangi çerçeve içerisinde sunulmaktadır?

S. 2. Haber başlıklarının aktarımı nasıldır?

S. 3. Haber girişleri nasıl yapılmaktadır?

S. 4. Haberde öne çıkartılan/çerçevelenen duygular/tutumlar nelerdir?

S. 5. Haberlerde izleyiciye sunulan çerçeveler/ana temalar nelerdir?

Türkiye medyasının İslamofobik tutumunu ölçebilmek amacıyla, amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle haber ve medya sektöründe faaliyet gösteren Sözcü, Cumhuriyet ve Halk TV yayın organlarının internet siteleri belirlenmiştir. Medyanın İslam ve Müslümanlar ile ilişkili meseleleri temsil biçimini

güncel örnekler üzerinden sorgulayabilmek amacıyla, ilgili internet sitelerinin 1 Ocak 2023-30 Eylül 2023 tarihleri arasındaki haberleri incelenmiştir.

Haberlerin belirlenmesinde ise “başörtüsü, türban, çarşaf, örtünme, sarık, cübbe, takke ve sakal” kavramları etkili olmuştur. İslam ve Müslümanlar ile ilgili olan ve araştırma konusuna uygun olacak haberler değerlendirme kapsamına alınmıştır.

Bu bağlamda, yapılan araştırma sonucunda, İslamofobik dilin inşa edilmesinde ve siyasal, toplumsal ve ekonomik alanlarda kendisine bir söylem alanı oluşturmasında medyanın önemli bir rolü bulunduğu belirlenmiştir. Başörtüsü, türban, çarşaf, örtünme, sarık, cübbe, takke ve sakal gibi İslami giyim/görünüm unsurlarına sosyal/siyasal/ekonomik hayatta ayrımcı, dışlayıcı, negatif ve nefret dili ile bakılmasında Batı ülkelerindeki ve Türkiye’deki iletişim araçlarının kullandıkları İslamofobik dilin etkin yeri vardır. Ayrıca:

a-Başörtüsü, türban, çarşaf, örtünme, sarık, cübbe, takke, sakal ile ilgili içeriklerin medya araçları tarafından ilgi çekici bulunduğu ve bu konularla/kavramlarla ilgili özellikle haberler ürettikleri,

b-Haber başlıklarının çoğunlukla çarpıtıcı, abartılı ve olumsuz kelime içeren bir şekilde sunulduğu;

c-Haberler girişlerinin özellikle sansasyonel/magazinsel, korkutucu, karşılaştırmacı, eleştirel ve yargılayıcı bir tonlama taşıdığı;

d-İslami giyim/görünüm unsurları ile ilgili haberlerinde dışlayıcı/ötekileştirici, nefret duygusunun belirgin olduğu, korku uyandırıcı ve ayrımcılığı teşvik edici bir duygu/anlam içerdiği;

e-Özellikle; İran vb. ülkelerdeki başörtüsü kullanımı ile ilgili yaşanan gelişmeleri abartarak sunan ve bu ülkedeki olayları uyarıcı bir tonlamayla sunan; İslami giyim görünüm unsurları üzerinden Türkiye’nin de negatif bir içerikle sunulan ülkelere benzemeye başladığı anlamını inşa etmeye çalışan; bireylerin temel tercihlerini, giyim tarzlarını veya ibadetlerini siyasetle ilişkilendirip politik kaygılara hizmet eden; başörtülü/türbanlı/çarşaf, sakallı, takkeli/cüppeli kişileri terörist veya şiddet yanlısı gibi gerici ve ilkel gösteren haber içeriklerinin varlığı tespit edilmiştir.

Bu araştırma, medya araçlarının İslamofobik dilini sorgulamaya/tartışmaya açmaktadır. Medya araçlarının üretmiş oldukları haber çerçevelerinin, kamuoyunun olayları/kavramları anlamalarına, tanımalarına, etiketlemelerine ve kendi hayatlarında/zihin dünyalarında nasıl bir yere, ne şekilde konumlandırmaları gerektiğine ilişkin bir yorum kalıbı sunduğu düşünüldüğünde bu sorgulamanın önemi daha net anlaşılacaktır. Bununla birlikte;

1-İslam ve Müslümanlar ile ilgili olayların/gelişmelerin belirlenen yönlerini, istenildiği şekilde öne çıkararak, izleyicinin o meseleye nasıl bakması gerektiğini söyleyen,

2-Tekrar kalıplar ile sürekli aynı anlatımların kullanılarak belirli bir Müslüman tiplemesi/profil ve İslam algısı yaratan,

3-Negatif anlatımlarla süslenen İslam dini ve Müslümanlar ile ilgili özellikle seçilen/tekrarlanan kavramlar ile bir düşmanlığın/karşıtlığın inşa edilmesine katkı sunan medya içeriklerinin İslam karşıtlığı oluşturan, İslamofobik bir dil üreten bilişsel bir işlevi olduğu unutulmamalıdır.

Ayrıca, haber metinlerinin kelimelerinde, cümlelerinde, satır aralarında görünür hale gelen İslam karşıtlığının izleri, medya profesyonellerinde içselleştirilen bir İslamofobik bakış açısına/niyetine sahip olduğu izlenimini doğurabilecek bir niteliktedir.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geçirilmiştir ve dergi beklentilerini karşılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu çalışmada “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuştur.

In this study, the rules stated in the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed.

Notes

¹ The purposive sampling method is a non-random form of sampling. The researcher conducts an investigation into what needs to be known and identifies the content that can provide relevant data. This sampling method is used as a way to select examples that have the highest likelihood of providing suitable and useful information. Purposive sampling strategies deviate from any form of random sampling and are strategies aimed at ensuring that cases of a specific type that can be included are part of the final sample in the research study (Etikan et al., 2016, pp. 1-3; Campbell et al., 2020, pp. 652-653).

² Dressing in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

³ Traditional gowns in Islamic societies.

⁴ Beard that is socially accepted as the sign of one’s piety or strict adherence to teachings of Islam.

⁵ The web traffic data for the websites was obtained from the website www.similarweb.com, which utilizes Big Data technologies to collect, measure, and analyze user engagement statistics for websites and mobile applications on behalf of companies (<https://pro.similarweb.com>, September 2023).



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Mapping Research on Xenophobia Increasing Visibility with Social Media: A Bibliometric Analysis

Fikriye ÇELİK*

Abstract

This study reveals a quantitative view of publications about xenophobia, whose visibility has increased through social media. Bibliometric analysis was used in the study, which was based on a systematic examination of the literature. Thus, the quantitative view of publications taking into account xenophobia, which points to a chronic problematic historical past, has been clarified, and the way of theoretical discussion that allows understanding the conceptual development has been found. With bibliometric analysis, the aim of determining the tendency of publications that focus on the theme in question and exemplify the fact that the problematic is seen in periodicity came to the fore, and it was possible to read the title from a wide perspective. Moreover, in the study, which does not ignore the fact that xenophobia becomes visible form through the tools created by the age, separate maps have been made about the publications examining the relationship between social media and xenophobia. Findings have concluded that interest in xenophobia has gained momentum in the last 5 years and revealed that periodic processes that develop with socio-cultural, socio-economic and political reasons update the alien identity, as well as the active role of new communication technologies that make xenophobia visible in this result. So it should be emphasized that there is a need for research focusing on the relationship between social media and xenophobia, and suggested that qualified studies that will fill the gap in the literature.

Keywords: Xenophobia, Social Media, Bibliometric Analysis, Alien

Sosyal Medya ile Görünürlüğü Artan Yabancı Düşmanlığı Konulu Araştırmaların Haritalandırılması: Bibliyometrik Analiz

Öz

Bu çalışma sosyal medya mecralarıyla görünürlüğü artan yabancı düşmanlığı hakkındaki yayınlara ilişkin nicel bir görüntü sunmaktadır. Alanyazının bütüncül ve sistematik biçimde incelenmesine dayanan çalışmada bibliyometrik analize başvurulmuştur. Böylece tarihi geçmiş kronik bir sorunsal işaret eden yabancı düşmanlığını dikkate alan yayınların nicel görünümü aydınlatılırken diğer taraftan kavramsal gelişimi anlamayı sağlayan teorik tartışmanın yolu bulunmuştur. Bibliyometrik analizle söz konusu temaya odaklanıp sorunsalın dönemselliğe bağlı şekilde görüldüğü gerçeğini örnekleyen yayınların eğilimini saptama amacı öne çıkarken başlığı geniş bir görüş açısıyla okuma imkanına kavuşulmuştur. Bununla beraber yabancı düşmanlığının çağın yarattığı araçlar üzerinden görünürlük kazandığı gerçeğini atlamayan çalışmada sosyal medya ve yabancı düşmanlığı ilişkisini inceleyen yayınlar hakkında müstakil haritalar çıkarılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, yabancı düşmanlığına ilginin son 5 yılda ivme kazandığı; sosyo-kültürel, sosyo-ekonomik ve politik gerekçeler eşliğinde gelişen dönemsel süreçlerin yabancı kimliğini güncellediği; bunda yabancı düşmanlığını görünür kılan yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin etkin rolü olduğu sonucuna ulaştırmıştır. Bulgulardan hareketle yeni iletişim ortamları ve yabancı düşmanlığı ilişkisini merkeze alan araştırmalara ihtiyaç olduğu vurgusunda bulunarak alanyazındaki boşluğu doluracak nitelikli yayın üretimi önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Düşmanlığı, Sosyal Medya, Bibliyometrik Analiz, Yabancı

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1. Introduction

Xenophobia is a universal phenomenon that appears as intense discontent, fear, or hatred directed towards 'alien' who are defined and classified behind walls built around borders. The problem of defining the phenomenon of 'alien' lies on the basis of this way of thinking and behaving based on hatred and intolerance. As a matter of fact, alien is the product of a conceptual effort that is negative from the beginning, rather than finding meaning as a result of a mutual relationship.

According to Waldenfels (1990, p. 19), the alien, who arises from definitional efforts fed by the negative way of seeing, evokes the uncanny. According to him, the alien is partly tempting and partly threatening. The fear of this alien, who is described as an object of anxiety, is explained by the concept of 'xenophobia', derived from the Greek words 'xenos' and 'phobos' (De Master and Le Roy, 2000, p. 425). On the other hand, xenophobia embedded in the fear of alien involves more than just a kind of phobia. Because the series of actions that start with naming and end with hostility after placing it as an object of fear points to historical realities. As it is known, the dichotomy of 'I – it', 'we – them', 'near – far', 'here – there' has found a way to reproduce itself throughout history.

According to Yakushko (2009, pp. 43-44), the phenomenon hidden under the definition of 'fear of alien' as a form of reproduction is a form of prejudice that includes emotions, attitudes, and behaviors directed towards the alien. This prejudice is complemented by the feeling of hostility at the junction of 'ethnocentrism', which explains the belief that 'oneself' and one's own culture are superior to others. Among the definitional efforts developed to understand xenophobia, ethnocentrism-centered explanations that justify Yakushko are encountered. This phenomenon indicates an extreme situation that is easy to define and measure due to a distinct feeling towards the alien. In fact, throughout history, the alien has been seen as a carrier of a different culture that has the potential to threaten the unique nationhood or unity of the 'self' (De Master and Le Roy, 2000, p. 425). Xenophobia, which is thought to be reflected from the sense of national identity originating from individuality, manifests as deep intolerance towards a 'there' that is outside 'us' and does not belong to 'here'. In other words, xenophobia is the tendency to identify with the 'inside' and completely reject the 'outside' (Starkey vd., 2021, p. 25).

The alien, who is systematically discriminated against, is faced with hostility centered on justificatory discourses after being declared a cause for fear. The basis of xenophobia, which has psychological, socio-economic, political, and cultural dimensions and emerges in a multi-component structure, is the perception of an alien culture, beliefs, and values as a threat that challenges the image of the native/host. For example, this is the reason why a portrait of Islam has been produced throughout history that challenges the Christian civilization, and the reasons that lead to the reproduction of this portrait have been created (Bravo López, 2011, pp. 1-6).

The type of perception in question is becoming more visible, especially in migration-themed developments. Thus, immigration-related xenophobia should also be mentioned. Because the economic problems that arise especially during the global migration process have increased the hatred towards aliens. As a result, increased competition has created an environment of conflict. There is no doubt that it is not enough to evaluate the issue of migration only in an economic context. As known another important framework of migration is security. The emergence of the global security issue along with global migration has added new ones to the stereotypes used to define the alien. This situation started a process in which global terrorism discourses increased. This process has revealed some new stereotypes used in discrimination/ exclusion/ marking. The black box filled with these stereotypes has been updated depending on periodic conditions. The fundamental position of the alien has not changed, but its scope has expanded. The declaration of the Muslim immigrant identity as the 'big other' of the global world stems from this update. Undoubtedly, some global events in this update have a high share. The most prominent of these

events is the 9/11 attacks. Besides this date, another important turning point is the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. Another significant event that has a similar impact is the 7/7 London metro explosion of 2005. The topic of terrorism has come to the fore with the addition of the mentioned terrorist attacks to the security-oriented discussions marked by global migration. Thus, the concept of alien was moved to the context of terrorism.

In the literature, paradigms that evaluate xenophobia within the framework of racism are also encountered. For example, Tafira (2011, p. 114) claims that what is seen as xenophobia is actually racism. However, according to him, although there is a clear definition of xenophobia, the lack of a clear definition of racism, which is a fluid form, makes it difficult to understand the closeness between the two concepts. This ambiguity in the definition makes invisible the fact that the violence observed in racism is also a phenomenon embedded in xenophobia. This invisibility marks the stage where violence becomes normalized. Violence that occurs at a normal/natural stage is the most concrete form of xenophobia (Kaziboni, 2022, p. 201). According to Hjerm (1998, p. 335), xenophobia should be seen as the basis for both racist actions and more subtle forms of exclusion embedded in social discourse.

As it is known, the modern world sees the alien as a weed that disrupts the well-designed garden format, with the idea that it cannot adapt to the generality. The nature of being an alien has been updated in today's global view of this way of seeing, which is based on discrimination. In this context, it becomes clear that the pandemic, which is the primary agenda issue of the world as of 2020, has revealed its own alien by updating people and space. Thus, it was decided that the new alien, whose identity was quickly identified within determined limits, was a carrier of the COVID-19 virus. In fact, the approach that really fuels xenophobia is the strong belief that alien spreads the virus. Research conducted in the last three years confirms this idea. Studies showing that the idea of placing alien as a target due to viral danger and fear of contamination is on the rise, provide inferences about the course of xenophobia (Asmundson et al., 2020; Khosravani et al., 2021; Taylor, 2021, p. 2, 2022; Taylor, Landry, Paluszek, and Asmundson, 2020, p. 94; Taylor, Landry, Paluszek, Fergus, et al., 2020, p. 598). This means that after the transformation that has taken place since 2020, the alien who is thought to disrupt the orderly garden image dictated by the modern paradigm has evolved into an object of exclusion that pollutes the world of healthy individuals.

The adventure of the alien -as an object of fear, hatred, and hostility- who is seen as responsible for the negative consequences of globalization due to the paradigm imposed by modernity, is undoubtedly not over yet. This adventure is rapidly moving to new stages depending on today's technical and technological developments. There is no doubt that the internet, which surrounds the world today, is a tool that preserves existing stereotypes and reveals new stereotypes. Likewise, the instrumental position of the new communication opportunities that give rise to social networks and social media environments has reached remarkable levels. These new spaces allow people to create stereotypes express prejudice and transfer the codes of behavior that are prominent in this age to the online environment.

Undoubtedly, the behavioral codes mentioned become widespread as they are learned. As a matter of fact, there are many studies revealing that thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors towards the alien are learned through exposure to social environments and media (Armstrong and Neuendorf, 1989, p. 3; Boer and van Tubergen, 2019, p. 2; Dixon, 2008, p. 331; Schemer, 2012, p. 751; Vergeer et al., 2000, p. 127). In particular, many studies are showing that media environments have managed to become the most effective actors in managing ethnic reconciliation and generating public consent by legitimizing policies based on discrimination (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 21). Similar studies highlight the fact that xenophobia, which is on the rise due to global migration, is fed by media content (Igartua and Cheng, 2009, pp. 739-740; Schemer, 2012, pp. 751-753). Just like the fact that the alien's position of alienage, which it has had throughout the historical process and maintained with various justifications, is fixed through the media and stereotypes, a similar situation is also

encountered in social media. However, research shows that prejudiced behavior is learned and spread more quickly and easily in social media environments than in traditional media (Ahmed et al., 2021, pp. 646-647). Because users are also influenced by factors such as subscribed news sources, the structure of the network, and content ranking algorithms (Bakshy et al., 2015, pp. 1131-1132). When all these studies are considered together, the current stage of the world points to the fact that the global nature of new communication technologies has fixed universal xenophobia.

This study, based on understanding the phenomenon of fear, hatred, and hostility centered on the alien phenomenon that dates back to ancient times, is a systematic literature review on xenophobia. Reasons such as the fact that the concept of alien requires philosophical, sociological, psychological, theological, economic, and cultural understanding efforts and that xenophobia has psychological, political, and socio-economic dimensions have enabled the problematic in question to be taken into consideration by interdisciplinary approaches. Thus, it should be said that these studies, which contribute to the literature, provide important data on the conceptualization and causalization of xenophobia. In that case, it is important to systematically research the literature in question. It was concluded that bibliometric analysis is the most accurate technique to be used in this study with such a context.

This research aims to determine how the subject is viewed by various fields through bibliometric analysis of xenophobia-themed publications. With this technique, on the one hand, the quantitative view of the publications centering on the issue in question was illuminated, and on the other hand, a way to conduct theoretical discussion on the subject was found. Thus, the primary goal of the study was to draw attention to the studies examining the concept by holistically mapping the literature and to guide future studies.

Based on this, in the first stage of the study, a theoretical discussion was conducted regarding the concept that forms the center of the research. In the second stage, the methodology of the study was explained and knowledge was given about the technique preferred in the research. In the next stage, bibliometric analysis was carried out and the findings were obtained. Then the graphics showing the results of the mapping were analyzed. Finally, the results of the research are presented.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

Xenophobia is a comprehensive title that needs to be evaluated interdisciplinary due to the meaning it implies. Research on xenophobia, which has become the focus of philosophical, sociological, political and cultural studies and has increased depending on periodic developments, has gained intensity in recent years. This study is based on a subtle evaluation practice aimed at seeing within what limits the issue, whose clarification seems to depend only on a multidisciplinary approach, is handled. This study, which hopes to be a small but important contribution to the literature by drawing attention to the nature of the subject, examining the literature in a holistic framework, and marking areas that need further research, is the product of a significant effort.

As it is known, it is important to classify the literature of a research field according to its main trends (Shi et al., 2022, p. 2). This triage is becoming more important, especially in interdisciplinary issues. The primary importance of this study comes from its classification of the literature on xenophobia according to trends. In addition, the potential to reveal how the social media channels that shape the age we live in are viewed under the title of xenophobia is another reason that makes the study important. The findings obtained in the research using statistical techniques are remarkable due to their contribution to the literature as well as presenting a quantitative expression. Based on this, the main purpose of this study is to determine in which branches of science there are more efforts to understand and explain the subject or in which fields more studies

on the subject are needed. Similarly, another purpose is to show in which geographies the mentioned issue is more on the agenda or in which countries it is ignored. At the same time, reaching a picture that reveals the holistic process by illuminating the periods when the subject was taken into consideration more, the connection between researchers focusing on the subject, and the concepts that enable the subject to be problematized are among the prominent aims of the study.

2.2. Method

In this study, where research on xenophobia was examined descriptively, bibliometric analysis was used. Bibliometric analysis is a literature description based on quantitative character. As it is known, bibliometrics focuses on the concrete image that reveals the progress made in a field of science in the context of publication, author, country, citation, institution and source. This approach, which centers on concrete visual output, is a functional tool in creating an accurate profile of the field consisting of many components. Thus, themes, indicator figures, and thematic networks reveal the holistic structure of the concept in detail (Cobo et al., 2011, p. 146).

There are two main procedures in bibliometrics, namely performance analysis and science mapping (Noyons et al., 1999, p. 115). On the one hand, thanks to performance analysis, it is possible to make inferences about the actions of structures involved in active science production, on the other hand, it is possible to reveal data about the structure of scientific research through science mapping (Braam et al., 1991a, p. 233, 1991b, p. 252). In this research based on the bibliometric mapping approach, visual expression of quantitative data is prioritized. Thus, the quantity of performance on academic research, which is known to be the main purpose of bibliometric analysis, and the graphical indicator of this output have enriched the study. Likewise, this technique makes it easier to produce data that contributes to the measurement of scientific activities at both micro and macro levels. (Van Raan, 2005, p. 23).

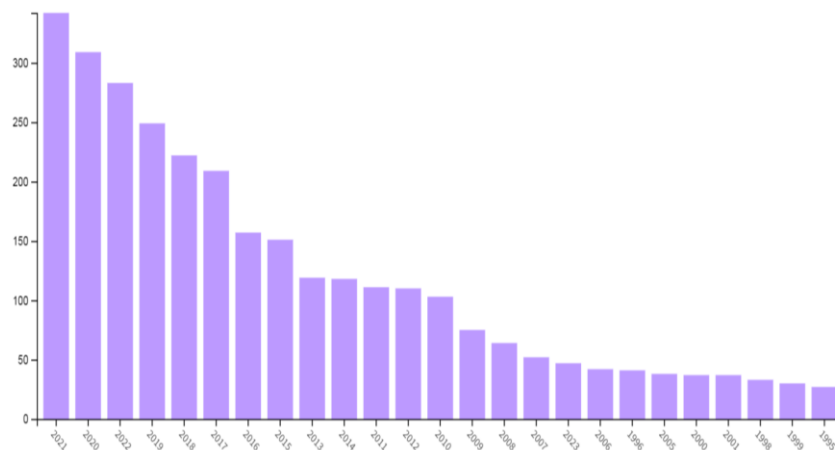
Bibliometric mapping, which is seen as scientific calculation and used in the numerical measurement of production-based scientific progress, is carried out through some software and programs. This research, in which network maps were created with the help of VOSviewer, only includes Web of Science indexes. In the study, data taken from the WOS database were processed and made suitable for analysis. Since the scanning took place only on Web of Science, data on other scanning platforms were excluded. Exclusion of other data constitutes the limitations of the study. In the research conducted in April 2023, a total of 3339 studies were found in the search using the keyword “xenophobia”. In addition to the findings obtained, the keywords “xenophobia” and “social media” were also searched together. A total of 82 studies focusing on the relationship between xenophobia and social media were reached in the research.

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. In which years were the studies in question taken into consideration?
2. Which countries are most relevant and influential on the issue?
3. Which research areas are most interested in the issue in question?
4. What are the topics on which the most effective studies appear?
5. In which language were the most works produced?
6. What is the distribution and trend of keywords?
7. What kind of relationship exists between researchers?
8. Who are the most influential researchers?

3. Findings and Analysis

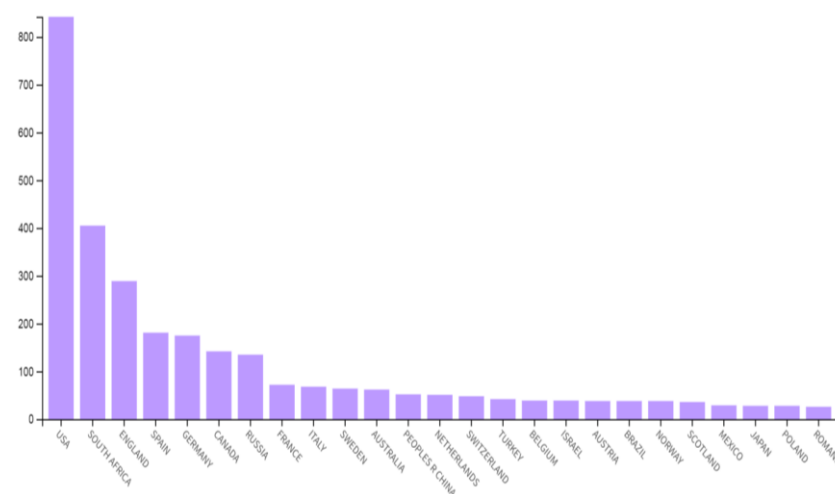
The Web of Science search engine was used to access studies conducted on xenophobia to date. As a result of the research, 3339 publications were reached. The data of the studies accessed via WOS were saved in the VOSviewer program. Thus, in addition to accessing information about the year, country, and university of the 3339 publications accessed, it was possible to analyze in detail, from the discipline of the publications in question to the most cited publication and author.



Graphic 1. Distribution of studies on xenophobia by years (WOS, 2023)

According to the research, the studies in question started to produce the first examples in 1995. It is seen that publications, which increase regularly every year, have gained significant momentum in the recent period. The rates given in Graphic 1 show that the highest rate was reached in 2021, with approximately 400 studies on xenophobia. It should be said that a number close to the studies put forward in 2021 was also in question between 2017 and 2022, and interest in the subject increased as of 2017.

The significant increase in research centered on hostility towards aliens in the 2000s is undoubtedly not independent of the historical, economic, political and cultural developments. The events of 9/11 were a turning point that enabled the reproduction of the ‘big other’ in the world. In addition to the new wave of migration that developed due to the war in Syria after 2011, alien and xenophobia have managed to attract attention with the rising political discourse of the insecure world discourse that approaches global migration within the framework of security.

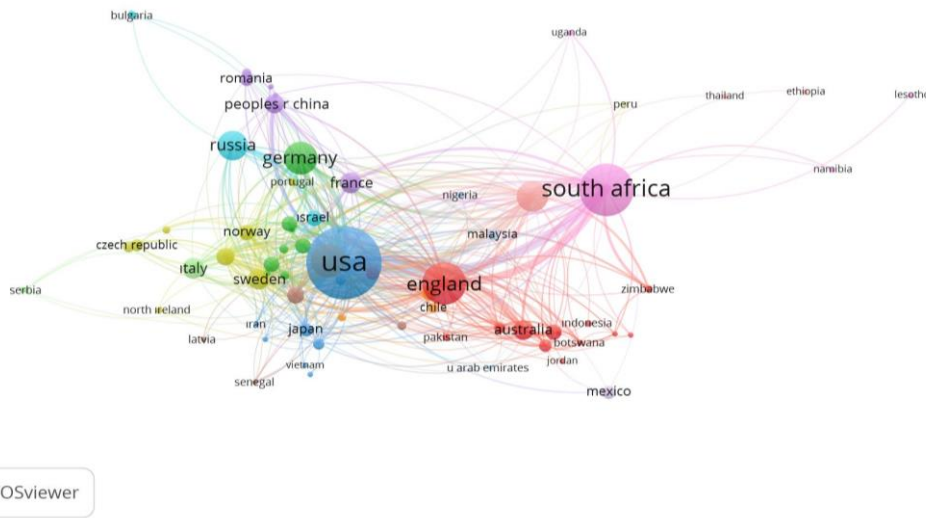


Graphic 2. Distribution of studies on xenophobia by country (WOS, 2023)

As a result of the analysis carried out within the scope of the study, 106 countries where research on xenophobia was conducted were reached. Graphic 2 shows the 25 countries with the most publications. According to the chart, the USA ranks first with over 800 publications (842) in the list of countries publishing on the subject in question, followed by South Africa with 405 publications and the UK with 289 works. When we look at the top three regions in the ranking, there is a clear difference especially between the first and second places.

Undoubtedly, in the context of the reasons explained above, it is not a surprising result that the USA is at the top of the list. Because, with the 9/11 attacks and the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, ‘alien’ and ‘terrorism’ issues became the priority agenda of the country, and interest in the mentioned issue/problem increased. Another example that confirms this idea is England, which comes in third place on the list. The 7/7 London subway bombing of 2005, described as England’s September 11, led to a situation similar to the approach seen in the USA. It is no surprise that Africa comes second on the list. There seems to be no more natural outcome than Africa, which has experienced being an ‘alien’ throughout its history, being at the top of the countries that are interested in the issue. Spain, which ranks 4th on the list, shows the normality of being one of the countries with the most publications, considering the country’s history.

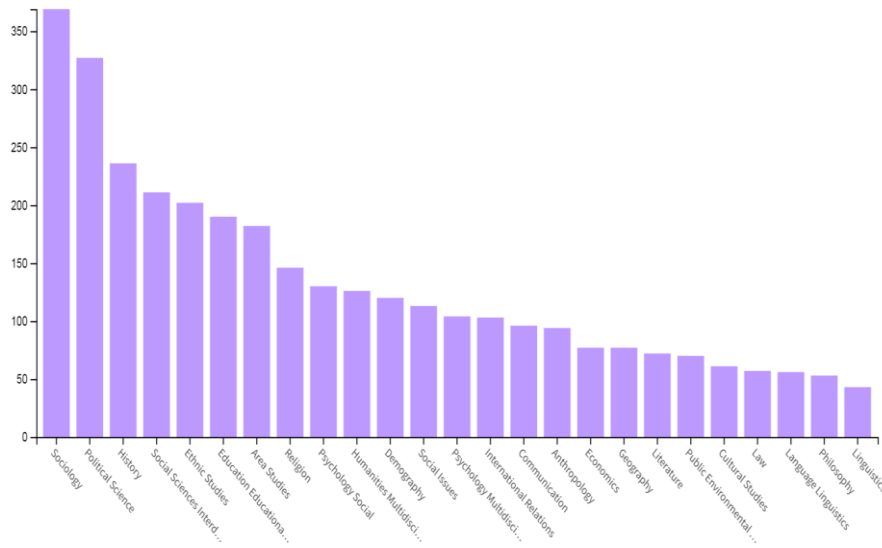
Türkiye is among the 25 countries with the most publications about xenophobia. Türkiye ranks 15th on the list with 42 publications. This ranking, which constitutes an average of 1.5% of the total research, draws attention to the fact that there is a need for research that will draw attention to the issue in question in Türkiye.



Map 1. Country network map of studies on xenophobia (VOSviewer, 2023)

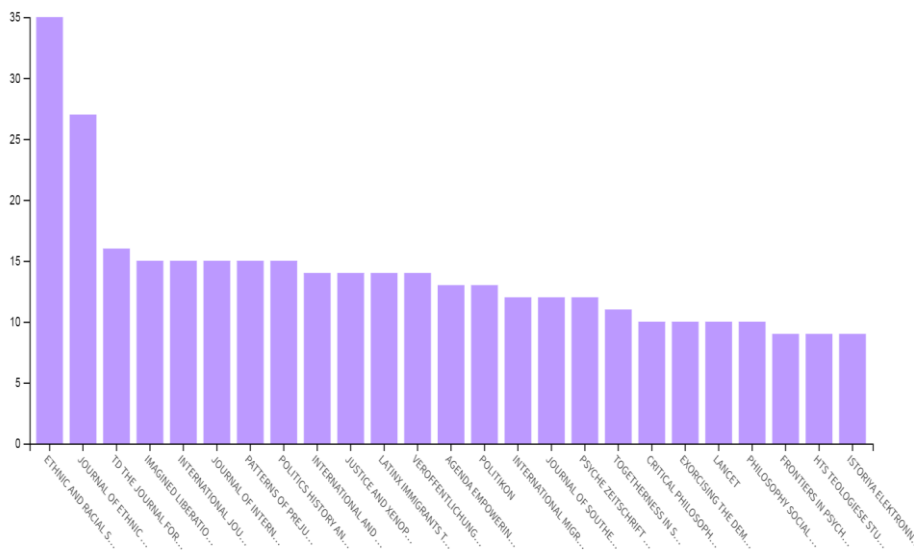
Map 1, which visualizes the country network map of xenophobia-themed studies, includes 73 observation units selected from 111 countries and included in the analysis within the framework of at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation criteria. The map resulted in 16 clusters, 481 links and 2446 total link strength. Based on the map, it should be said that the ranking of the countries with the most publications focusing on the research issue in question is not parallel with the countries with the most citations and the highest link strength. In the list of countries with the most citations, while the USA tops the list with 11378 citations, the UK comes right behind the USA with 4812 citations. Canada, which comes in third place on the list, has a total of 3272 citations. When looking at the map in terms of total link strength, the list changes. While the USA (1009) maintains its place, England leaves the second place to South Africa (617). Following Canada, which has a link strength of 471, the UK moves to the 4th place, with a total link strength of 460. Another remarkable indicator on the countries network map is the numerical expression of publications in Türkiye.

Türkiye (119), which is in the 15th place in the list showing the number of works, rises to the 8th place in the list by being among the prominent countries in terms of total link strength.



Graphic 3. Distribution of studies on xenophobia by field (WOS, 2023)

Graphic 3 shows the distribution of studies focusing on xenophobia by field. The 25 areas with the most publications on the subject are graphed. The distribution we encounter shows that the highest number of publications belong to the field of sociology (369). While political science comes after sociology with 327 publications, history studies follows political science with 236 publications. There are also publications on the subject in the fields of ethnic studies, religion, economy, communication, geography, and law. These publications appear to have an average distribution. When we look at the percentage expression of these fields of study, it is understood that the field of sociology, which produces the most publications, constitutes 11% of the total number. While political science follows sociology with 10%, history ranks third, accounting for 7% of the total number of publications.



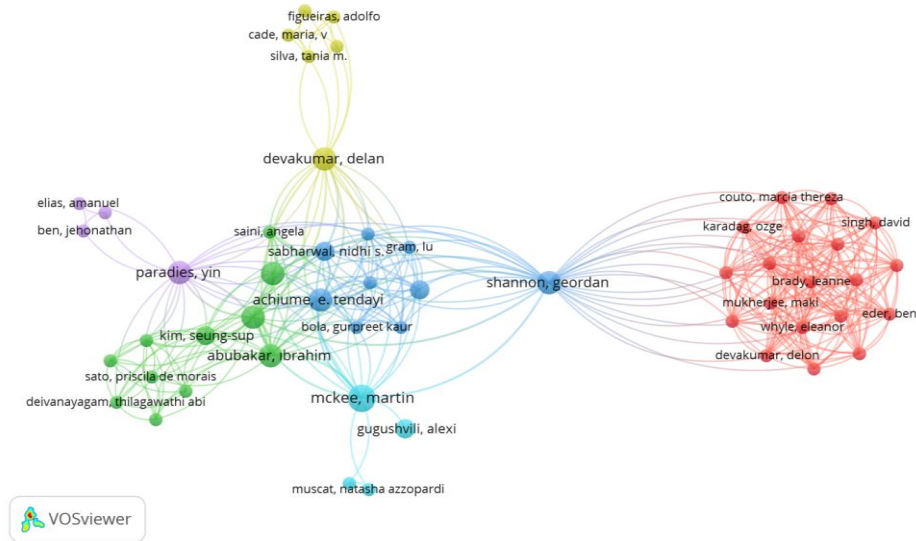
Graphic 4. Distribution of studies on xenophobia by subject titles (WOS, 2023)

Map 2 shows the network map showing the link between keywords. The map is important in revealing the network that keywords establish with each other. Because, as it is known, local keywords reveal the exact nature of the study and ensure the visibility and accessibility of the study. In the study, out of 1601 words, 276 high link strength keywords with a minimum number of occurrences of 2 were included in the scope of analysis. As can be seen from the map, the highest link between words is between xenophobia and racism. However, 274 titles stand out. Based on the network map, it was determined that the keyword xenophobia was linked to 433 keywords. In addition, it was found that the total link strength of the concept of xenophobia with keywords, which has a high connection power, is 1005.

Looking at the map, it can be seen that the concept of racism, as the most visible word around xenophobia, is linked to 79 keywords, and the total link strength is 241. The third keyword that stands out in xenophobia-centered research is South Africa. The total link strength of South Africa, which has links to 59 keywords, is 163. While the concept of migration, which is observed to be linked to 33 keywords on the map, has 116 total link strength, the concept of nationalism, which follows the keyword migration, is in the top five of the list with 29 links and 110 total link strength. Undoubtedly, there are other words on the map where the keyword xenophobia reveals a strong network connection. Islamophobia, globalization, ethnocentrism, and human rights are some of the prominent ones.

As a result of the analysis made on keywords, it is revealed that xenophobia has a place in quite different themes. The size of the color scale on the network map consisting of 26 clusters gives an idea about the diversity of the themes in question. Another interesting finding emerges in the layer analysis. The clusters marked in yellow on the map provide clues about the recent interests of researchers. Based on the map, as of 2020, the areas associated with the concept of xenophobia have diversified. What is most striking is that there is a kind of directional shift in the usage of the concept. When we look at the yellow keywords that are used extensively in recent research, it is seen that the first 3 words are COVID-19, coronavirus, and pandemic.

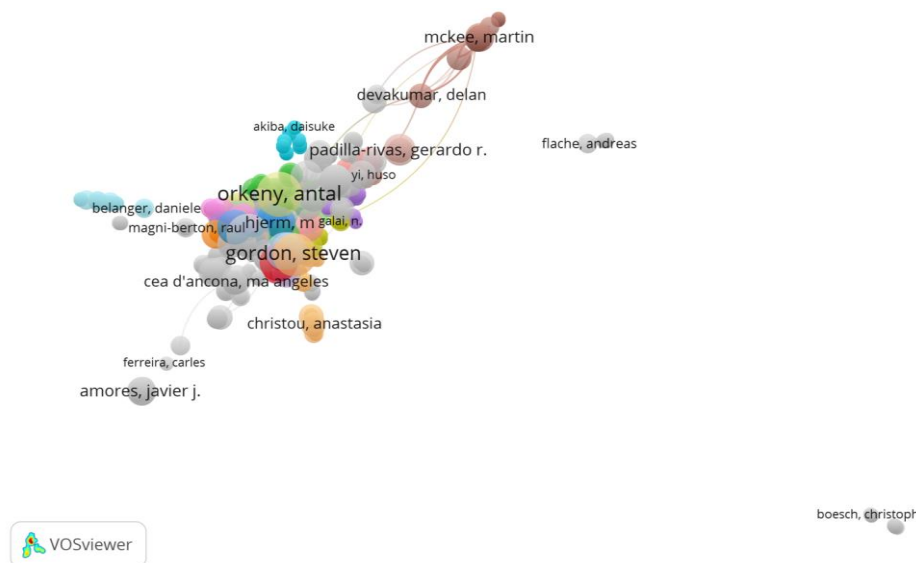
The change in keywords opens the door to important explanations. As a matter of fact, these 3 words indicate the necessity of re-reading the concept of 'aliens' in accordance with the experienced age. The identity of the 'aliens' has been reproduced with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made the health issue the most important and single agenda in the world and made national and international health policies single-centered. This time, the boundaries of the concept have not only expanded; an alien of the new era has been defined as being a coronavirus carrier. The 'alien', who has been the object of discursive and action practices involving separation/exclusion throughout history, has continued to be exposed to the same marginalizing discrimination practices in its new appearance. Undoubtedly, considering the keywords that are the center of the research in question in the light of this knowledge makes network map analysis valuable. For example, it is not surprising that the concept of globalization is also one of the prominent keywords.



Map 3. Co-author map of studies on xenophobia (VOSviewer, 2023)

Map 3 shows the co-author analysis map of research on xenophobia. This network map identifies the authors with the most publications on the issue in question, the authors with the most connections between them, and the most cited authors. The map was created within the framework of the criteria of at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation on the subject.

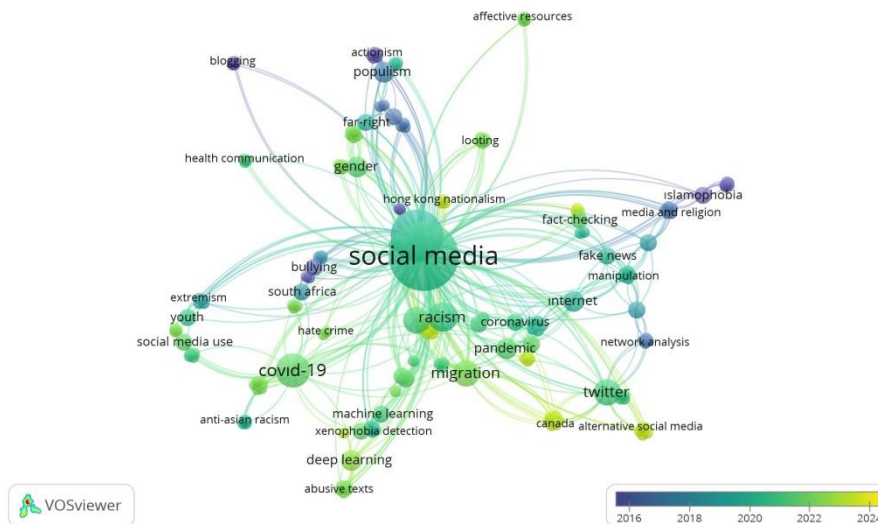
Based on the map, it is possible to say that the names with the most publications do not have the same number of citations. For example, Antal Orkeny, who has the highest number of publications (10), has 18 citations. Gordon J. G. Asmundson and Steven Taylor, who have the highest number of citations with 998, have only 5 works. As can be seen from the map that provides an analysis of the total link strength, Geordan Shannon is the name with the highest link strength. It is important that Shannon, who has only 3 works and 11 citations, is at the top of the list with a total connection strength of 41. This exemplifies the fact that authors who produce many works are not also those who are most cited or have the highest number of connections.



Map 4. Author citation map in studies on xenophobia (VOSviewer, 2023)

Of the 5010 authors who worked on the subject in question, 3343 authors who had at least 1 work and received at least 1 citation were evaluated. Among these, 1463 authors with the highest

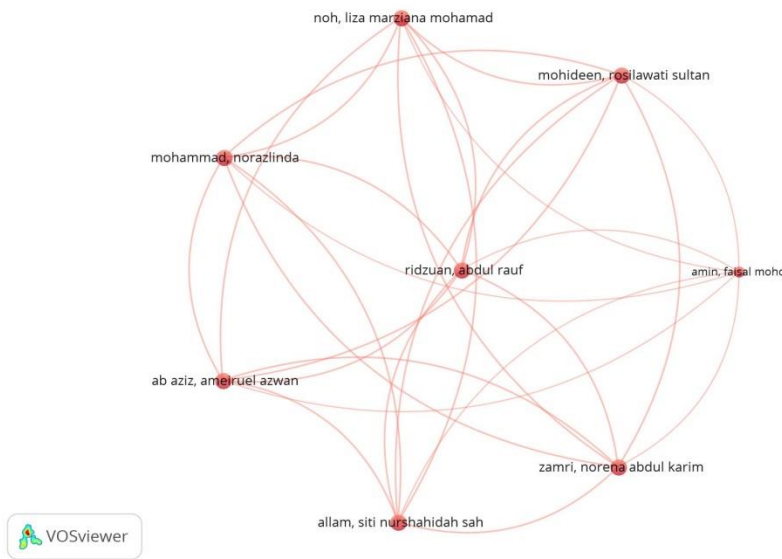
number of connections were included in the study. The network map in Map 4, which visualizes the analysis at the scale of 1463 units, reveals 47 clusters, 6831 links, and 7966 total link strength. While Gordon J. G. Asmundson and Steven Taylor come first among the most cited authors with 998 citations, it is possible to say that there is a high connection between these two authors. Following these two names, Caeleigh A. Landry and Michelle M. Paluszek split second place with 965 citations. Dean McKay ranks 3rd on the most cited authors list with 924 citations. The order observed in the number of citations mustn't be parallel to the ratios showing the number of publications and total link strength.



Map 5. Keyword network map of studies on xenophobia and social media (VOSviewer, 2023)

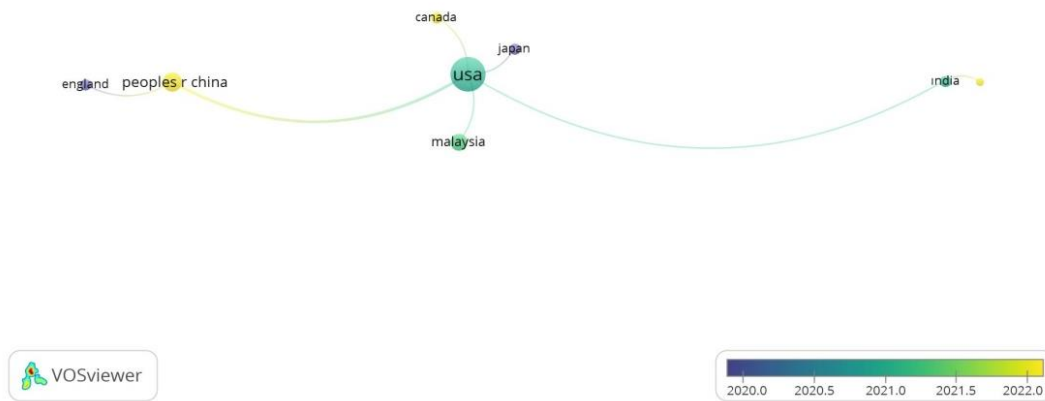
When we look at the publications on the relationship between xenophobia and social media among the 3339 studies accessed in WOS, it is seen that this number is only 82. The social media factor in xenophobia, which was observed to have been ignored until recently, has received increasing attention as of 2016. However, it seems that interest in the subject has increased in 2022. It is possible to look for the clue to this increase in keywords. As a matter of fact, keywords provide causality of interest.

In the network in Map 5, which shows the connection between keywords, all 194 words within the criteria of at least 1 occurrence are presented. A total of 22 clusters, 767 connections, and 838 total connection strengths were identified. As shown in Map 5, layer and density analysis collects similar words in the same group. When we look at which keywords come to the fore in research focusing on the relationship between social media and xenophobia, we can see words such as racism, immigration, Twitter, echo chamber, fake news, COVID-19, pandemic, Islamophobia, hate speech, far right, gender. It should be said that the common feature of these keywords is to focus on current topics. The yellow color in the cloud shows this. The transition from yellow to blue shows the decrease in the frequency of use of keywords. This situation indicates a tendency towards current issues. When looking at the connection strength of words, social media with 33 occurrences has 187 total link strength. Xenophobia, which comes next and was seen 19 times, has a total link strength of 104. The keyword COVID-19, which is ranked 3rd on the list and seen 8 times, has a total link strength of 39.



Map 6. Co-authorship map of studies on xenophobia and social media (VOSviewer, 2023)

The quantitative scarcity of publications (82) centering on the relationship between xenophobia and social media makes the co-authorship network in Map 6 more striking. In order to identify the authors with the most connections in the network map, the criteria of at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation were met. Within the framework of these criteria, 107 names were selected among 133 authors. Based on the analysis, each of the 8 authors seen in the map above has 13 unit links.



Map 7. Country network map of studies on xenophobia and social media (VOSviewer, 2023)

It is seen that studies on the relationship between social media and xenophobia have been published in 26 countries. 22 countries that met the criteria of at least 1 publication and at least 1 citation were selected from 26 countries and evaluated. The network map of the 8 observation units with the most connections among them was created. Map 7 shows 4 clusters, 7 links and 10 total link strengths. As can be seen from the map, the highest total link strength belongs to the USA. USA has 973 citations and 8 total link strengths. When evaluated in general the map is important to show that the connection between xenophobia and social media is not taken into account sufficiently.

Based on the other analysis units evaluated in the study, one of every 4 studies (24.390%) focusing on the relationship between xenophobia and social media was published in the field of communication. In addition, one of the other findings is that one in every 4 studies (25.610%) was published in 2022.

Conclusion

In this study, which has a quantitative character, an effort was made to produce descriptive meaning, and research on xenophobia has been mapped. In addition to quantitative analysis, the map has led to findings that enable theoretical discussion on a correct basis. Within the scope of this research, which is a literature description, 3339 studies were reached. The studies were primarily examined within the framework of xenophobia. Following this, 82 publications were identified in the review of publications focusing on the relationship between xenophobia and social media.

In the study, it was concluded that the way xenophobia, which indicates a chronic problem with a historical background, was subject to scientific research was carried out within the framework of periodicity. The trend observed in research in the early 1990s has shown an increasing interest and has increased in the last 5 years. Undoubtedly, the periodic process that updated the alien identity accompanied by social, cultural, economic, and political reasons was effective in this increase. On the other hand, new communication technologies, the reality of the age that makes xenophobia more visible, have played an active role in the increasing interest.

Through bibliometric analysis, the opportunity to causalize the findings as well as the quantitative value of the data was obtained. For example, by identifying prominent keywords, it has become easier to talk about a general image of xenophobia. Similarly, the network map of countries was useful in explaining why publications focusing on the phenomenon in question were mostly seen in the USA. Likewise, findings such as examining this socially embedded problematic mostly in the field of sociology and revealing the slip in the object of xenophobia in social media-centered publications have provided the opportunity to present the issue in question from a broad perspective. However, according to the findings, the field of communication is among the fields with the most publications on the subject. In the field of communication, which ranks 15th with 96 publications, research focusing on the relationality of social media and xenophobia has received increasing attention as of 2018. It is seen that interest in the subject has intensified as of 2022.

As a result, based on the general view revealed by the research findings, there is a need for research that centers on the relationship between social media channels, especially the internet, and xenophobia. In this case, it is possible to suggest qualified publications that can fill this gap in the literature.

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Sosyal Medya ile Görünürlüğü Artan Yabancı Düşmanlığı Konulu Arařtırmaların Haritalandırılması: Bibliyometrik Analiz

Fikriye ÇELİK*

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Arařtırmanın Konusu ve Kapsamı

Yabancı düşmanlığı; sınırdaki fenomene yönelen hoşnutsuzluk, korku ya da nefret görünümlü evrensel bir olgudur. Bu nefret ve tahammülsüzlük kökenli düşünüş ve davranış biçiminin temelinde ‘yabancı’ fenomenini tanımlama sorunsalına rastlanmaktadır. Bütün tanımlama ya da kavramsallaştırma çabalarının aksine yabancı; korkuya yol açma potansiyeli bulunan soyut bir varlık değil, somut bir kimliktir. Kara kutuya ya da türlü çerçevelendirmelere maruz kalan bu somutluk, sınır fenomeni konumunu her seferinde daha fazla sabitleyen bir gerçeklik olarak kendini göstermektedir.

İsmlendirmeye başlayıp yabancı olanın korku nesnesi konumuna taşınmasıyla nihai sonucu düşmanlıkta bulan ‘ben – o’, ‘biz – onlar’, ‘yakın – uzak’, ‘buradaki – oradaki’ dikotomisi tarih boyu kendini yeniden üretmenin bir yolunu bulmuştur. Mantıklı açıklamalara dayanmayan ya da henüz gerekçelendirilememiş korkunun öne sürülmesiyle tekrarlanan bu kadersel ayırım sonunda düşmanlığın çeşitli biçimlerine uzanmaktadır. Hořgörüsüzlükle ilişkilendirilen her tür dilsel ve eylemsel pratik buradakinin/evsahibinin alanını genişletirken; oradakine/yabancıya ait bütün değerlerin sistemli biçimde ortadan kaldırılması normalize edilmektedir. ‘Ben’ ve ‘o’ karşılaşmasında tarafların hiçbir zaman eşit olamayacağına, ‘orada’ olanın sabitlenmiş bir oradalığa mahkum olduğuna duyulan inanç evin/toprağın/yurdun sahibini esir alırken; ‘yabancı’ olan, korku duygusunun ardındaki/altındaki düşmanlık aracılığıyla sistematik olarak şiddete uğramaktadır. Böylece zenofobi kavramından, bahsi geçen davranış biçimini meşrulaştırması beklenmektedir.

Kuşkusuz en ince dışlanma biçimlerine maruz kalan yabancıların karşılaştığı tutum ve davranışların bütünü şiddet yoğundur. Zira bilindiği gibi bu karşılaşmada korku ya da düşmanlığı üretip kendini merkeze yerleştiren taraf yabancı olanın doğuşunu gerçekleştirmektedir. Böylece sınır belirlenmekte, kimlik profili çıkarılmakta, yabancıya kim olduğu söylenmekte ve her seferinde yeniden hatırlatılmaktadır. Nihayet bu döngü şiddet içeren bir dilsel ve eylemsel pratikler dizisi halini almaktadır.

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Gerek tarihsel gerek sosyo-ekonomik gerekse de dinsel ve kültürel gerekçeler eşliğinde ortaya çıkan söylem ve eylemlerin merkezi modern dünyaya göre; ‘buradaki’ olamayıp ‘oradaki’ olma kaderini yaşayan ve ‘genel’e uyum sağla(ya)maydığı iddiasıyla ‘özel’leştirilen yabancı, düzen içinde tasarlanmış bahçe formatına aykırı yabani ot kabul edilmiştir. Temeli ayrımcılık ve düşmanlığa dayanan görme biçiminin bugünkü küresel görünümünde yabancı olmanın mahiyeti de güncellenmiştir. Keza yabancı tasarımının dönemsel şartlar çerçevesinde gerçekleştiği yadsınmayan bir hakikattir. 2020 itibarıyla insana ve insanı ağırlayan mekana getirilen güncellemeyle yeni modelleme sürecine geçildiği bilgisi bu bağlamda düşünüldüğünde; öncelikli gündem başlığı haline gelen pandeminin kendi yabancısını da beraberinde getirdiği gerçeği netlik kazanmaktadır. Dünya, tarih boyu varlığını türlü yeniden üretimlere borçlu olan yabancıнын güncellenmiş modeliyle tanışmıştır. Böylece ani kararlarla belirlenen sınırlar etrafında tanımlanarak kimliği konusunda ortak payda yaratılan yeni yabancıнын, Covid-19 virüsü taşıyıcısı olduğuna karar verilmiştir. Bununla beraber yabancı düşmanlığını esas besleyen yaklaşım, yabancı olanın virüsü yaydığına duyulan kesin inanç olmuştur.

Modern paradigmanın büyüttüğü bir sorunsal olarak anlam kazanıp küreselleşmeyle artan göçün sosyo-kültürel ve sosyo-ekonomik sonuçlarının sorumlusu ilan yabancıнын korku, nefret ve düşmanlık nesnesi olma serüveni kuşkusuz henüz sona ermiş değildir. Dünya, içinde bulunduğumuz dönemin teknik ve teknolojik imkanları nispetince giderek büyüyen bu serüvenin yeni aşamalarına şahitlik etmektedir. Bugün internet ağının mevcut yargı ve stereotipleri güçlendirip yeni birtakım kalıp yargıların doğuşuna yardımcı bir enstrüman rolü üstlendiğine şüphe yoktur. Keza sosyal ağlar ve sosyal medya ortamlarını doğuran yeni iletişim imkanlarının araçsal konumu dikkat çekici boyutlara ulaşmıştır. Çağın dönemsel niteliklerinin bir çeşit prototipini veren sosyal medya mecraları bunun en açık göstergesidir. Bu yeni mekan kullanıcı konumunda bulunan insanın stereotip oluşturma ve ön yargıyı ifade etme şeklindeki somut pratiklere alan açarak öne çıkan davranış kodlarını çevrimiçi ortama taşımaktadır. Böylece sosyal medyanın araçsal konumu yabancı düşmanlığının daha görünür olmasında pay sahibi olmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Önemi

İşaretlenen bütün söz konusu dönemsel süreçler sonunda çeşitli güncellemelere uğrayan yabancı düşmanlığını anlamaya yönelik bugüne kadar pek çok araştırma yürütülmüştür. İçerimlediği kapsamlı anlam gereği farklı disiplinlerin kadrajına giren yabancı düşmanlığı hakkında ortaya çıkan felsefi, sosyolojik, politik ve kültürel çalışmalar son yıllarda yoğunluk kazanmıştır. Bu çalışma da söz konusu olgunun hangi sınırlar çerçevesinde ele alındığını görmeye/gösterme yönelik incelikli bir değerlendirme pratiğine dayanmaktadır. Gerek konunun niteliğine dikkat çekme gerek literatürü bütüncül çerçevede inceleme gerekse de hakkında daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulan alanları işaretleme gücü dolayısıyla alanyazına ufak ancak önemli bir katkı olmayı uman bu çalışma kayda değer bir çabanın ürünüdür. Benzer şekilde içinde bulduğumuz çağın yeni mekanı kabul edilen sosyal medya mecralarının yabancı düşmanlığı başlığı altında ne kadar görüldüğünü açığa çıkarma potansiyeli de çalışmayı önemli kılan bir başka sebeptir.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu araştırmanın amacı yabancı düşmanlığını konu edinen çalışmalar hakkında bilim dalı, yazar, ülke, kurum, yayın yılı, yayın dili, yazarlar ve ülkeler arası bağlantılılık, anahtar kelimeler, atıf bağlantısı ve atıf rakamları gibi genel bilgisel ağa ulaşım durumu tespiti yapmaktır. Böylece çıkarılan

profil üzerinden bahse konu sorunsalın en çok hangi alan, ülke, kurum ve yıllarda dikkate alındığından hangi anahtar kelimelere başvurulduğuna, yazarlar arasında nasıl bir bağlantı olduğundan atıfların ülkelere göre dağılımına, alanın bütüncül portresini sunan çalışmadan araştırmacılara yön tayin etmesi beklenmektedir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Yabancı düşmanlığı temalı yayınların eğilimlerini saptama amacındaki bu çalışmada niceliksel karaktere dayalı literatür betimlemesi olarak tanımlanan bibliyometrik analize başvurulmuştur. Bu teknikle bir yandan söz konusu sorunsal dikkate alan yayınların nicel görünümü aydınlatılırken diğer taraftan kavramsal gelişimi anlamayı sağlayan teorik tartışmanın yolu bulunmuştur. Literatürün bütüncül biçimde incelenmesine imkan tanıyarak bahsi geçen temaya odaklı araştırmaların gelişimine ışık tutan çalışmada VOSviewer'dan yardım alınmıştır. Ağ haritalarının çıkarıldığı araştırma yalnız Web of Science indexlerini içlemektedir. Taramanın Web of Science üzerinde gerçekleşmesi ile diğer tarama platformlarındaki verilerin dışlanması araştırmanın kısıtlılıklarını oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada “xenophobia” anahtar sözcüğü ile yapılan taramada toplam 3339 çalışmaya ulaşılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara ek olarak “xenophobia” ve “social media” anahtar sözcükleri birlikte aranmış; taramada yabancı düşmanlığı ve sosyal medya ilişkisini merkeze alan toplam 82 araştırma tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları

Çalışmada tarihi geçmiş kronik bir sorunsal işaret eden yabancı düşmanlığının bilimsel araştırmalara konu edilme biçiminin dönemsellik çerçevesinde gerçekleştiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. 1990'lı yılların başında gözlenen eğilim giderek artan bir seyir göstermiş, son 5 yılda ivme kazanmıştır. Kuşkusuz bu artışta yabancı kimliğini güncelleyen sosyal, kültürel, ekonomik ve politik gerekçeler eşliğinde gelişen dönemsel sürecin payı bulunurken yabancı düşmanlığını görünür kılan yeni iletişim teknolojileri de etkin rol oynamıştır.

Araştırmada yardımına başvuru bibliyometrik analiz, nicel verilere ulaşmayı sağlamanın yanında elde edilen sonucu nedenselleştirmeye de alan açmıştır. Örneğin öne çıkan anahtar kelimelerin tespiti, yabancı düşmanlığına ilişkin genel bir görüntüden söz etmeyi kolaylaştırırken; ülkeler ağ haritasına erişim, söz konusu olguyu gündeme alan yayınların en çok ABD'de görülmesinin nedenselleştirmesine izin vermiştir. Benzer şekilde toplumsala gömülü bu sorunsalın en çok sosyoloji alanında incelemelere konu olması, alanı domine eden İngilizce'yi küçük oranlarla İspanyol ve Alman dilinin takip etmesi, sosyal medya merkezli yayınlarda yabancı düşmanlığının nesnesinde kayma yaşandığı gerçeğinin açığa çıkması gibi bulgular söz konusu başlığı geniş bir görüş açısıyla ortaya koyma imkanı tanımıştır.

Sonuç

Sonuçta; araştırma bulgularından ortaya çıkan kuş bakışı görüntünün verdiği izinle başta internet olmak üzere yeni dünyanın gerçeği sosyal medya mecraları ve yabancı düşmanlığı ilişkisine odaklanan araştırmalara ihtiyaca olduğu vurgusunda bulunarak alanyazındaki boşluğu doluracak nitelikli yayın üretimi önerilmektedir.

Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Arařtırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütölmüřtür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalıřma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile çıkar çatıřması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geçirilmiřtir ve dergi beklentilerini karřılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etięi Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu çalıřmada “Yükseköęretim Kurumları Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etięi Yönergesi”

kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuřtur.

*In this study, the rules stated in the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and
Publication Ethics Directive” were followed.*

Definitions and Roles Attributed to Muslim Identity by Digital Salafi Preachers*

Mevlüt UĞURLU**

Abstract

Since Salafi communities in Türkiye have begun to attract public attention, the necessity of research on Salafi groups has emerged. This study deeply analyzes the sermons given by digital Salafi preachers on YouTube in order to explore their definitions of Muslim identity and how they construct it. The research includes the sermons of six different Salafi preachers, and these sermons give an idea about the basic principles, beliefs and interpretations of Salafi thought in Türkiye. The research adopts a case study approach and categorizes the videos according to their thematic content, presenters and context. Then, content analysis is performed on these sermons. The results show that Salafi preachers construct Muslim identity with new definitions and roles and propose a new typology of Muslims in society. Muslim identity changes through sermons; while some definitions are inclusive, others can be exclusionary and marginalizing. The wide availability of these online sermons enables Salafi preachers to disseminate their views and beliefs to a wider audience, thereby influencing the construction of Muslim religious identity in line with the Salafi understanding. This research contributes to a certain extent to our understanding of the construction of Salafi ideology and its dissemination mechanisms through new media. It is also intended to serve as a resource for further research.

Keywords: Salafi Communities, Digital Preachers, Muslim Identity, Content Analysis, New Media.

Dijital Selefi Vaizlerin Müslüman Kimliğine Atfettikleri Tanım ve Roller

Öz

Türkiye'deki Selefi cemaatler kamuoyunun ilgisini çekmeye başlamaları nedeniyle Selefi gruplar hakkında bir araştırmanın gerekliliği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma, dijital Selefi vaizlerin Müslüman kimliği hakkındaki tanımlamalarını ve nasıl inşa ettiklerini incelemek amacıyla YouTube'da verdikleri vaazları derinlemesine analiz etmektedir. Araştırma, altı farklı Selefi tebliğcinin vaazlarını içermekte ve bu vaazlar Türkiye'deki Selefi düşünceye dair temel ilkeler, inançlar ve yorumlar hakkında fikir vermektedir. Araştırma, vaka çalışması yaklaşımını benimsemekte ve videoları tematik içeriklerine, tebliğcilere ve bağlamlarına göre kategorilere ayırmaktadır. Ardından, bu vaazlar üzerinde içerik analizi yapılmaktadır. Sonuçlar, Selefi vaizlerin Müslüman kimliğini yeni tanımlar ve rollerle inşa ettiğini ve toplumda yeni bir Müslüman tipolojisi önerdiğini göstermektedir. Müslüman kimliği, vaazlar aracılığıyla değişiklik göstermektedir; bazı tanımlamalar kapsayıcı iken, diğerleri dışlayıcı ve ötekileştirici olabilmektedir. Bu çevrimiçi vaazların geniş erişilebilirliği, Selefi tebliğcilerin görüşlerini ve inançlarını daha geniş bir kitleye yaymalarını sağlamakta ve böylece Selefi anlayışa uygun Müslüman dini kimliğinin inşasını etkilemektedir. Bu araştırma, Selefi ideolojinin inşası ve yeni medya üzerinden yayılma mekanizmalarını anlamamıza belirli bir ölçüde katkıda bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, daha fazla araştırma için bir kaynak olarak hizmet etmesi hedeflenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Selefi Cemaatler, Dijital Vaizler, Müslüman Kimliği, İçerik Analizi, Yeni Medya

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Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of the digital age, the emergence of new media, especially digital and social forms of media, has brought about a significant shift in reshaping the fabric of our society. These platforms have not only revolutionized the way we communicate and interact, but have also played a central role in fundamentally reconstructing both social and religious practices. The impact of new media has not only changed the ways in which religious beliefs are perceived and practiced; it has also profoundly transformed the essence of religious meanings and ways of expression. For a significant segment of the world's population, especially Muslims, new media have become the primary source of information about their faith. Within the dynamic nature of the digital environment, the number and diversity of digital religious authorities has experienced a remarkable increase. This represents a marked shift in the way individuals access and interpret religious teachings. In this research, we focus on the complex relationship between new media and the reshaping of religious and social practices, specifically considering how the impact of new media has increased in facilitating access to Islamic beliefs and practices.

The fields of religion and the media were previously considered as independent and competing fields. Through their activities and actors, each tried to prevent the other from becoming a public actor. Recently, however, the relationship between media and religion has become closer and more complex. Both are now meeting in a common space, influencing, changing and transforming each other. Both fields try to exist and strengthen themselves through each other (Hoover & Clark, 2002, p. 2). The fact that religion reaches large audiences through the media and that the media has many followers and viewers through religious content can be given as examples of this new type of relationship.

The rise of new media through various factors has brought about radical changes in the world of communication, and these changes have made both the reshaping of power relations and the control of information and meaning an important issue to be investigated. Addressing this issue, Manuel Castells (2007) emphasizes that new media offer an important field of study in this respect. According to him, the continuous and permanent interactions occurring in this field reflect a state and process of interaction and transformation between traditional fields and the field of communication. Furthermore, Castells draws attention to the fact that new media offers a platform that is better equipped to intervene and resist existing power structures (Echchaibi, 2011, p. 28). Therefore, the field of new media is not only limited to communication and information transfer, but also requires in-depth analysis and understanding of power dynamics and how meaning is constructed. Because of this power of influence, the internet serves as an emerging interpretive space for understanding Islam. New media technologies have restricted the ability of states to control the flow of religious messages within their borders (Echchaibi, 2011, p. 37). Thus, the definition of what constitutes religiosity by new religious authorities such as the Salafis, who utilize the possibilities of the digital world, creates a struggle over an issue called 'boundary setting' by Eickelmann and Piscatori (1996). Boundary setting means defining the definitions and content of concepts and demarcating the spheres of influence. Each religious authority seeks to set the boundaries of Islamic concepts and make new adjustments to their theoretical and practical correspondences. This is because there is a never-ending debate between religious and political authorities on concepts such as public sphere, private sphere, religion-politics, individual-society, Muslim and non-Muslim. Digital preachers try to direct this debate within the framework of their own ideologies. Therefore, when Muslims seeking religious guidance go online, it is a direct challenge to the traditional channels of Islamic religious authority. Following this challenge, the leading religious authorities in the interpretation or dissemination of Islamic concepts such as Muslim, Kafir, Shariah, Jihad, Ummah, Sunnah, Hadith, Halal, Haram, etc. begin to change. Digital platforms have started to replace traditional Islamic authority figures, giving new meanings to religious concepts and practices.

This article provides an in-depth analysis of how digital Salafi preachers define and construct Muslim identity through videos published on the YouTube platform, one of the new media tools. This analysis aims to better understand the relationship between digital media and religious identity construction. In the following sections of the article, the themes that digital Salafi preachers use in their videos, the extent of the importance they attach to the Muslim identity, and how they construct this identity are analyzed in more detail. The aim of this study is to reveal how digital Salafi preachers' sermons on YouTube define and construct Muslim identity. For this purpose, the videos of digital preachers on this subject were analyzed in detail, which religious concepts they underlined, what kind of Islamic interpretation they explained, and what kind of Muslim identity they encouraged their followers to acquire. In accordance with the nature of the research, qualitative research method and case study were preferred in this study. The data obtained through content analysis of the videos provides an in-depth understanding and insight into how digital Salafi preachers construct Muslim identity. In the following sections of the article, the structure of Salafi thought and its presence in Türkiye are discussed, the content, themes and emphases of the YouTube videos of digital Salafi preachers are analyzed, and the kind of Muslim identity these videos propose to viewers is analyzed in detail. This analysis will provide an important understanding of how digital media influences religion and identity formation processes.

Salafi Theology: Exploring its Fundamental Framework

In order to understand Salafism, which forms the basis of this study, it is necessary to start by exploring the origins of the concepts related to Salafism. Salaf originally means "to come first, to pass, to remain in the past" (Merçil, 1992, p. 399). Concept of Salafism is intended to refer the initial three generations of Muslims as reference. Salafism takes as a reference the three centuries/generations in which these three generations lived and defines this period as the golden generation, the golden age. In this way, Salafism is a philosophy that believes in progress through regression (Maher, 2016, p. 7). According to this understanding, the first three generations should be taken as a model for understanding, interpreting and living Islam. This model was removed from being a part of history and made a part of religion (Koca, 2018, p. 7). Islamic tradition and accumulation after the first three generations are rejected and considered as heresy or bid'ah. Because of this characteristic, Salafism is also called a movement that advocates a return to the essence. Olivier Roy (2003, p. 125) uses the term "militant rejectionist" accordingly. Salafism is based on three pillars and realizes its progress in this way. The "conservatives" focus on pure Islam and worship. On the other side, there are the "preacher militants" who oppose the dominant culture and society by basing their actions on invitation and preaching. The third group, which can be called "jihadists", constitutes the group that sometimes wages war against Islam and sometimes against the Western world (İşcan, 2017, p. 41).

There are structural and intellectual differences between Salafism, which emerged in different contexts in history, and today's Salafism. Although there are a number of disagreements, this difference can be overlooked due to the similarity in naming. Today, the evidence for this situation can be shown that instead of a single Salafi consensus, various Salafi groups are belonging to different thought groups. However, today Salafism is discussed as a political and violent ideological movement due to its actions and activities on a global scale. It has gained a place on the world agenda as a way of thinking that has adopted a radical and violent approach that excludes, takfir and even wants to destroy all other thoughts other than its own (Koca, 2018, p. 7).

Because Salafism has the dynamics and potential to both influence and be influenced by other Islamic movements, intellectual differentiations emerge within itself. These differentiations diversify Salafi thought with various interpretations and focuses. However, despite all this diversity, today the name Salafiyya refers to Salafi individuals and groups who generally approach religious beliefs and practices within the framework of a traditional paradigm, although they have some intellectual and ideological differences (Büyükkara, 2004, pp. 485-486). This situation reflects a kind

of unity united around the basic components of Salafi thought, creating a kind of imaginary Salafi community.

Salafism and Its Influence in the Turkish Context

Among the reasons for the grounding, spread and growth of Salafist thought today are the crises of thought and occupations that have been going on in the Islamic world since the 19th century. Salafism, feeding on this situation, has managed to export its intellectual and ideological stance to different Islamic countries and re-adapt itself according to the conditions there. Today, Türkiye is one of the countries where Salafist thought has managed to influence and hold on to a small part of the society. However, Salafism has not been able to gain a foothold in the Turkish Islamic intellectual and cultural tradition throughout history. The traditional religiosity of Anatolia has always been distant and cautious about religious extremism such as Salafism. Çaha (2004, pp. 488-489) explains the reason for this as the subordination of religion to the state in the Seljuk and Ottoman States, the fact that the social and political structure was not theocratic, the fact that the society did not show extreme reactions to events due to its interaction with different religions and ethnic cultures throughout history, and finally, the prevalence of Sufi understanding in the society.

Although its historical roots can be traced back to the influence of Turkish Islamism, translation movements, the Iranian Revolution and the Afghan Jihad on religious groups in Türkiye, the rise of Salafism, especially in today's Türkiye, seems to be directly linked to international and conjunctural initiatives and developments. Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, export religious mentality to other Islamic countries through Salafist groups. This initiative is especially realized through new media tools such as the internet. This religious mentality has managed to find a response in Türkiye by producing digital religious data. Salafist thought sees the gap caused by the negligence and inadequacies in the field of religious education and religious knowledge in Türkiye in terms of producing data in the digital environment as an opportunity and disseminates its religious knowledge in the digital environment. Today, as a result of the identity crisis and the search for an alternative religious interpretation to the existing religious understanding, Salafism has become an agenda among young people through the influence of such information, data and images that young people who spend time in the digital world encounter. Since it has a stance completely opposed to the established religious understanding, it is seen that Salafist thought has become very attractive among young people because it contains features such as opposition, protest, rebellion, conflict, and war that are compatible with youth ideology and culture.

Having started to spread from the virtual world to the real world, Salafism today tries to exist and spread in Türkiye through legal or illegal associations, centers and digital platforms such as social media. Since an important point of departure of Salafist thought is a return to the essence, it aims to target established religious beliefs and practices in Türkiye and replace them with a system of beliefs and religious practices that it claims to be the true Islam. After the struggle against the religious understanding of the society, there is a possibility that the political order in Türkiye will be next. As mentioned above, because new media technologies have helped to create new public religious authorities free from state control and restraint, Salafis today have begun to exist in this digital environment in order to continue communicating their intellectual and ideological views to others. The advantages of new media technologies, such as the ability to amplify the voice of the cause to a much wider audience, is also an important reason for their choice.

Although Salafism appears to be theologically ultra-conservative, technologically it appears to be quite innovative and revolutionary. The possible reason is that online dawah events are considered by the Salafi movement as a different aspect of jihad, not only in the military, economic and political spheres. This is what is meant by digital jihad or e-jihad (Bunt, 2003), concepts that are currently the subject of new studies. The emergence of Salafism as a modern movement due to its willingness and ability to interact with information and communication technologies, the spread

and adoption of Salafist thought as a collective identity in Türkiye can be shown as the reason for the emergence of this study. This research will focus on the activities of different Salafi preachers on YouTube in order to answer the question of what discourses and practices Salafis engage in the digital world to promote and express their collective identity.

Virtual Spaces and the Evolution of Religious Authority

The relationship between religion and media in Turkey has become closer from time to time. There are political as well as technological reasons for this. The 2010s generally coincide with the period of developments in the internet and technology. For this reason, an increase in the number of new religious virtual authorities and their impact on public opinion has been observed in Turkey since the 2010s. According to Moghadam (2013, p. 8), "The Internet, and social networking media in particular, have come to be seen as important new mobilizing technologies that help create 'virtual communities' or connect diverse movements, networks and individuals for collective action framed by a collective identity". Rapid advances in technology, such as the development of smartphones, have made it possible for more people to access the internet and use new media tools. With increased access to technologies has come increased interest in them. People gravitated towards the internet and new media tools, seeing these technologies as a way to connect with others, access information and participate in online communities. These factors have changed the way people communicate and access information and have had a profound impact on many aspects of modern life, including religion.

In Türkiye in the 2010s, the above-mentioned possibilities and advantages of technology attracted the attention of religious groups and a relationship between new media technologies and religion emerged. The internet offers a kind of "cyber sanctuary" for marginalized communities left vulnerable away from their physical spaces due to concerns of discrimination, violence and persecution (McLean, 2014). New media technologies such as social media, podcasts and live streaming have opened up new avenues for religious expression, education and communication. New media technologies have transformed the ways in which individuals engage with their faith, learn about their religion and connect with others in their religious communities. One of the most significant effects of new media regarding religion is the way it changes religious expression. This shift presents the opportunity to replace traditional religious practices through the Internet, which means it can enrich and complicate one's offline religious experiences (Robinson-Neal, 2008).

Social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have enabled individuals to share their religious beliefs and experiences with a wider audience. These platforms have given religious minorities a voice, allowing them to share their perspectives and connect with others who share their beliefs. In other words, social media has also allowed religious organizations to engage with their followers in new ways. The Internet has been revealed as supporting participation in contexts that encourage the construction of multiple identities simultaneously (Katz & Rice, 2002). Many religious leaders and religious communities have their own social media accounts where they share their thoughts and ideologies, offer spiritual guidance, and communicate with their followers. Thus, traditional barriers between religious leaders, communities and their followers have broken down and the religious views and thoughts of religious leaders and communities have become more accessible. The result is more accessible forms of religious leadership and community. This can be seen as a result of how information technology changes the way we interact with others and think about our own selves and identities (Hillier and Harrison, 2007).

Since every religious community is also seen as a religious authority, these newly formed religious virtual communities have also revealed a new form of religious authority. This new form of religious authority corresponds to online versions of traditional forms of religious authority and can easily be argued to have the same degree of influence on individuals' beliefs and practices. Thus, with its innovative aspect, the internet serves as a tool to redefine religious authority

structures (Selge et al., 2008, p. 465). It seems important to present religious groups as a virtual religious community and a new religious authority and to make them the object of analysis, as they are affected by new media technologies and influence their followers. Virtual religious communities refer to communities of individuals who share a common religious identity and come together using online platforms including social media, forums, and other digital environments (Campbell, 2003, p. 1027). The emergence, development and growth of these communities have attracted attention in recent years, and it has become important to understand the structure, function and impact of these communities. Online religious communities, by their nature, have a largely separate function from traditional religious institutions and structures and have transformed the understanding of classical religious communities (Campbell, 2013, p. 685).

Social identity, which defines the positions of individuals due to their belonging to a group, is another important concept that comes to the fore when researching virtual religious communities. Social identity, which turns into online identity in the virtual environment, turns into a performance in which individuals present themselves in the transition to the virtual world (Campbell, 2013, pp. 686-687). Virtual religious communities, like real-world communities, can provide individuals with belonging and identity while helping them connect with others who have similar beliefs and lifestyles. This new, inclusive sense of belonging and identity can be especially meaningful for those who are not fully accepted by their real-world community. For this reason, it has become important to analyze online identity formation as a social process through these virtual religious communities (Kendall, 2002). Because there are advantages and conveniences that these communities provide to their members. For example, the online environment may offer individuals greater privacy and confidentiality. This advantage seems quite critical and useful for individuals who are hesitant to express and practice their religious beliefs in the real world. Therefore, virtual religious communities can be analyzed and understood by making use of many important concepts and theories in sociology within the framework of social identity and the relationship between religion as a social institution.

Methodology of the Research

This study, which is about understanding social phenomena such as human experiences, behaviors, and attitudes in depth with a qualitative method aims to investigate how Salafi religious communities define and construct a Muslim religious identity, especially through their videos on YouTube.

In this study, the case study approach, which is one of the qualitative research method designs, was preferred in order to analyze Salafi religious communities in the context of Türkiye's experience. The case study approach is a qualitative research approach that focuses on in-depth analysis of a single case or a small number of cases. In this approach, a group of people, a business, a city and a community can be the object of the research in question (Baş and Akturan, 2017, p. 211). This type of qualitative approach involves the comprehensive and holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit (Merriam, 2013, p. 46).

YouTube videos of popular Salafi preachers were used as a data source in this research. A purposive sampling technique was preferred when selecting the research group or the preachers as data sources. In this study, the criterion for purposive sampling was the number of videos on YouTube and their diversity in terms of subject matter. Six digital preachers with videos that would be appropriate for the purpose of the research in terms of subject and diversity were included in the study. Although the YouTube channels of some of the preachers had more followers than some of the preachers in the research group, it was seen that the number of videos and the variety of topics were not sufficient to answer the research aim and were excluded from the scope of the data source. Therefore, the following preachers were selected as the research group in this study.

Each of the Salafi groups corresponds to a situation (case) in this research. The table below provides a list of these cases.

Table 1. List of Salafist preachers used as data sources for the study

	List of the Cases (Salafi Preachers)	Name of the Channel	Opening date	Number of Subscribers	City	Number of Videos
1	Halis Bayancuk (Ebu Hanzala)	Ebu Hanzala Hoca	2016	318k	İstanbul	124
2	Abdullah Yolcu	Guraba Yayınları	2010	23,8k	İstanbul	65
3	Murat Gezenler	Şehadet Mektebi	2021	15,7k	Konya	40
4	Musa Olğaç (Musa Ebu Cafer)	Nakil Kürsüsü	2014	10k	Suriye	43
5	Musab Köylüoğlu	Musab Köylüoğlu	2012	7,54k	Nevşehir	40
6	Mehmet Balcioğlu (Ebu Said Yarpuzlu)	Yarpuz İslami İlimler Araştırma Merkezi	2013	4,87k	Antalya	32

The analysis of the research was conducted through Qualitative Content Analysis Method. Qualitative Content Analysis is a very effective type of analysis in analyzing media content and focuses on the interpretative evaluation of data. The aim is both to develop a general understanding and interpretation of the text in line with the purpose and question of the research (Gökçe, 2019, p. 118) and to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 243). Qualitative content analysis involves a systematic and iterative process of reading, coding, categorizing and synthesizing data to identify patterns, themes and relationships. In the quotations from the participants' sermons, abbreviations where necessary are indicated with 4 dots (...). According to the 6th Edition of the APA Publication Guide (2013, pp. 172-173), four periods are used if expressions between two sentences are omitted. In this method, the first dot marks the end of the first quoted sentence, followed by the other three dots.

Findings of the Study

Individual typologies are a fundamental element of Salafi ideology and have an important impact and function in the internal dynamics of Salafi communities. These typologies guide us as to who is accepted and excluded by Salafi communities. Salafi groups determine the definition of Muslim identity according to whether they adhere to Salafi beliefs and practices. In this way, the main goal and ideology of Salafism, which is to create religious purity and homogeneity in society and create a collective identity, can be achieved.

Muslim Identity Formation: A Comprehensive Construction and Description

There are the views of Salafi preachers representing different Salafi communities about the definition, responsibilities and lifestyle of a Muslim below.

According to the following statements by Abdullah Yolcu, when calling a person a Muslim, the person's own declaration should be taken as basis, not external observers or decision makers. Accordingly, a person can be considered a Muslim even if he does not include religious worship and practices in his life.

Even if he does not act, he is a Muslim. In other words, he is in heedlessness, we give him advice, he returns to his deeds.... So his name is Muslim, but he does not pray (Yolcu, 2019).

You see someone, he is a Muslim, he prays, he goes to the mosque, he is a Muslim. You don't say, "Come, before I call you a Muslim, how do you believe in such and such a matter?" (Yolcu, 2014)

According to Abdullah Yolcu, a Muslim should be careful with whom he communicates and interacts closely. From his point of view, it is an important issue in Islam that a Muslim should be careful with whom he makes friends and enemies. Muslims should be in an environment where only Muslims

are present. In addition, Muslim individuals must take part in organized structures called communities.

The first condition is to emigrate from the land of infidels to be a friend of Muslims. To where? To the Muslim land. Second, a believer, a Muslim must join this Muslim community. He must be one with the Muslim communities. He should not be separated from them (Yolcu, 2018).

Ebu Hanzala, another Salafi preacher whose discourses were included in this study, claims that a person falls into one of two categories: Muslim or infidel. It then lists the criteria that a person must have in order to be classified as a Muslim.

In the Shari'ah of Allah, there is no such concept as neither kafir nor Muslim. The people created by Allah are either infidels or Muslims. It is not possible for a person to be in the middle (Hanzala, 2020b).

I said to you: When we say that sovereignty belongs to Allah, we mean four things. 1) Believing that absolute sovereignty belongs to Allah. 2) Ruling by what Allah has revealed as an obligation and a matter of faith. 3) That we, who are the ruled, give this right to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and Allah alone. 4) That people should only refer to Allah's laws in their problems and should not be judged by any law other than Allah's laws. A Muslim is a person who believes in these four principles and applies them to his life in practice. In other words, he is a believer who has believed and surrendered in this matter. Whether he has a problem with four of these or one of them, that is, whether he does not believe as such, or whether he claims to believe as such, but does not apply them to his life in practice and pursues different things, this person has no connection, no relationship with the Islamic nation (Hanzala, 2018).

The following criteria explained by Ebu Hanzala underline the rejection of democracy and acceptance of sharia as both a form of government and a way of life. The individual must not only reject democracy and trust in sharia, but also apply this in every aspect of his life. Otherwise, it is impossible for him to deserve to be called a Muslim. The following statements include the reasons why Democrat and Muslim identities cannot coexist in an individual.

On the one hand, he says he is a democrat, this is what democracy says. On the other hand, he says he is a Muslim, and Islam also says so. What is this like? This is like a person trying to put two opposites together at the same time, which is impossible. In other words, just as something cannot be black and white at the same time, something cannot be good and bad at the same time, so two opposites cannot be brought together in one thing at the same time. Likewise, a person cannot be a democrat and a Muslim at the same time. A person is either a Muslim who gives sovereignty to Allah, believes and lives that way, or a polytheist democrat. Or a person is a polytheist democrat. He associates partners with Allah in sovereignty. He gives sovereignty to other than Allah as many as there are human beings (Hanzala, 2018).

After giving a detailed definition of a Muslim, Ebu Hanzala stated that the reference point in his communication and interaction with other individuals in his daily life is only the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad. He insists on the practices of the Prophet. According to him, norms and values that are the product of culture or human mind and experience cannot determine the way Muslims live and approach other individuals.

The Muslim does not deal with what he has seen from his ancestors in the matter of women or in any other matter, but with what Allah's Messenger and the revelation have brought (Hanzala, 2019).

Sometimes the listener or audience directs the content of the sermons. This situation is exemplified below. In his question, the follower says that he left the group after realizing that he was not a Muslim due to his previous membership in a religious community, but that he has friends in that group with whom he wants to keep in touch, and asks whether there is a problem with this as a Muslim with a new religious identity.

-I am a Muslim, alhamdulillah. I used to be a strict Mahmudian. My very dear friends are still Mahmudian. He means they belong to the Ismailaga congregation. Is there anything wrong with me meeting with them because I am a Muslim? Pray for me a lot.

The relationship between a Muslim and a polytheist is always a relationship of necessity. A Muslim and a polytheist can never be two friends, two buddies - as we say today - they cannot establish a relationship between themselves

in this way. Allah (swt) has severed all ties between the polytheists and the Muslims, and has made the believers friends to each other and the polytheists friends to each other (Hanzala, 2020a).

In his answer to the audience's question, Ebu Hanzala states that a Muslim cannot communicate with a non-Muslim except in cases of necessity, in connection with the issue of friends and enemies. He emphasizes that Muslims are friends with each other and polytheists are friends with each other.

According to Ebu Hanzala, those who live in Turkey thinking they are Muslims may not actually be Muslims. Determining this situation depends on whether the person meets the criteria listed above or not. Once a person becomes a Muslim by meeting the above criteria, he should start paying attention to his behavior, starting with those closest to him. The practical equivalent of Muslim identity should be reflected in the communication and interaction with other individuals. The following answer to a follower's question about his parents explains this situation.

Whatever the elderly people around you expected of you when you were not a Muslim, try to fulfill their expectations after you become a Muslim. Until they can say this to themselves: Our son has changed a lot after he became a Muslim. Before, he used to make us sad. He doesn't upset us anymore. Before, he used to get angry with us. Now he is not angry with us. Before, he did not contribute to the household. Now he contributes to the household. He didn't care when we were sick. Now he stays up all night with us, that is, if you can try to conquer people's hearts, hopefully Allah will be impressed by your morals and make them believe and become Muslims (Hanzala, 2021).

When we look at the criteria of being a Muslim, Ebu Said Yarbuzi, another Salafist preacher, seems to agree with Abdullah Yolcu. According to him, the person's statement on this issue is also essential. If a person claims to be a Muslim, he should not be accepted as such and no attempt should be made to prove it. Explaining this situation with a metaphor, he draws a circle and includes everyone who says they are Muslim. Those who remain outside the circle are outside the Muslim identity.

We draw a big circle. If he says I am a Muslim, we see him inside this circle.... If someone greets you with the intention of showing you that he is a Muslim, do not push him in the chest because you are not a Muslim. Your good treatment, your kindness to him may be instrumental in winning him to Islam (Yarbuzi, 2020).

Murat Gezenler gets closer to Ebu Hanzala in his religious thought and defines the Turkish society as a non-Muslim society. He attributes this claim to the fact that the society does not behave in accordance with Islam in any area of daily life, and he details what he means by giving examples from these areas.

We live in a society that is not Muslim. Even though the society we live in calls itself Muslim, there is no Islam in any part of their lives. Their customs are not in accordance with Islam. The way they dress is not in accordance with Islam. Trade is not in accordance with Islam. Earning is not in accordance with Islam. Marriage is not according to Islam. Divorce is not according to Islam (Gezenler, 2021).

According to Murat Gezenler in the statement below, if a person has a claim to be a Muslim, he must prove this by organizing his life according to the holy book Quran, researching what Islam demands from him and putting forward the necessary practices in his life. However, he argues that the opposite situation is observed in Turkish society and emphasizes that it is culture, not religion, that gives individuals Muslim identity.

You live independently of the book of Allah, you do not pick up the book of Allah even once in your life and look at what kind of Muslim this book describes. You live completely away from the religion revealed by Allah. What does la ilahe illallah mean? When asked what this word wants from you, you don't know anything. You do not know the religion taught by Muhammad Mustafa sallallahu alayhi wa sallam, sent by Allah, but your name is Muslim. In our society, it is the custom that determines the name Muslim. It is not religion. The definition of a Muslim is clear in our society. If he is a Turk, he is a Muslim. If he was born to Muslim parents, he is a Muslim. If he says, Alhamdulillah, he is a Muslim. However, friends, as we explained last week, Islam is not such a frivolous religion (Gezenler, 2021).

According to Musa Ebu Cafer's approach, individuals in societies known to be Muslim are also considered Muslims accordingly. Even though there are individuals in the society who do not carry the Muslim identity, it should be assumed that the majority of the society is generally Muslim. In order to reject the Muslim identity of an individual, sufficient concrete evidence obtained by experts in this field must be presented. Otherwise, instead of immediately declaring a person an unbeliever and excluding him from Islam, various criteria must be met in order for that person to be excluded from the Islamic faith. These criteria are listed in detail below.

There are polytheists and apostates in this ummah, the ummah of Rasulullah sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. But the main thing is that they are Muslims. In other words, what is the origin of the peoples living in these states, that is, their roots, their coloring in general, let's say? It is Islam. We need to call them Muslims. After that, when we see their disbelief, what is done after that? The issue of takfir, this time it is started to be operated on the basis of science. Who has or has not committed kufr with which words? First of all, what act did he do and what word did he say? Has this act and word been clearly defined as kufr in a clear, clear way from Islam? Plus, has the invitation to Islam really reached the person who said it or even committed it in a sufficient way? Is he sane? Does he have a tawili (interpretation)? Is he under threat? And so on and so forth. The conditions of takfir are analyzed, and the implications are taken into consideration. After that, if the sharia orders it to be declared takfir, then it becomes takfir. But even if there is an obstacle, it is not considered takfir (Cafer, 2022).

According to the following statements by Musa Ebu Cafer, when a decision is made about Muslims, it should first be accepted that the individuals are Muslims. They should be treated according to their Muslim identity. That's why children of Muslim parents should be treated as Muslims. Similarly, in the dilemma of Muslim and infidel, children should be decided according to the religion of their parents.

But the main thing is that when we deal with a person, if we see these Islamic signs in him, what do we do? We go back to the basics. We will judge him as a Muslim. We may be wrong. But this will not harm us (Cafer, 2022).

The children of Muslim parents are also considered Muslims according to Islam. When these children die at a young age, they are washed, shrouded, buried in a Muslim cemetery and their funeral prayers are performed. Their madmen are also like this. Just as we treat the children of infidels as infidels, what do we do with the children of Muslims? We treat them as Muslims (Cafer, 2022).

After giving detailed explanations and examples of who is considered Muslim, Musa Ebu Cafer turns to the Turkish society to concretize this situation. It emphasizes that in order to make a decision about a person's religious beliefs in this society, clear and concrete behaviors in a person's life must be observed. An individual is considered a Muslim if he exhibits the behaviors prescribed by Islam towards his environment.

A question arises. Then are Turkish people all Muslims? The answer is not that Turkish people are all Muslims. Of course, Turkish people are Muslims, but there are infidels and apostates among Turkish people. There are those who do not accept religion. There are secularists, Alevi, democrats, these are separate. When we see people whose kufr is clear and obvious, of course we will declare takfir of them, but what do we do with people whose kufr we do not see clearly, but whose signs of Islam we see? We will give the verdict of Islam on the face of it (Cafer, 2022).

Musab Köylüoğlu sets criteria for being a Muslim and states that a Muslim should never embrace secularism. For example, a Muslim individual should not accept the separation of religion and state, on the contrary, religion should be a decision-maker and policy maker in all areas of life.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not possible for a Muslim to be both secular and Muslim (Köylüoğlu, 2021).

Köylüoğlu states that Islam gives the individual a Muslim identity that covers all kinds of identities. Such claims often emphasize the opposition to commemorating other identities alongside the Muslim identity, as he exemplifies above.

The identity of the religion of Islam is Muslim and there is no other identity. Other statements are not true (Köylüoğlu, 2012).

Musab Köylüoğlu is among the inclusive Salafi preachers who generally accept the Turkish society as Muslim.

"This land is inhabited by people, the majority of whom are Muslims." (Köylüoğlu, 2016)

As can be seen from the video sermons of Salafi preachers, today's Salafi communities have different views on this issue. While some adopt a rigid and pure interpretation that includes a limited group of people, others expand the boundaries by adopting a more flexible perspective. Muslim identity practically demands from individuals to establish a form of relationship and interaction in the form of brotherhood. Brotherhood or camaraderie across religions and ideologies promises to bring about deeper relationship and solidarity between individuals than citizen-based solidarities. Brotherhood in Islam brings various rights and responsibilities to individuals. On the other hand, those who are outside this religious brotherhood are deprived of various rights and may face various sanctions when necessary.

Conclusion and Discussion

Today, with the influence of new media tools, the teachings of Islam and the religious groups that adopt these teachings have reached the capacity to reach individuals around the world without obstacles such as geographical limitations. Thus, Muslim individuals began to meet and interact with an Islam different from their own social and cultural structures and the different forms of Muslim identity required by this Islam. This development creates new and alternative public spaces for Muslim communities, allowing individuals to express their political and religious identities (Echchaibi, 2011, p. 28). Another consequence of the use of digital environments is that new concepts such as e-sermons and e-jihad have emerged among religious groups and transformed the way religious groups interact, adding a digital dimension to traditional religious practices (Bunt, 2003, p. 26). In this way, religious communities begin to shape both internal dynamics and relations with the outside world not only in face-to-face interactions but also in digital spaces. This process offers us an important understanding and insight into how Islam is progressing and evolving today in a modern context.

In the digital age, there is now a new form of dawah and jihad for religious groups and movements. Interestingly, it is the radical and Salafist religious groups, which advocate the purification of religion, that seem to have embraced this new way of dawah the most and the best. Salafist groups that reject traditional ways of living and spreading Islam have become virtual communities and their leaders have become social media phenomena. Social media has become a new front of jihad. Religious elites who make religious invitations on social media have also become cyber mujahideen, active participants in cyber jihad. The effort to spread Islam through videos on digital media also spreads other messages in the video. The dress and appearance of the preachers, the presence or absence of music in the video, the background, the tone and emphasis of the preacher's voice, and the way he or she communicates with the audience all feed, support and reinforce the religious message. All but one of the Salafi preachers discussed in this study have beards. Their dress and appearance are modest. This shows that they want to spread religion not only in content but also in form. This leads us to McLuhan's (1994, p. 7) famous statement that 'the medium is the message'. This statement implies that the form of a medium influences how a message is perceived. This creates a symbiotic relationship and reveals that the medium itself is embedded in the message.

In the expression "the medium is the message", the medium is no longer an ordinary medium for individuals who want to access religious knowledge, but a medium that is always accessible. Since being able to communicate with the tool at all times actually means being able to communicate with the people who convey the message through the tool, individuals are in constant communication with the source of the message. Therefore, the impact, change and transformation desired to be created in individuals in accordance with the purpose of the message

can be much stronger than conventional tools. This is because Salafis have now become religious authorities due to the opportunities offered by digital platforms. Powerful religious authorities have a much higher level of reaching and influencing individuals. Since it is possible to encounter and be exposed to videos, images, posts, and content circulated by these religious authorities in digital environments at any time, these communities can constantly be on the agenda of the public and individuals. As a result, it is a fact that this brings positive returns and gains to virtual religious communities both indirectly and directly.

Analysis of Salafi communities in Turkey has revealed the different views of these groups on issues related to an important aspect, namely the construction and manifestation of Muslim identity. This finding shows that the beliefs and perspectives of Salafi communities are not monolithic. Instead, it shows that although they are referred to by the common name of predecessor, they can have different perspectives and approaches from each other. Therefore, the diversity of Salafi communities' thoughts on issues related to Muslim identity means that they can similarly differ on many other issues. This emphasizes that it is important to avoid generalizations about religious groups that are not based on evidence. Moreover, this diversity challenges superficial prejudices that Salafi communities have a single, unified way of thinking or action.

This study aimed to uncover the categories by which Salafi communities categorize society into individual and social categories and to analyze how they interact within these categories. Through content analysis of Salafi discourse, different categories such as infidel, polytheist, democrat, sofi, Muslim and Salafis were identified. The findings show how these classifications shape the perceptions, behavior and social interactions of Salafi communities. Salafis primarily associate with those they consider to be religiously correct or like-minded, while maintaining varying degrees of separation from those outside their defined categories. These categorizations and interactions contribute to the construction of Salafi social identity and influence intergroup dynamics, social cohesion and inclusiveness within Turkish society. Moreover, these classifications seem to be in line with the categorization of self and others in social identity theory. Social groups divide themselves and others into categories to create a social identity. While categorizing oneself is done with positive and accepted expressions, negative and deviant expressions are preferred in categorizing others.

Finally, through the data of this study, the important impact of digital media on religious identity formation is revealed. Additionally, the relationship of religious groups with new media tools is analyzed specifically. The findings highlight how religious groups effectively use the new media tool YouTube to disseminate religious content through digital preachers, create virtual religious communities, encourage religious participation, and strengthen collective religious identities. Due to this aspect, digital platforms have now become 'identity spaces' (Morley et al., 2011). All kinds of identities, such as ethnic, religious and sexual, can find a place and opportunity to express themselves on digital platforms, which have become identity spaces. Thus, they can freely reveal and express their identities by going beyond the areas where they are prohibited or restricted. For this reason, identity groups that do not have the opportunity to display their identities through various activities in real life can come together, institutionalize and organize in digital environments without any obstacles. In this respect, the relationship between new media and identity formation seems to be an inviting area for new research.

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Dijital Selefi Vaizlerin Müslüman Kimliğine Atfettikleri Tanım ve Roller

Mevlüt UĞURLU*

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Türkiye'de Selefi dini gruplar, kamuoyunun dikkatini çeken ve zaman zaman toplumsal düzen için bir tehdit olarak algılanan figürler haline gelen dini gruplar olarak ön plana çıkmıştır. Türkiye'de dini hayat üzerinde artan etkileri, inançlarının, düşüncelerinin, pratiklerinin ve Müslüman kimliğinin Türk toplumu bağlamı içindeki yapısının derinlemesine araştırılmasına yönelik bir ihtiyaç yaratmıştır. Bu nedenle bu araştırma, dijital Selefi vaizlerin Müslüman kimliğini şekillendirmede kullandıkları tanımların ve metodolojilerin kapsamlı bir incelemesini sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda son derece etkili ve yaygın bir yeni medya platformu olan YouTube aracılığıyla yayılan çok sayıda video vaazın kapsamlı bir analizine özellikle vurgu yapılmaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın öncelikli odak noktası, Türkiye'de Selefilik düşüncesinin Müslüman kimliğini tanımlaması ve bu kimliğe atfettiği rolleri anlamaktır. Bunu başarmak için, nitel araştırma metodolojisi ve desen olarak vaka çalışması yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Bu çerçevede analiz için Selefi vaiz ve vaazların seçimine özellikle dikkat edilmiştir. Seçilen örneklemin Selefi topluluğu içindeki farklı bakış açılarını etkili bir şekilde temsil etmesini sağlayacak şekilde amaçlı örnekleme tekniği uygulanmıştır. Bu örnekleme stratejisi, Türkiye'deki Selefi düşüncesinin çok yönlü yapısının detaylı ve bütünsel bir şekilde anlaşılmasına hizmet etmektedir. Çalışmaya dahil edilen altı tane Selefi vaize ait seçilmiş vaazlar, Selefi dini kimlik inşasını derinlemesine detaylandırmaktadır. Bu vaazlar, Selefi inançlarının nasıl ifade edildiği, teşvik edildiği ve Müslüman kimliğini nasıl inşa ettiğine dair önemli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Bu vaazlara ilişkin yürütülen tematik tanımlama ve sınıflandırma süreci, altta yatan içeriği, bu vaazları veren vaizleri ve vaazları etkileyen daha geniş bağlamsal faktörleri daha da açığa kavuşturmaktadır.

YouTube videolarının içerik analizine tabi tutulması sonucu elde edilen veriler, Müslüman kimliği kavramının çok yönlü ve dinamik yapısını ortaya koymakta ve bu kimliğinin inşasının Selefi vaizlere göre nasıl değişebildiğini göstermektedir. Bir diğer deyişle, Müslüman kimliği bağlamında farklı Selefi vaizlere göre değişebilen farklı bakış açıları gözlemlenebilmektedir. Bazı Selefi gruplar Müslüman kimliğini dışlayıcı bir anlayışla kavrayarak onu daha dar ve katı bir şekilde tanımlama ve sınırlama eğiliminde olabilmektedirler. Bu görüşe göre Müslüman olmak, genellikle belirli inançlar, dini pratikler ve belirli bir Selefi yorumla yakından ilişkili görünmektedir. Bu dışlayıcı bakış açısına bağlı olanlar, kendi dini duruşlarıyla aynı çizgide olan bireyleri Müslüman kimliğinin gerçek ve yetkili temsilcileri olarak görebilirken, bu spesifik yoruma bağlı kalmayan diğerleri ise "gerçek" İslam'ın dışında kalanlar olarak değerlendirilebilmektedir. Diğer taraftan, daha kapsayıcı bir Müslüman kimliği anlayışını sahiplenen Selefi dini düşünceye de rastlanmaktadır. Bu görüşe göre Müslüman

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olmak, Selefiliğin çeşitli ekolleri de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli inanç, pratik ve yorumları içerisinde barındırabilen daha geniş ve daha kapsayıcı bir kimlik olarak görülmektedir.

Gündelik hayatın birçok yönünü ve detayını kapsayan ve hatta siyasi katılım alanına kadar uzanan geniş kapsamlı etkisi ile Selefi dini düşünce, Türkiye gibi çok çeşitliliğe sahip bir toplumu önemli ölçüde etkileyebilme ihtimali ve riski barındırmaktadır. Bu dini yaklaşımın en önemli sonuçlarından biri, Türk toplumunun bazı kesimlerinin Selefilerin tanımladığı "gerçek" Müslüman kavramının dışında kalma potansiyeli olarak görünmektedir. Kendini Müslüman olarak tanımlayıp İslam dinine ait olarak gören bireyler bile kendilerini Selefi vaizlerin desteklediği inançlar, pratikler ve yorumlarla çelişki içinde bulabilirler. Bu durum, Selefilerin dini saflık konusundaki güçlü ısrarları ve İslami ilkelerin belirli bir yorumuna ciddi bağlılıklarının aksine İslam'a daha çoğulcu veya Selefi düşünceyle uyumsuz bir yaklaşımı benimseyen kişiler için zorluklar yaratabilir. Zira bazı Selefi vaizlerin Müslüman kimliğinin inşasında hem alternatif yorumlara hem de kendi yerleşik normlarından sapan uygulamalara tahammül eşikleri oldukça düşük olabilmektedir. Bu düşük esneklik, bu katı kriterlere uymayan bireyler ve toplulukları kendilerini Müslüman olarak görüyor dahi olsalar dışlanmışlık ve izolasyon ile karşı karşıya bırakabilmektedir. Üstelik bu tür ayrışmalar, farklı birey ve grupların Selefi düşünce ile çelişen İslami yaşam tarzını benimsemelerinden ötürü Türkiye'de yer alan Müslüman topluluğu içinde potansiyel olarak kırılmalara yol açabilme ihtimali barındırmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Selefi dijital vaizlerin etkisi toplumun kişisel inanç alanı da dahil olmak üzere toplumsal ve politik alana da uzanma ihtimali bulunmakta ve bu tür bir yaklaşım, Türk toplumunun yerleşik inanç ve uygulamalarına meydan okuyabilmektedir. Zira Türkiye gibi dini ve kültürel çeşitliliğe sahip bir toplumda, Müslüman kimliğinin ve inanç sistemlerinin çeşitli yönleri arasındaki etkileşimler Selefi ideoloji nedeniyle gerilimlere ve çok yönlü bir sorun alanına dönüşebilir.

Çalışmanın bir diğer yönü, bizzat YouTube platformunun Selefilik düşüncesinin yayılmasında oynadığı önemli rolü ortaya çıkarmasıdır. YouTube'un günümüzdeki yaygın erişilebilirliği, Selefi vaizlere geniş ve çeşitli bir kitleyle etkileşime geçmek ve onları etkilemek için güçlü bir imkan ve araç sağlamaktadır. Bu platform, teşvik edilen dini yorumların ve pratiklerin aktarımı için bir araç görevi üstlenerek Selefiye dini kimliğinin daha geniş bir şekilde inşasına önemli ölçüde katkı sunmaktadır. Ek olarak bu araştırma, Selefiye düşüncesinin ve kimliğinin çok yönlü yapısını Türk toplumu bağlamında analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Bulgular, dini yorumların, pratiklerin ve bunların farklı dini gruplara göre farklılaşmasını vurgulayarak Selefi inançlarının karmaşık yapısını gün yüzüne çıkarmaktadır. Bu yöntem, basit ve klasik stereotipleri aşmakta, Selefi dini kimliğinin sahip olabileceği derinliği ve çeşitliliği ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Ayrıca bu araştırma, Selefi dini ideolojinin ve onun çevrimiçi yayılma mekanizmalarının anlaşılmasına önemli bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Dijital çağda dini düşüncenin inşa edilişi ve yayılımına ilişkin çeşitli bilgiler sunarak dini araştırmalar, sosyal bilimler ve çağdaş dini hareketler alanındaki akademik literatürü ve söylemi zenginleştirmeye katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu araştırma, toplumun Selefi dini topluluklara göre teolojik olarak sınıflandırılmasında Müslümanların ilk nesillerinin (Selef) uygulama ve inançlarının referans olarak alındığı ortaya çıkmaktadır. Selefi dini topluluklar içinde Müslüman kimliğinin inşasının temel dini metinler olan Kuran ve Hadislere sıkı sıkıya bağlılığında, İslam'ın püriten yorum ve uygulamalarını teşvik etmeye yönelik artan bir vurgu görülmektedir. Selefiler çağdaş toplumda Müslüman kimliğini temel dini metinlere göre yeniden biçimlendirmeye çalışırken, bu girişimleri ritüellere ve gündelik kişisel davranışlara kadar uzanan dini kimliğin günlük yaşamdaki önemine atfettikleri anlamın altını çizmektedir. Böyle yaparak, kimlikleri tanımlamanın ve işlevler yüklemenin öneminin farkında oldukları ortaya çıkmaktadır. Zira kimlik tanımları hem bireysel hem de kolektif olarak yaşam tarzını derinden etkilemektedir. Bununla birlikte, her kimliğin öncelik verdiği inançlar bulunmakta ve bu da ister istemez bazı kimlikleri dışlayabilmekte ve kendi tanımının kabul edilmesini dayatabilmektedir. Bu araştırmada görüldüğü üzere bazı dini kimlikler kapsayıcı görünmektedir ancak kapsayıcı tanım ve inşa süreçlerinin bile öngörülemeyen sonuçlara yol açabileceği bilinmelidir. Ne kadar kapsayıcı

olursa olsun birincil ve üst kimlik, her zaman doğası gereği az miktarda bile olsa dışlayıcı olabilmekte ve diğer kimlikleri kendi varlığı için bir tehdit olarak görebilmektedir.

Bu araştırmanın bulguları, Selefi dini toplulukları, onların dini ideolojilerini, dini kimliği tanımlama biçimlerini ve yeni medya araçlarıyla bağlantılarını anlamamıza katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemekte ve onların Türk toplumunun dindarlık biçimlerine ilişkin görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. Böylece bu çalışma, din, dijital medya ve sosyal kimlik oluşumu arasındaki ilişki üzerine gelecekteki çalışmalar için bir temel çalışma görevi görerek, dijital çağda dini toplulukların var olma aktiviteleri hakkında daha fazla araştırma yapılmasına yönelik bir teşvik olması beklenmektedir.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı / Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

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Xenophobia and Anti-Islamism: Framing the News Covering the Shootings Four Years After the Christchurch Mosque Shooting

Mustafa ÇEĞİNDİR*

Abstract

The concept of xenophobia, defined as fear and hostility towards the strange and different in a simple and general sense, is quite comprehensive and can be addressed in conjunction with Islamophobia. The terrorist attacks on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019 represent extreme examples of both xenophobia and anti-Islamism. In this study, news articles addressing the Christchurch mosque attacks from January 1, 2023, to October 22, 2023, were collected using keywords and analyzed in a total of 81 articles across nine different frameworks. A comparison was made with previous studies that conducted analyses and framed the topic, allowing an examination of how the content of news articles changed over time since the incident. Furthermore, it has been observed that the Western press did not categorize the attack as anti-Islamism, despite the clear statement in the terrorist's manifesto that he targeted Muslims. Given the influence of media content on shaping individuals' attitudes and perceptions of events, this discrepancy could impede efforts to combat xenophobia and anti-Islamism.

Keywords: Xenophobia, Anti-Islamism, Christchurch Mosque Shootings, New Zealand Mosque Shootings, Islam in Western Media

Zenofobi ve İslam Karşıtlığı: Christchurch Cami Saldırılarından Dört Yıl Sonra Saldırığı Ele Alan Haberlerin Çerçevesi

Öz

Zenofobi kavramı, basit ve genel anlamda yabancı ve farklı olana karşı korku ve düşmanlık olarak tanımlanmasıyla oldukça kapsayıcıdır. Kavramın kapsayıcı yapısı onu İslam karşıtlığıyla beraber ele alınmasını mümkün kılmaktadır. 2019 yılında Yeni Zelanda'nın Christchurch şehrinde gerçekleştirilen cami saldırıları da hem zenofobinin hem de İslam karşıtlığının uç örneklerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada 1 Ocak 2023 tarihinden 22 Ekim 2023 tarihine kadar Christchurch cami saldırılarını ele alan haberler anahtar kelimeler ile toplanmış ve toplamda 81 haberin analizi yapılarak dokuz farklı çerçevede ele alınmıştır. Konuyla ilgili analiz yapan ve çerçeve oluşturan önceki çalışmalar ile buradaki çerçevelerin karşılaştırılması yapılmıştır. Bu sayede olayın üzerinden belli bir süre geçtikten sonra haberlerin içeriklerinin nasıl değiştiğinin incelenmesi yapılabilmektedir. Bunların yanı sıra saldırıyı gerçekleştiren teröristin manifestosunda Müslümanlara karşı bu saldırıyı gerçekleştirdiğini açıkça belirtmesine rağmen batı basınında saldırının İslam karşıtlığı bağlamında ele alınmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Medya içeriklerinin bireylerin tutumlarını ve olaylarla ilgili fikirlerini etkileyebildiği gerçeğini göz önünde bulundurduğumuzda bu durum, zenofobi ve İslam karşıtlığı konularındaki mücadeleye ket vurabilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zenofobi, İslam Karşıtlığı, Christchurch Cami Saldırıları, Yeni Zelanda Cami Saldırıları, Batı Basınında İslam

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Introduction

The duality of good and evil has been a constant presence throughout human history. Over time, the meanings attributed to these concepts have evolved, often resulting in blurred boundaries. The 16th and 17th centuries marked a pivotal period when the changing global landscape influenced the perception of good and evil. Prior to the age of modernism, virtue held a position of paramount importance, closely associated with the concept of goodness. As Terry Eagleton aptly stated in a speech, "For Thomas Aquinas, virtue is about being good and its flourishing; conversely, evil is characterized by lack, negativity, and deprivation, as opposed to virtuousness" (The Institute of Art and Ideas, 2019).

However, with the advent of modernism, a historical reversal occurred, casting doubt on the concept of virtue. The central question shifted to what truly constitutes virtue and what does not. The transformation of the meanings of good and evil in modern times has given rise to various forms of revolt. During these historical processes, rebellions and contradictions have forged their own interpretations. The blurring of the concept of evil has provided fertile ground for extremists to justify their actions. In this context, xenophobia has emerged as a significant tendency. Xenophobic actions are often accompanied by justifications that can evolve into entrenched mindsets. Consequently, the appeal of evil can become more pronounced.

One of the important concepts that emerged with modernism is national identities (Farrands, 1996). These identities can be characterized as the main reason for the emergence of the concept of "other". Simply, the person who falls within the scope of the other identity is characterized as the other (Fabian, 2006). When viewed from the perspective of the historical process, the conflict of the other appears as a natural process. Lacan interprets this concept, which is also within the scope of psychoanalysis, as the other as unlike us. It both has an essential role in the formation of the subject and is an agent radically alien to the subject (Lacan, 2019). Therefore, the concept of the other is undoubtedly related to the concept of the stranger. Being a citizen of a different country, having a different skin color or being subject to a different belief evokes the concept of stranger in an individual's mindset. Especially from the beginning of the twentieth century, the struggle against the strange is one of the most common phenomena in history. In fact, almost all historiography consists of struggles with this "stranger". The race for power and profit leads to hatred and hostility towards the other and the stranger (Mamabolo, 2015). This could be considered as one of the most concrete social realities in our social life. This social reality could be expressed by the term xenophobia.

The concept of "xenophobia" encapsulates the fear of strangers, manifesting itself in various forms throughout history and defined within numerous theoretical frameworks (Sanchez-Mazas & Licata, 2015). The emergence of the term xenophobia coincides with the emergence of modern national identities. By the end of the 19th century, xenophobia made a relatively recent appearance in literature (Kökel and Odabaşı, 2017). The Greek root "xenos" may evoke a universal psychological response to strangeness, as well as a political dimension, primarily concerned with the rules and regulations that prevent access to a territory and separate the civilian body from strangers. The term "stranger" may evoke strange as a general category, referring to that which is unfamiliar or outsider (Sanchez-Mazas and Licata, 2015). Therefore, xenophobia means fear of strangers. However, it also means "hatred of the stranger" (Hervik, 2015). Attitudes, prejudices, and behaviors that reject, exclude, and often denigrate people who are or feel that they are strange to society or national identity are known as xenophobia (Özmete et al., 2018). Consequently, xenophobia can be conceptualized on a variety of levels of analysis, depending on the targeted stranger and the theoretical frame of reference. Xenophobia can come in many different varieties and is a very inclusive term, as it can be caused by anything that is stranger to a person. For this very reason, fear and hatred towards strangers is an important social reality that needs to be addressed today.

The sources, intensity and character of any fear, especially of another religion, ethnicity or civilization, are complex, occasionally obscure and ephemeral, and not usually concrete and tangible. Few if any studies of the contemporary politics of xenophobia begin with an examination of the origins of people's predispositions, partialities, phobias, biases, anxieties and antipathies (Taras, 2012, p. 8).

Today, we see many reflections of xenophobia, which can be briefly defined as "hostility to everything stranger" (Bauman, 2016, p. 59). Many reflections of xenophobia, which emerged in different periods and in different geographies, can be seen today. Undoubtedly, one of these reflections is the recent widespread anti-Islamism. Anti-Islamism or Islamophobia can be considered as a subspecies of xenophobia (Taras, 2012). Our beliefs influence our social and political identities. Identities may cause individuals to show favoritism and loyalty to the groups to which they belong, but they may adopt the opposite attitude towards groups to which they do not belong and this could consider as a situation that triggers xenophobia (Tajfel, 2010). In this context, xenophobic attitudes can be directed towards religion and its members, racial differences, cultural or ethnic differences (Kökel and Odabaşı, 2017). In a performative context, we can see that xenophobia mobilizes individuals in different degrees. The circumstances and circumstances of that period can determine how effective xenophobia is on individuals and when it becomes radicalized. Not only do more radicalized forms of antagonism against strangers from different cultures threaten harmonious multicultural relations within nation-states, but they also pose a threat to the development of a cosmopolitan global society (Sanchez-Mazas & Licata, 2015). Radicalized xenophobia can lead to radical actions. From this context, one of the most concrete examples of xenophobia turning into radical action and directed against individuals of different religions is the New Zealand mosque attacks that took place in 2019 as anti-Islam sentiment.

On 15 March 2019, two mosque attacks took place in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 people. The extremist terrorist, who came from Australia just to carry out this attack, entered two mosques with legally obtained automatic rifles and caused a massacre. While the terrorist was carrying out this attack, he broadcast it live on social media and sent this live broadcast information to politicians and journalists by e-mail beforehand. This terrorism, which took place in Christchurch, a quiet city in New Zealand where such an event had almost never occurred before, created a catastrophic atmosphere nationally and internationally. This incident, which took place in Christchurch, a quiet city in New Zealand where such an event had almost never occurred before, created a catastrophic atmosphere nationally and internationally. There are reasons and facts behind this terrorist act, which was carried out deliberately and in a xenophobic and Islamophobic sense against a certain group.

The terrorist's live broadcasting of the violence that fuels xenophobia on social media and presenting himself as a protagonist here appears as a performative form of radicalization in anti-Islamism. One of the indicators that the attack will be considered a radical form of xenophobia is the preparation plan of the attack. The terrorist came to New Zealand specifically from Australia to carry out the attack. The fact that the attack took place in New Zealand, especially in the city of Christchurch, reveals what meanings radical xenophobia produces. Mazer (2020) explains why the terrorist chose this city in particular:

By all accounts, including his own, the gunman's decision to target Christchurch's small, almost invisible Islamic community was performative. He was calculating impact, courting notoriety, promoting himself. New Zealand is not like the USA, where gun violence is so commonplace and mass murder so much a daily occurrence that it's a struggle to hold the spotlight for more than a single news cycle. The very unlikelihood of Christchurch being the site of mass murder, its reputation for being a placid sort of place where nothing of interest (earthquakes aside) ever happens, would serve to heighten its dramatic effect (Mazer, 2020, p. 5).

It has been revealed that the terrorist who carried out the attack was in contact with some extreme racist groups. He visited many countries and received funding from different sources (Scotcher, 2020). This can be considered as one of the indicators that xenophobia against Islam has a global radical dimension. In connection with this, and as another indicator of the radicality of the

event, is the manifesto published by the terrorist before the attack. In the manifesto published by the terrorist before the attack, he clearly states that the migrating Muslims are invaders and that this should be prevented, and that his action serves this purpose according to manifesto (Beutel, 2019). This manifesto is the most obvious indicator of radicalized xenophobia and anti-Islamism. To summarize, this attack and the realities behind it present us with one of the most concrete and striking examples of radical xenophobia on the part of anti-Islamism.

This attack had a great impact on New Zealand. Socially and politically, the country has gone through a process it has almost never seen before. New Zealand's Security Intelligence Service, for the first time in its history, raised the national terrorism threat level to a "high" (Every-Palmer et al., 2021). Numerous pundits and politicians have openly asserted that this catastrophe permanently altered New Zealand. "Another common refrain -echoed on newspapers' front pages the day after the attack- was that this marked 'the end of our innocence'" (Peacock, 2019, p. 18).

The approach of the society and the leaders of the period to the incident can be described as quite humane when looked at objectively. In fact, after the incident in Christchurch, the people of New Zealand reacted with a sense of unanimity (Rahman, 2020). The situation was covered live by the New Zealand media, but the terrorist, his manifesto, and his background were not discussed. All attention was focused on the casualties. Especially the attitude and stance of the then Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was exemplary in the national and international arena. Ardern's speeches and discourses were such that she managed the crisis moment in a very constructive manner and removed the drama of the event. Ardern wore a headscarf and met with Muslims in mosques to show her support for Muslims (Normand, 2022). She tried to prevent extremists from taking advantage of this by never mentioning the terrorist's name in her speeches. Continuing this constructive approach, she constantly repeated the statement "This is not us" and differentiated terrorists and terrorism from the people of New Zealand and declared "we are them" (Mazer, 2020). Ardern's clear emphasis on terrorism and extremism in her first statements about the incident is an indication of her empathetic and constructive attitude. Arden's first public reaction to the anguish and suffering of those impacted embodied the quintessential New Zealand display of love, compassion, and understanding. Arden was commended by political analysts, detractors, and social commentators for her "strong and swift leadership" (Malik, 2019).

Literature Review

Ardern's statement that "we are not this", "we are them" actually indicates that this attack is an attack based on xenophobia in general. The fact that the attack targeted Muslims and the fact that the pronoun "them" in Arden's "we are them" discourse represents Muslims, reveals the relationship of this xenophobic action with anti-Islamism without the need for evidence or deep analysis. There are some reasons and phenomena behind the xenophobic attitude towards Muslims. This phenomenon constitutes a reality that needs to be researched and studied more today. Especially the Western world and the Western media are constantly trying to create an ideological enemy (Herman et al., 2012). After the dissolution of the Soviets, the West lost its "a spectre haunting Europe", that is, its enemy, which legitimized its actions, and this created the need for new ones. The fact that the lands where Islam is widespread are rich in oil and that this geography is geopolitically important has caused the West to set its sights on this region and attempt to establish hegemony (Harvey, 2019). Huntington (2021), on the other hand, has argued that cultural differences and historical legacies between Islam and the West have led to conflicts, resulting in a negative perception of Islam and Muslims in the Western world (Rane et al., 2014). Prior to the mosque attacks, the New Zealand media exhibited a similar attitude to that of Western media (Rahman and Emadi, 2018). Rahman (2020) suggests that prior to the Christchurch attack, articles against Muslims were disseminated in global media, predominantly originating from the USA, and these narratives aligned with the negative portrayals of Muslims in New Zealand media. The way in which the media addresses and constructs facts can significantly influence individuals'

attitudes and can be effective in shaping public opinion, potentially contributing to the formation of xenophobia. In this context, the process of framing and critically examining media content concerning xenophobic actions plays a pivotal role in addressing this issue comprehensively and elucidating its underlying causes.

While individuals may not always be consciously aware of it, the news disseminated through the media has the potential to influence our beliefs, attitudes, and thought processes, to varying degrees (Kioussis, 2001). It is crucial to critically analyze news texts to uncover the underlying meanings, thereby gaining insights into the prevailing trends and attitudes regarding emerging situations and events. Hence, a critical examination of the media's stance is imperative for comprehending the sociocultural repercussions in the aftermath of the mosque attacks in New Zealand. "There were more articles on the mosque shooting than any other event in 2019, with the story dominating the headlines for three months (Every-Palmer et al., 2021, p. 277)." Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the New Zealand press had been generating news pertaining to Muslims even prior to the incident, in addition to the immediate post-incident coverage. Incorporating the content of news reports preceding the terrorist attack, in addition to the coverage produced after the event, can offer valuable insights into the prevailing attitudes. It is conceivable that certain attitudes and tendencies may have played a direct role in shaping the events that led up to the incident. Rahman and Emari (2018) conducted a pre-incident study in which they analyzed news content related to Muslims and Islam in the New Zealand press, revealing the presence of negative trends. Peacock (2019), who serves as an editor at a New Zealand media outlet, articulated in an article that a detrimental disposition towards Muslims had been evident in the press of both Australia and New Zealand prior to the attack. In a separate study, Ewart et al. (2016) affirmed the presence of a detrimental disposition towards Muslims in the press of Australia and New Zealand, attributing this phenomenon to content generated without a comprehensive understanding of Islam.

When examining the research conducted following the incident, Şentürk and Aşçıoğlu (2020) scrutinized the initial reports published in the international press immediately following the incident, demonstrating that the news exhibited varied tendencies attributed to the recentness of the event. For instance, certain websites opted to publish images of the massacre, while others refrained from doing so, reflecting a similar dilemma in the dissemination of the terrorist's identity information. Hence, it was deduced that the initial news reports concerning the incident concentrated on the underlying factors and potential reasons for terrorist attacks. In a study focusing on the local press in the geographic region where the incidents related to the attacks occurred, through an analysis of news coverage related to the Christchurch assaults in Australia and New Zealand, and through interviews with local news executives, Ellis and Muller (2020) explored the influence of proximity on media coverage. Their findings indicate that local newsrooms prioritize proximity as a key factor. It was observed that in New Zealand, news coverage was driven by sympathy for the victims and their families, while in Australia, the nationality of the attacker played a significant role in shaping the narrative.

In a comparative study, Greaves et al. (2020) contrasted attitudes towards Muslims with those towards other religious groups. Their findings indicate a higher prevalence of threats and negative sentiments directed at Muslims in comparison to other groups. In a different research yielding akin findings Yogeewaran et al. (2019) centers on the impact of New Zealanders' national identity constructs on their attitudes towards Muslims following the terrorist attacks. The research draws on data collected from a study examining individual behavior in New Zealand. The study reached the conclusion that New Zealanders exhibit a stronger preference for civic and ethnic components in their national identity constructs compared to other aspects. This inclination has a negative influence on their perceptions of Muslims, specifically, and on their attitudes toward minorities in general. In one of the other comprehensive studies conducted regarding the incident and presenting similar findings, Rahman (2020) conducted an analysis of the news disseminated on

social media and arrived at the following conclusion: A significant transition is evident, moving away from the international media's adversarial rhetoric of 'othering' to the New Zealand press adopting a more inclusive national approach in its tone. This change in the tone of media coverage contributes to a more positive portrayal of Islam and Muslims.

In a study that underscores the conclusion of discriminatory media portrayal against Muslims more explicitly than the aforementioned studies, Satir (2020) asserted that through the analysis of news reports related to the event from five distinct media organizations, these entities emphasized various facets of the event and delivered them in diverse manners, thereby unveiling the implicit dimension of the interplay between news, ideology, and power. Furthermore, in his analysis, he contended that while the country's leadership overtly underscored the aspect of terrorism, the Western press exhibited a degree of reluctance in giving similar prominence to this aspect.

Finally, akin to this study, Soliman et al. (2021) analyzed news coverage of the attacks. They developed their framework through the examination of news reports regarding the terrorist attacks in New Zealand published by major international news outlets, including CNN, BBC, and DW. According to their research findings, significant acts of terrorism often lead to extensive media coverage, which is presented in diverse ways across various online news platforms. The predominant framing employed in these reports was the 'terror' frame. It can be inferred that the 'Terror' frame is particularly apt for understanding an event of the magnitude of the mosque attacks in New Zealand.

Research Problem

The primary focus of research revolves around the representation of terrorist attacks in New Zealand within the Western media landscape. The manifesto authored by the individual responsible for the attack explicitly elucidates the core motive behind the incident, which was to perpetrate violence against and cause harm to Muslims. Regrettably, media organizations often overlook this pivotal dimension in their news coverage, consequently failing to encompass the underlying reality of anti-Islamism. Such an omission may potentially foster the perception that the media does not adopt a proactive stance against xenophobic actions, and may even inadvertently perpetuate discrimination.

Questions of Research

Q1: "After an extended temporal interval subsequent to the terrorist attack, what are the underlying elements that comprise the structural framework of news coverage on this particular subject matter?"

Q2: What similarities and differences can be observed between the methodological frameworks used in previous studies on acts of aggression and those introduced within the context of this research?

Q3: Despite the attack's unmistakable origins rooted in xenophobic and anti-Islam sentiments, does the Western media portray it as such?

The Hypothesis of the Research

H1: Despite the unequivocally anti-Islamic nature of the terrorist attack that occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019, the Western media inadequately acknowledges this reality. Such a stance hinders the broader efforts to combat xenophobia, extending beyond the scope of anti-Islamism.

H2: While a majority of resemblances can be observed between the news frames delineated in prior studies pertaining to the attack and the news texts generated in the aftermath of the incident, certain distinctions have also come to light.

Methodology

The study involved the collection of news articles regarding the mosque attacks that occurred in New Zealand in 2019 from Western media organizations and internet sources published in the English language between January 1, 2023, and October 22, 2023. The news articles were retrieved through Google search with the application of specific filters. Paid-access sites were not considered, and news articles published in languages other than English were excluded from the study. Furthermore, all news articles published within the specified date range were included in the dataset. A total of 81 news texts were subjected to data analysis and categorized into distinct frames. The research incorporated the use of six key questions during the investigation of these news articles:

“New Zealand mosque attacks”

“New Zealand mosque shootings”

“Christchurch mosque attacks”

“Christchurch mosque shootings”

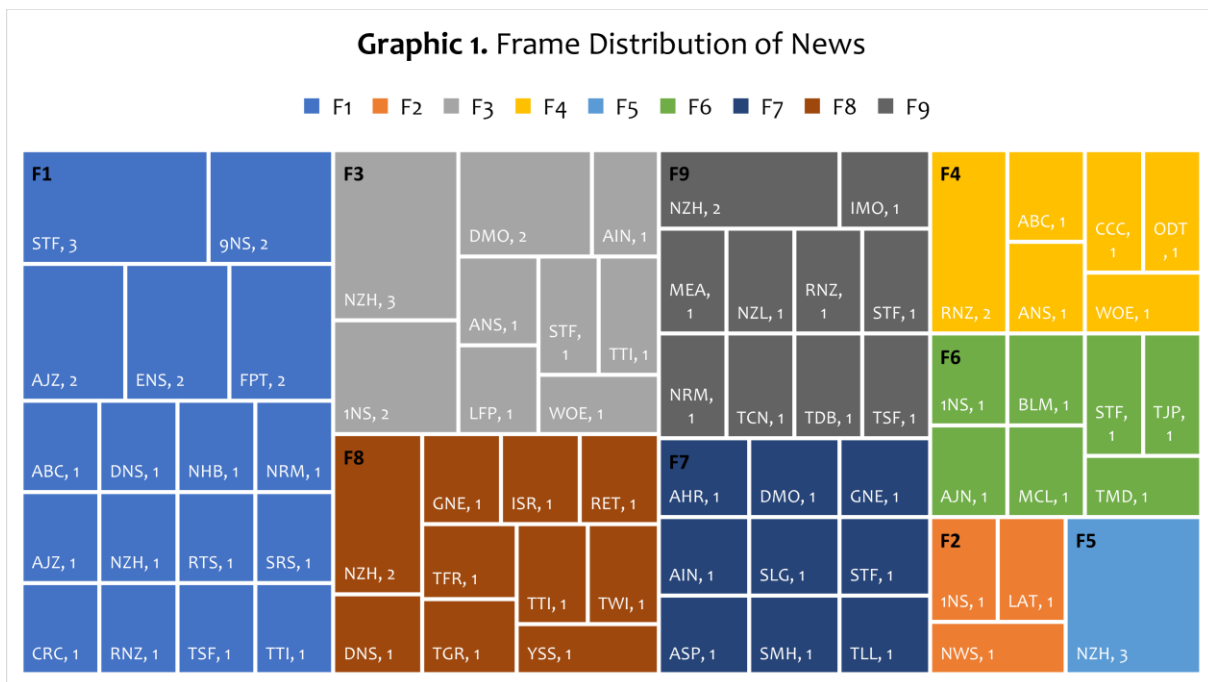
“NZ mosque attacks”

“NZ mosque shootings”

The data acquired within the study underwent a qualitative analysis, and the findings were subsequently juxtaposed with those of previous research efforts.

Findings of Research

The 81 news stories gathered for this research can be examined within a total of nine distinct frameworks. As illustrated in the graphic below, these frameworks encompass: (F1) "Jacinda Ardern and domestic politics in New Zealand", (F2) "gun reform", (F3) "radical groups", (F4) "victims and their families", (F5) "judicial processes", (F6) "social issues and societal healing", (F7) "crime and fight against crime", (F8) "social media and cybercrimes" and lastly (F9) "subject to any content." Each frame is shown in different colors in the graphic below. The abbreviations in each box indicate the site from which the news was taken. The numbers next to the abbreviations specify how many articles from that news site are included in that frame. Although there are 81 collected news articles, the total count of frames is 87. This discrepancy arises from the fact that certain news articles have been categorized under multiple frames. The abbreviations correspond to the news sites, and a comprehensive list of these abbreviations is provided at the end of the study. At the same time, all news texts distributed according to their frames can be accessed via the link given in the endnote¹.



Each delineated framework in the graphic above converges on a specific subject axis. Although the news articles within the frames touch on different points, they are generally integrated within the context of a topic. Hence, it is necessary to scrutinize each framework individually.

Media Frame 1: Jacinda Ardern and Domestic Politics in New Zealand

It can be observed that the news articles published in 2023 predominantly emphasized Jacinda Ardern and the internal political landscape of New Zealand. The prevalence of news within this framework, originating from various sources, indicates the Western media's predominant focus on this aspect of the incident (see Graphic 1). As delineated in the preceding sections of this study, Ardern's resilient and optimistic image in the aftermath of the attacks unquestionably stands as one of the most significant contributing factors to this phenomenon. Another factor contributing to the notable concentration of news in this context is the infrequency of terrorist attacks in New Zealand and the country's overall stable security structure. In contrast to Middle Eastern nations, a terrorist attack of this magnitude can sustain its prominence in both media and politics over an extended period in New Zealand. Furthermore, in addition to the aforementioned factors, the phenomenon of tragic events and massacres evolving into a political dynamic over time can be regarded as a practice that has become rather normalized in everyday life (Baum, 2007).

The news coverage, in general, revolved around topics such as Ardern's decision not to run for re-election, the discourse of opposition parties, contrasting perspectives directed at Ardern, as well as the responses and viewpoints of various political parties and politicians in the wake of the incident. The prevalence of political matters as the overarching framework in the compiled news articles underscores a distinctive characteristic when compared to other studies within the existing literature that have analyzed the event. In this context, it is reasonable to surmise that the political framework was not as extensive in prior studies, and as time elapsed, this tragedy evolved into a focal point within the realm of New Zealand's domestic politics, as perceived by the media.

Media Frame 2: Gun Reform

Approximately 250,000 people in New Zealand are licensed to carry guns (Manch, 2018). These criticisms targeting politicians, particularly in relation to gun control laws, have seen a notable surge, especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks. After the terrorist attack, legislative amendments were implemented concerning individual armament, resulting in restrictions on certain aspects of personal firearm ownership. Palmer and his colleagues (2021) similarly incorporated this framework, referred to as 'gun reform', within the scope of their media analysis in their research pertaining to the incident. In their study, they articulated that the media content predominantly centered on the legal acquisition of such a lethal arsenal of firearms. Three of the news articles gathered as part of this study encompass discussions regarding the prospects of alterations that have been implemented or are anticipated within the domain of gun legislation. It appears that individual armament and modifications in firearm regulations are predominantly among the subjects that draw the media's attention within the context of this event.

Media Frame 3: Radical Groups

It was observed that, in contrast to the news examined in prior research, the news articles gathered in this study placed a distinct emphasis on extremist organizations. And this frame, being the second most covered, marks a noteworthy distinction from previous studies (see Graphic 1). Regrettably, individuals with radical and extremist ideologies, akin to the perpetrator of this attack, coexist within our global community. While certain extremist factions may direct their focus on specific groups, others may adopt radical stances towards anyone external to their own. As elucidated in the initial sections of the study, xenophobia is employed to precisely elucidate this phenomenon. The terrorist attack in Christchurch garnered the interest of extremist organizations, owing to the dissemination of the manifesto and the live streaming of the incident. The news examined within this context predominantly revolves around the perpetrators' connection to the Christchurch attacks, their repercussions, and the role they played as exemplars in subsequent events following the Christchurch attacks. Additionally, reports are indicating that the individual responsible for the Christchurch attacks was affiliated with certain extremist organizations, receiving support and coordination from these groups. It is particularly imperative to underscore the issue of anti-Islamism in this context, as these extremist groups operate with a clear objective of organizing anti-Islamic actions and attacks. Nevertheless, among these news articles, only one addresses this issue concurrently with anti-Islamism. This news content will be deliberated upon in the end note section of the study.

Another noteworthy aspect within this context pertains to the adjectives ascribed to the assailant. While the assailant had been labeled as a 'terrorist', 'extremist', 'white supremacist' and 'gunman' in news articles scrutinized in earlier studies, in the content analyzed in this study, the attacker was characterized as a 'Nazi' or 'neo-Nazi'. It is evident that news articles concerning individuals sympathetic to the Christchurch attacker, described as Nazis, are generated in various global regions, including England (Sims, 2023), USA (Associated Press, 2023) and Australia (Southwell, 2023). This circumstance bolsters the assertion that anti-Islamic xenophobia is a global phenomenon.

Media Frame 4: Victims and Their Families

While a considerable amount of time has elapsed since the attacks, the enduring repercussions of xenophobia persist for the victims' families. Although this frame may not receive the same degree of emphasis as it did in the initial of the events, it remains a subject addressed by the media. Ardern's responsible and empathetic conduct towards the victims and their families, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the attack, prompted the media to allocate increased attention to this matter (Every-Palmer et al., 2021). It may be reasonable to posit the following assumption: The demeanor and stance of politicians can influence the posture and orientation of the media. Constructive and responsible conduct by politicians might likewise exert an influence on the media's content generation. As the catastrophic aftermath engendered by the incident evolves and its impact gradually wanes, recent news articles within this framework center their attention on the survivors of the attack (RNZ, 2023) and the support initiatives devised to denounce and memorialize the event (Newsline, 2023). In earlier research, this framework has been examined under the identical approach and designated as 'empathy' (Every-Palmer et al., 2021; Soliman et al., 2021).

Media Frame 5: Judicial Processes

The trial processes were the least addressed subject matter among the collected news articles. The fact that only one news website focuses on this issue is an indication of this (see Graphic 1). The New Zealand Herald, the only news outlet contributing to the frame, stands out as the broadcasting entity with the most extensive coverage of Christchurch terrorist attacks. New Zealand Herald has notably emerged as the primary source extensively covering the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. The exclusive focus of this site on producing news content related to the trial processes serves as compelling evidence of its unparalleled commitment to monitoring and reporting on the developments since the incident transpired.

The protracted nature of judicial trials results in their omission from news content unless there is a substantial development occurring within a specific time frame. From this perspective, it can be posited that even though prior studies did not explicitly scrutinize a framework under this specific heading, there are news articles pertaining to terrorism and trial processes encapsulated within political frameworks. The rationale behind incorporating this framework in the current study stems from the identification of three news articles directly linked to the trial processes, which from the same news site (see Graphic 1). The initial news pertains to the prison conditions of the terrorist (Blck, 2023), while the second addresses an individual who violated the law by disseminating images of the attack (Wilkinson, 2023). The final news item discusses the judicial inquiry about the attack (Shaskey, 2023).

Media Frame 6: Social Issues and Societal Healing

Disruptive occurrences invariably exert an influence on societal dynamics, with the extent of this impact varying according to the event's location and its severity. The enduring social repercussions of this event can be attributed to the severity of the attack and its occurrence within New Zealand, where have rarely faced this kind of attack. The societal impacts of disruptive events and the alterations they bring about in the social realm emerge as a topic that can only be comprehensively addressed after a certain period has elapsed since the occurrence. The ambit of this framework encapsulates a broad phenomenon. Alterations in firearm legislation following the

attack, the impact of the incident on perpetrators and the connection between their criminal activities, media coverage, and a shift towards a more sanguine approach by politicians towards a particular group subsequent to the event, all essentially stem from the transformative influence wrought upon the social milieu by this attack. Seven of the news articles gathered in the context of this research (see Graphic 1) were examined within this framework due to their direct relevance to social life. When viewed from this perspective, it becomes evident that there are news articles expressing individuals' apprehensions and anxieties in a light (O'Connor, 2023), as well as efforts aimed at ameliorating social wounds (1news, 2023). It appears that certain news articles directly address initiatives organized to dispel the stereotypes and prejudices directed towards the targeted Muslim community (McCulloch, 2023). News analyzed in previous studies can be included in this framework because they are inclusive of social issues. Given the inherent inclusiveness of social issues. However, these studies do not identify a framework specifically dedicated to news articles that directly engage with social issues and their processes of recuperation.

Media Frame 7: Crime and Fight Against Crime

Fundamentally, this terrorist attack can be categorized as a 'criminal act'. This situation inherently places it within the media frameworks of 'crime' and 'crime prevention'. Ten of the collected news articles delve into issues related to crime and efforts in crime prevention. Some news articles directly confront the xenophobic actions and criminal acts perpetrated by individuals influenced by the Christchurch terrorist attacks (Associated Press, 2023; Price, 2023). Several news articles encompass reports about interventions and efforts to combat the escalating racism, extremism, and xenophobia (Australian Human Rights Commissions, 2023; Lewis et al., 2023; Thomas, 2023). In earlier studies, news articles falling within the purview of 'crime' predominantly center on the classification of the attack as either a terrorist act, a massacre, or a distinct form of criminal activity, striving to address questions of this nature (Every-Palmer et al., 2021; Şentürk and Aşicioğlu, 2020; Soliman et al., 2021). These studies pursue answers to these inquiries and subsequently establish the framework accordingly due to their proximity to the date of the attack. In the present day, there is no longer a need to debate the classification of this attack: "terrorism". Consequently, the news articles collected within the 'crime' framework for this research concentrate on the interrelation between the Christchurch terrorist attacks and other criminal activities.

Media Frame 8: Social Media and Cybercrime

The terrorist live-streamed the attack on social media using the body-worn camera. It can be surmised that his intent was to manifest his xenophobic animosity on a global scale, to resonate with like-minded extremists, and to cast himself in the role of a hero. However, it can be posited that the disposition of Jacinda Ardern, along with the alignment of politicians and the media with Ardern's stance, has largely deterred the materialization of these intentions. The terrorist's live streaming of the attack's moment and politicians' efforts to prevent the release of these records establishes a distinctive framework, as news articles explicitly delve into this issue. We can observe that identical or analogous frameworks have been deliberated in prior studies (Every-Palmer et al., 2021; Rahman, 2020; Soliman et al., 2021).

Among the collected news articles, eleven of them can be examined within the confines of this framework (see Graphic 1). Even though most of these articles may not directly center on the

attack, they refer to the Christchurch terrorist attack while exploring the influence of the internet, internet addiction, and violent content on individuals (Bevan, 2023; Gutelle, 2023; Kirkpatrick, 2023; Lang, 2023; Pugachevsky, 2023). These news articles predominantly allude to online culture and the violent content to which individuals are exposed within the virtual realm. Some of the news articles within this framework overlap with the news covered in the 'crime' context discussed in the preceding framework. This overlap is due to the fact that the live broadcast recording of the Christchurch attack serves as a motivating factor for other criminals, and sharing this recording is deemed a cybercrime. The remaining news articles address the political measures taken to hinder the dissemination of the attack recording (Franks & Cheng, 2023; Walch, 2023).

Media Frame 9: Subject to any Content

After the passage of a specific period of time, events become an integral part of the historical experiences. Despite the calamitous and devastating nature of events, they could possibly evolve into historical facts. Over four years have transpired between the terrorist attacks in Christchurch and the date of authorship of this article. Nonetheless, there is an approximate four-year gap between the date when the collected news articles were authored and the occurrence of the terrorist attack in Christchurch. The news articles addressing this attack today, as a part of the historical narrative, have given rise to the establishment of this framework. The news articles within this framework regard the Christchurch terrorist attacks as a historical event and incorporate them as content for various other subjects. As an example, in a podcast program focusing on criminal activities, this attack is deliberated in an episode and it is reported on the news (Leask, 2023). Another news article reports the publication of a new book that also examines the Christchurch terrorist attack (New Zealand Herald, 2023). The same holds true for another news article (Novitz, 2023). The news articles within this framework encompass diverse topics and approach the Christchurch terrorist attacks from various perspectives within the context of the subject. For instance, one article centers on politicians vying for votes (Stewart, 2023), while another discusses a journalist facing threats (Stuff, 2023), with each reference to the Christchurch attacks integrated within the context of their respective subjects or employed as an illustrative example. In contrast to prior studies, this research encompasses news articles that regard the event as a part of the historical continuum and introduces a novel framework pertaining to the subject under investigation.

Conclusion

The concept of xenophobia, as an overarching construct, delineates individuals' apprehension and antipathy towards that which is strange and dissimilar. A Turkish adage succinctly elucidates this phenomenon: "Man is the enemy of what he does not know". Here, the 'not known' phenomenon hold a broad connotation. Xenophobia encompasses not only matters of race, religion, language, or skin color but, in a comprehensive sense, it pertains to an individual's overarching negative disposition towards anything that deviates from their own lifestyle and identity. This adverse disposition towards a specific group or minority is likewise encompassed within the domain of xenophobia. When examined from this perspective, anti-Islamism can also be regarded as a manifestation of xenophobia. There is always a possibility that anti-Islamism may be underpinned by diverse systematic causes, intentions, financing, and structures. However, when

analyzed at the individual and societal levels, anti-Islamism can be concomitantly viewed as a facet of xenophobia.

The terrorist attacks in Christchurch in 2019, the terrorist's manifesto, his declarations, and his affiliations with extremist radical groups collectively indicate that this attack embodies both xenophobia and anti-Islamism. The terrorist's direct targeting of Muslims and the explicit expression of his animosity towards them undeniably indicate that this attack is unquestionably a result of anti-Islamism. On the other hand, the terrorist's affiliations with extremist radical groups and his assertion in his manifesto, perceiving Muslims as an invasive minority group, can be regarded as indicative of a xenophobic orientation. In short, this terrorist attack can be considered as one of the extreme manifestations of xenophobia, specifically in the context of anti-Islamism.

Within the scope of the research, a total of 81 news articles concerning the Christchurch terrorist attacks, published between January 1, 2023, and October 22, 2023, were gathered and scrutinized as data to explore this matter and elucidate their framework. These collected news articles were examined using filters and keywords on Google. All news pieces written in English and devoid of access restrictions were collected. The collected news was analyzed and discussed in nine different frameworks (see Graphic 1). In the analysis of the initial frame, it was evident that the majority of news articles concerning the incident revolved around the response of the then Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, during the attack and the impact of the attack on New Zealand's domestic politics. The second framework centers on the discussions surrounding gun laws in New Zealand subsequent to the attack. The third framework delves into the association of the terrorist who executed the attack with radical groups and the ramifications of the attack on such radical groups. The fourth framework emphasizes the individuals who lost their lives in the terrorist attack and their bereaved family members. The fifth framework comprises news articles pertaining to the trial proceedings of the terrorist. The sixth framework, adopting an inquisitive stance, centers on the challenges within the social sphere engendered by the attack and the endeavors made to ameliorate them. The seventh framework revolves around the criminal activities influenced and catalyzed by the Christchurch attack, along with the efforts to combat them. Additionally, it examines the classification of sharing images of the Christchurch attack as a criminal offense. The eighth framework addresses the news articles that discuss the terrorist's live broadcast of the attack and the online dissemination of this live stream, considering it as a cybercrime. The last frame focuses on how the Christchurch attack became one of the historical events in the historical process and how the news treated this attack as exemplary content on different topics.

When the frames of the news articles gathered within the ambit of this study were juxtaposed with prior studies (Every-Palmer et al., 2021; Peacock, 2019; Rahman, 2020; Satir, 2020; Şentürk and Aşicioğlu, 2020; Soliman et al., 2021) exploring the news frames of the Christchurch attacks in the media, it was discerned that certain frames and subjects exhibited congruity, while others exhibited divergence. For instance, while frameworks like politics, gun control laws, victims, and their families have appeared in previous studies and address analogous themes, frameworks such as social media, crime, trial proceedings, and legal processes might display distinct content, despite being previously framed. Unlike these, prior studies do not encompass frameworks addressing radical groups and the evolution of the attack into a historical event. The discernible reason for this circumstance lies in the temporal progression since the occurrence of the incident.

One of the research's main objectives is to scrutinize whether the Western media portrayed this terrorist attack as an act of anti-Islamism, despite the evident indications from the terrorist's manifesto and conduct that he perpetrated the attack with anti-Islamic intentions. When we examine the prior studies referenced above, it is apparent that the media did not address this attack within the anti-Islamism context. Similarly, it is evident that the news articles collected as part of this study did not interpret the attack as anti-Islamism, with the exception of one². The problematic aspect in this context is that the news articles in the international press fail to label the attack as anti-Islamism, despite the explicit emphasis on this aspect in the terrorist's manifesto. It can be asserted that the objectivity of the media is lacking in this regard, constituting a problematic situation from the perspective of professional ethics. Furthermore, and of greater significance, it is connected to the notion that the media's coverage of events can influence individuals' perceptions of the event. Neglecting to classify an unmistakably anti-Islamic attack in this fashion could hinder individuals' awareness of such a social issue and reality, thereby obstructing collective and individual endeavors to address xenophobia and anti-Islamism.

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List and Table of News Site Abbreviations

#	Newspapers	Acronyms	Newspapers	#	
1	Firstpost	FPT	CCC	Christchurch City Council	26
2	The Week	TWK	MCL	MyCity Logan	27
3	Sahara Reporters	SRS	AJN	The Australian Jewish News	28
4	The Time of Israel	TTI	TMD	The Minnesota Daily	29
5	Newsroom	NRM	TJP	The Jerusalem Post	30
6	Stuff	STF	BLM	Blunt Magazine	31
7	9News	9NS	SMH	Sydney Morning Herald	32
8	Euronews	ENS	TST	The Strateg	33
9	Reuters	RTS	ASP	Australian Strategic Policy Institute	34
10	Aljazeera	AJZ	SLG	Sri Lanka Guardian	35
11	Newshub	NHB	AHR	Australian Human Rights Commission	36
12	ABC News	ABC	TLL	The Local	37
13	The Spinoff	TSF	GNE	Global Network on Extremism and Technology	38
14	Critic	CRC	TFR	TubeFilter	39
15	Desert News	DNS	YSS	Yahoosports	40
16	Radio New Zealand	RNZ	TWI	The Washinton Independent	41
17	Los Angeles Times	LAT	TGR	The Gamer	42
18	News.com	NWS	RET	RogerEbert.com	43
19	1news	1NS	ISR	Insider	44
20	Daily Mail Online	DMO	TCN	The Conversation	45
21	London Free Press	LFP	NZL	NZ Lawyer	46
22	All Israel News	AIN	IMO	Irish Mirror Online	47
23	Wales Online	WOE	TDB	The Daily Blog	48
24	Arab News	ANS	MEA	Middle East Eye	49
25	Otago Daily Times	ODT			

Zenofobi ve İslam Karřıtlığı: Christchurch Cami Saldırılarından Dört Yıl Sonra Saldırıyı Ele Alan Haberlerin Çerçevesi

Mustafa ÇEĞİNDİR*

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Giriř

Zenofobi, tarih boyunca farklı biçimlere bürünen, farklı teorik yaklařımlara göre kavramsallařtırılan ve genel anlamda yabancı korkusu ve düşmanlığı anlamına gelen bir kavramdır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında zenofobinin farklı türlerde, farklı dönemlerde ve coğrafyalarda ortaya çıkan birçok yansımasını günümüzde görebilmekteyiz. Bu yansılardan biri olan ve günümüzde yaygınlařan İslam karřıtlığı, zenofobinin bir alt türü olarak kabul edilebilir. Bu durumun en belirgin örneklerinden biri 2019'da Yeni Zelanda'da gerçekte camii saldırıdır. Dönemin başbakanı Ardern'in olaya yönelik "biz bu deęiliz", "biz onlarız" söylemleri saldırının genel olarak zenofobiye dayalı bir eylem olduęunu; bununla beraber saldırının direkt olarak Müslümanları hedef almasının ise saldırının İslam karřıtlığı içerdięini göstermektedir.

Literatür İncelemesi

Olayın sonrasında yapılan arařtırmaları incelediğimizde, Şentürk ve Aşçıoęlu (2020), olayın hemen ardından uluslararası basında yayınlanan ilk haber metinlerini inceleyerek bu haberlerin, olayın yeni gerçekte oluřundan dolayı çeřitli eğilimler sergiledięini göstermişlerdir. Örneęin, bazı web siteleri katliamın görüntülerini yayınlamayı tercih ederken, bazıları ise bunu yapmaktan kaçınmıştır. Saldırıları yerel basın bazında ele alan bir dięer çalışmada ise Ellis ve Muller (2020), Avustralya ve Yeni Zelanda'daki Christchurch saldırılarıyla ilgili haberlerin analizini yaparak saldırının gerçekte olduęü bölgesel medyada saldırıların nasıl ele alındıęını tartışmıştır. Karřılařtırmalı bir çalışmada, Greaves ve dięerleri (2020), Müslümanlara yönelik tutumları dięer dini gruplara yönelik tutumlarla karřılařtırmıştır. Bulguları, dięer gruplara kıyasla Müslümanlara yönelik tehditlerin ve olumsuz duyguların daha yaygın olduęunu göstermektedir. Benzer sonuca ulařılan bir dięer çalışmada ise Yogeşwaran ve arkadaşları (2019), terör saldırılarının ardından Yeni Zelandalıların ulusal kimlik yapılarının Müslümanlara yönelik tutumları üzerindeki etkisine odaklanmış ve Müslümanlara yönelik algının genel anlamda olumsuz olduęunu ifade etmişlerdir. Yine benzer çıkarımları içeren başka bir çalışmada ise Rahman (2020), sosyal medyada yayılan haberlerin bir analizini yapmış ve řu sonuca varmıştır: Uluslararası medyanın Müslümanlara karřı sürekli ötekileřtirici tavrının aksine Yeni Zelanda basınının tonunda daha kapsayıcı bir ulusal yaklařım benimsemesine doęru bir geçiř oluřtuęundan bahsetmiştir. Satır ise (2020) çalışmasında Müslümanların medyadaki olumsuz temsilini dięer çalışmalara nazaran daha net vurgulamıştır. Beř farklı medya kuruluşunun olayla ilgili haberlerini analiz ederek, bu kuruluşların olayın çeřitli yönlerini vurguladıęını ve bunları farklı řekillerde sunduęunu, böylece haber, ideoloji ve güç arasındaki etkileşimin örtük boyutunu burada görebileceğimizi ifade etmiştir. Ayrıca, analizinde, Yeni

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Zellanda'daki politikacıların saldırının terörizm boyutunu açıkça vurgularken, batı basınının bu boyuta benzer bir önem verme konusunda pek de istekli olmadığını dile getirmiştir. Son olarak bu makalede yürütülen çalışmaya benzer şekilde Soliman ve arkadaşları (2021), CNN, BBC ve DW gibi önemli uluslararası haber kuruluşları tarafından yayınlanan Yeni Zelanda'daki terör saldırılarına ilişkin haberlerin çerçevelerini oluşturmuşlardır.

Araştırmanın Problemi

Araştırmanın problemi, Yeni Zelanda'daki terör saldırısının Batı medyası tarafından ele alınma şeklinin olayın gerçekliğiyle kurduğu ilişki biçimidir.

Araştırmanın Soruları

S1: Christchurch'deki terör saldırılarının üzerinden belli bir süre geçtikten sonra konuyla ilgili üretilen haberlerin içerikleri ve çerçeveleri nelerdir?

S2: Bu terör saldırısına ilişkin daha önceki çalışmalarda gerçekleştirilen haber içerik analizleri ve oluşturulan haberlerin çerçeveleri ile bu çalışmadaki analiz ve çerçeveler arasında nasıl bir farklılıklar veya benzerlikler bulunmaktadır?

S3: Terör saldırısının açıkça Müslümanlara karşı işlendiği gerçeği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda batı medyası bu gerçekliği yansıtmakta mıdır?

Araştırmanın Hipotezleri

H1: 2019'da Yeni Zelanda, Christchurch'te gerçekleşen terör saldırılarının tartışmasız bir şekilde İslam karşıtlığı içermesine rağmen, batı medyası bu gerçeği yeterince kabul etmemektedir. Bu durum, zenofobi kapsamındaki İslam karşıtlığı mücadelelerine engel olabilmektedir.

H2: Terör saldırılarıyla ilgili yapılan önceki çalışmalarda ayrıntılı olarak incelenen haber çerçeveleri ile olayın ardından oluşturulan haber metinleri arasında çoğunlukla benzerlikler gözlemlenebilirken, belirgin farklılıklar da ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Metodoloji

Araştırmada 1 Ocak 2023 tarihinden 22 Ekim 2023 tarihine kadar İngilizce yazılmış ve erişim kısıtlaması olmayan Christchurch cami saldırılarını ele alan bütün haberler toplanmıştır. Google'da filtreler ve anahtar kelimeler kullanılarak ulaşılan toplam 81 haber analiz edilerek dokuz farklı çerçeveye ayrılmıştır.

Bulgular

Çerçevelerin dağılımı ve hangi haber sitesinin hangi çerçevede kaç adet içerik ürettiği grafik haline getirilerek görselleştirilmiştir (bkz. Grafik 1).

Çerçeve 1: Jacinda Ardern ve Yeni Zelanda İç Siyaseti

2023 yılında yayımlanan haber makaleleri ağırlıklı olarak Jacinda Ardern ve Yeni Zelanda'nın iç politika durumuna odaklanmaktadır. Haberler, Ardern'in saldırıların ardından gösterdiği güçlü ve etkili liderliğinin örnek teşkil ettiğini vurgulamaktadır. Önceki yürütülen çalışmalarda da benzer haber içeriklerine ulaşılabilmektedir.

Çerçeve 2: Silah Yasası

Christchurch saldırılarının ardından, Yeni Zelanda, kişisel silah barındırmanın belirli yönlerini kısıtlayan yasal değişiklikleri hayata geçirdi, bu durum haber içeriklerinde 'silah reformu' başlığıyla ele alınmıştır. Önceki çalışmalarda da içerik açısından benzerlik gösteren bu çerçevedeki haber içerikleri, olayın ardından bireysel silahlanma karşıtı bir tavır alındığını göstermektedir.

Çerçeve 3: Radikal Gruplar

Önceki çalışmalardan farklı olarak bu çalışmada “radikal gruplar” yeni bir çerçeve oluşturmaktadır. Olayın üzerinden belli bir süre geçmesi ve teröristin farklı radikal gruplarla olan ilişkisinin açığa çıkması, haber içeriklerinin de bu konuyu ele almasına sebep olmuştur.

Çerçeve 4: Kurbanlar ve Aileleri

Konuyla ilgili üretilen haberlerin bu kısmı, önceki çalışmalarda da bir çerçeve olarak ele alınmaktadır. Olayın üzerinden zaman geçse de terörist saldırıdan kurtulanlara ve saldırıda hayatını kaybedenlere yönelik içerikler, medyada üretilmeye devam etmiştir.

Çerçeve 5: Yargılanma Süreçleri

Toplanan haberlerden birkaç tanesi direkt olarak saldırıyı gerçekleştiren teröristin yargılanma süreçlerine odaklandığı için bu çerçeve ele alınmıştır.

Çerçeve 6: Toplumsal Etki ve Sosyal İyileşme

Yeni Zellanda ve özellikle de Christchurch şehri, güvenlik sorunlarının pek görülmediği ve terör saldırılarının çok nadir yaşandığı bir coğrafyadır. Bu denli yıkıcı bir eylemin büyük bir etki yaratmasında bu durum etkili olmuştur. Bu bağlamda ülke çapında olayın etkisinin neredeyse hala sürdüğüne ve bunu atlatmak için etkinliklerin düzenlendiğine değinen haberlere ulaşılmıştır.

Çerçeve 7: Suç ve Suçla Mücadele

Teröristin radikal gruplarla olan ilişkisi ve bu gruplara üye olan veya sempati besleyen bireylerin olaydan etkilenerek gerçekleştirdiği suçları ele alan haberler bulunmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra saldırı anının kaydını paylaşmanın suç olarak değerlendirilmesi, haberlerin içeriklerinde görülmektedir. Bu açıardan bakıldığında toplanan haberler, terör saldırısının diğer suçlarla olan ilişkisine, saldırı kaydını paylaşanların suç işlediğine ve bunlara karşı yürütülen mücadeleye odaklanmaktadır.

Çerçeve 8: Sosyal Medya ve Siber Suç

Yukarıdaki çerçevede de belirtildiği gibi saldırı kaydının paylaşılması suç olarak sayılmaktadır ve bunun siber ortamda gerçekleşmesi bu suçu bir siber suç haline getirmektedir. Haberler sosyal mecraların bu tarz durumlardaki konumunu sorgulamaktadır ve sosyal mecralarda bu tarz içeriklerin birey psikolojisinde yarattığı olumsuz etkilerden bahsetmektedir. Bu durum da genellikle Christchurch saldırılarının kayıtları ile ele almaktadırlar.

Çerçeve 9: Herhangi Bir İçeriğe Konu veya Örnek Olarak Christchurch Saldırıları

Olayın üzerinden belli bir zaman geçmesi bu terör saldırısını tarihsel süreçte yaşanmış bir olay olarak ele alınmasına neden olmaktadır. Tarihsel ilerleme ele alındığında bu durum doğal bir süreç olarak değerlendirilebilmektedir. Christchurch saldırısı, kitaplara, podcastlere ve buna benzer yayımlara içerik olmakta; farklı meseleleri ele alan haberlerde ise örnek olarak gösterilmeye başlanmıştır.

Sonuç

Zenofobi kavramının kapsayıcı oluşu İslam karşıtlığını da bu kavramla beraber ele alabileceğimizi göstermektedir. İslam karşıtı eylemlerin ve tutumların ardında yatan sistematik niyetler, kuruluşlar ve fonlar olabilmektedir (ki Christchurch saldırısını gerçekleştiren teröristin radikal gruplarla olan ilişkisi buna bir örnektir) ancak kavramsal olarak ele alındığında İslam karşıtlığını zenofobi çatısı altında ele alınabilmektedir. Christchurch saldırılarında teröristin manifestosu, bu saldırının direkt olarak İslam karşıtlığının en uç örneklerinden birini oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Bunun yanı sıra dönemin başbakanı Ardern’in olaya yönelik “biz bu değiliz”, “biz,

onlarız” söylemi ise saldırının zenofobi ile ilişkilendirebileceğini göstermektedir zira terörist manifestosunda Müslümanları istilacı bir ‘öteki’ olarak nitelendirmiştir.

Medyanın ise bir olayı nasıl ele aldığı bireysel ve toplumsal anlamda olaya karşı yürütülen düşünceleri etkileyebilme gücü, bu tarz yıkıcı durumlarda medyanın konuyu nasıl ele aldığı önemli hale getirmektedir. Bu sebeple araştırmada toplanan haberlerin analizi yapılmış ve çerçeveleri oluşturulmuştur. Çerçeveler olayın üzerinden belli bir süre geçtikten sonra olayın medyada nasıl ele alındığını açıklamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra aynı konuda haber analizi yapan çalışmalarda çerçeveler kıyaslanmış ve bazı belirgin benzerlikler ve farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Çerçevelere bölünerek analiz edilen haberlerde varılan en kritik sonuçlardan biri de bu terör saldırısının açık bir şekilde İslam karşıtlığı içermesine rağmen batı medyasının saldırıyı bu açıyla ele almamasına dayanmaktadır. Bu durum, bu denli yıkıcı olaylarda batı medyasının objektif olmadığını ve zenofobi ve İslam karşıtlığı gibi toplumsal sorunlarla mücadelede batı medyasının tavrının olumsuz bir etkisi olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geçirilmiştir ve dergi beklentilerini karşılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu çalışmada “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuştur.

In this study, the rules stated in the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed.

Notes

¹ For news texts separated into frames in folders: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1H5gr8FyoN5ndAW-wXP3ja4M7ZDU3HL5l?usp=sharing>

² This exception is found in a newspaper article within a music magazine named 'Blunt,' published in Australia. In this article, the terrorist who perpetrated the attack is characterized as a neo-Nazi, and it underscores the Islamophobic nature of the attack (Hillier, 2023).



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Religious Programs on Radio and Television in Türkiye: A Longitudinal Evaluation

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Abstract

The subject of this research is religious broadcasting on Turkish radio and television. The study's key issue is whether the duration and rates of religious programs have changed. It has been observed that all of the research conducted on religious programs on Turkish radio and television is cross-sectional; there is no longitudinal study. A longitudinal evaluation was performed in this study using the trend analysis technique. The analysis was based on data from the State Institute of Statistics (SIS) and the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat)'s Radio and Television Institution Statistics. These statistics offer quantitative data on program genres and airing times in radio, television, and radio-television companies. The relevant institutes' statistics cover the years 1995 to 2015. The study investigates whether religious programs have increased in duration and rate, as well as if the total number of broadcasting organizations and total broadcasting time have an impact on this increase or decline. The duration of religious programs on radio and television declined between 1995 and 1997, grew between 1997 and 1998, then decreased between 1998 and 2002, according to the findings of the study. However, between 2002 and 2015, and particularly since 2011, there has been a steady growth in the total time of religious programs on radio and television, as well as a considerable difference in the percentage of religious programs in all broadcasts.

Keywords: Media and Religion, Religious Broadcasting, Religious Program, Religious Programs on Radio and Television in Türkiye, Islamic Program

Türkiye'de Radyo ve Televizyonda Dinî Programlar: Boylamsal Bir Değerlendirme

Öz

Bu çalışmanın konusu, Türkiye'de radyo ve televizyonlardaki dinî programlardır. Çalışmanın temel problemi, dinî program sürelerinin ve oranlarının değişip değişmediğidir. Türkiye'de radyo ve televizyonlardaki dinî programlarla ilgili literatürün tamamında kesitsel bilgilere yer verildiği; boylamsal bir çalışma bulunmadığı görülmüştür. Bu çalışmada trend analizi tekniği kullanılarak boylamsal bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Çalışmada Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü (DİE) ve Türkiye İstatistik Enstitüsü (TÜİK) tarafından yayınlanan Radyo ve Televizyon Kurum İstatistikleri'ndeki veriler temel alınmıştır. Bu istatistikler arasında radyo, televizyon ve radyo-televizyon kuruluşlarındaki program türlerinin yayın süreleri ve oranları hakkında nicel bilgileri bulunmaktadır. İlgili kurumlar tarafından yayınlanan istatistikler 1995-2015 yıllarını kapsamaktadır. Çalışmada dinî programların süre ve oran bakımından artıp artmadığı, bu artış ya da azalışta yayıncı kuruluşların toplam sayısı ile toplam yayın süresinin etkisinin bulunup bulunmadığı tartışılmıştır. Çalışma sonunda radyo ve televizyonlarda dinî programların süresinde 1995-1997 yılları arasında düşüş; 1997-1998 yılları arasında yükseliş; 1998-2002 yılları arasında düşüş tespit edilmiştir. Ancak 2002 yılından 2015 yılına kadar, özellikle de 2011 yılından itibaren radyo ve televizyonlardaki dinî programların toplam süresinde sürekli artış; dinî programların tüm yayınlar içindeki oranında belirgin bir farklılık olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medya ve Din, Dinî Yayıncılık, Dinî Program, Türkiye'de Radyo ve Televizyonda Dinî Programlar, İslamî Programlar

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Introduction

Religious programs on radio in Türkiye began in 1950, and on television in 1974. Therefore, religious broadcasting has a 73-year radio history and a 49-year television history as of 2023. Religious radio and television programs were initially produced during this time period as part of public broadcasting. However, since the 1990s, religious programs have also been produced as a private broadcasting service. It would be beneficial to briefly discuss this procedure.

After the broadcast of the mawlid (chanting Masnavi) program on Laylat al-Qadr in 1932, religious broadcasting did not return to radio until the 1950s. In the 1950s, policies were implemented that strengthened the representation of religion in the public sphere (translation of the call to prayer into Arabic, budget improvements for the Presidency of Religious Affairs, expansion of İmam-Hatip secondary schools, increased effectiveness of religious groups in the public sphere, etc.). Thus, religious radio broadcasts began in the 1950s, and although the broadcasting period has changed, there has never been a time when religious coverage was interrupted. In the 1990s, religious groups became interested in radio due to the relative ease of content production compared to television, the ability to operate at reduced costs, and the development of a radio audience. Radio broadcasting has become an essential communication practice for entrepreneurs who want to convey their religious ideas to the masses. In Türkiye, religious content has been broadcasted on both public and private radio stations since the 1990s.

Based on public broadcasting, the first mawlid broadcast (TRT TV 1) aired in 1974, the first iftar program aired in 1975, and the first weekly religious discussion show (İnanç Dünyası) began in 1980. From the mid-1980s onward, TV 1 continued to air a variety of programs on a weekly basis, and with the introduction of TV 2 in the 1990s, new religious broadcasting was reflected on the new screen. After that, TRT INT provided religious broadcasting to Turkish citizens living abroad, and with the launch of TRT GAP, this form of broadcasting shifted to the new screen. Since the 1990s, there has been a desire to broadcast religious content on all newly opened televisions in Türkiye's public broadcasting sector.

Private radio and television organizations, particularly religious groups, have altered the profile of religious broadcasting on radio and television since the 1990s. Consequently, while there were religious programs on public broadcasting that reflected the official discourse, a discourse shaped by religious organizations' religious understanding emerged. However, the trend of broadcasting religious programs also appeared on general-audience televisions managed by secular organizations, and religious talk/chat shows began to be broadcast on all screens, particularly during Ramadan.

It is a sectoral reality that various types of religious content are broadcast on television, predominantly in the form of religious conversations. Whether conservative/religious, liberal, or secular in terms of their general broadcasting line, there are religious programs that are included in the broadcasting periods both throughout the year and in certain periods. Throughout the year, public broadcaster Diyanet TV, Turkuaz Media Group's VAV TV, and channels operated by religious groups (Lalegül TV, Semerkand TV, Dost TV, etc.) broadcast religious content in various formats. In addition, there are channels (Kanal 7, ATV, Ülke TV, FOX TV, etc.) that broadcast religious discourse programs one or two days per week. In addition to Turkish-language channels, both the Kurdi channel of the public broadcaster TRT and Rehber TV broadcast religious talk programs in Kurdish. Furthermore, the public broadcaster TRT and certain private television channels include religious discussions in their syndicated programs (for example Alişan ile Hayata Gülümse/TRT (Paş, 2023). With the cooperation of TRT and the Presidency of Religious Affairs, "TRT Diyanet Çocuk" became the first official children's television program with religious content.

During Ramadan, religious programs tend to increase on nearly all television channels. The existence of the “Diji Ramadan” channel on Dijitürk, which opens during Ramadan and closes at the end of Ramadan, and the broadcast of the “Uçankuş'ta Sahur” program on the tabloid television channel Uçan Kuş are the clearest indicators of the television industry’s inclination toward religious programs.

Radios are in a similar condition. TRT radios continue to air weekly religious programs that began in the 1950s, as part of its public broadcasting strategy. Another part of public broadcasting is the Presidency of Religious Affairs’ Diyanet Radyo, Diyanet Risalet Radyo and Diyanet Kur’an Radyo channels. In addition, religious broadcasting continues on radio channels run by religious organizations (Lalegül FM, Akra FM, Erkam Radyo, Semerkand FM, and etc.). VAV radio, owned by TTurkuvaz Media Publishing Services another significant media business, illustrates the current state of the sector.

Religious programs have become one of the most popular program genres on radio and television, as well as a topic of interest for both popular and academic literature in Türkiye.

This research focuses on religious broadcasting on radio and television. The objective of the research is to see if there is a change in the airtime of religious broadcasting. In this regard, the study aimed to find out whether there is a link between the “number” of radio and television organizations and the duration/rate of religious program broadcasting in Türkiye.

Cross-sectional periods are used to represent the current situation in academic papers on religious programs on radio and television. Elpeze Ergeç, for example, illustrates the distribution of religious programs on televisions with varied broadcasting strategies throughout a one-month period in 2004 (2006, ss. 189-190). Karakoç and Akyüz presented their findings on the duration of religious programs on both general and thematic television channels in Türkiye, as well as data on thematic television channels with religious content (2015, s. 898).

Studies on religious programs on radio and television include significant findings and interpretations on when religious programs began; on which channels and for how long religious programs were broadcast in specific time periods (weekly, monthly, yearly); what religious groups or institutions that entered the radio and television sector with their religious tendencies brought or lost the broadcasting profile; and if Türkiye’s political and legal environment was conducive to religious programs. All of these studies provide essential information for evaluating the factors influencing religious programs on radio and television and for comprehending the changes in broadcasting. Nonetheless, in the majority of studies, the cross-sectional information presented independently does not permit us to determine whether there are long-term changes. Moreover, this condition is closely related to the study’s subject and problem.

This study, on the other hand, examines the changes that have occurred between 1995 and 2015, a period of 20 years. In this regard, the research differs significantly from previous investigations. The fact that the secondary data used in the study are obtained from questionnaires completed by all radio and television stations in Türkiye makes it possible to determine the orientation of all radio and television stations, as opposed to the orientation of certain stations towards broadcasting religious programs. Thus, an analysis of all Turkish radio and television stations is provided. The fact that the study’s data were obtained from the State Institute of Statistics (SIS)/Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), which manages Türkiye’s statistical database, is one of the factors that enhance the study’s credibility.

Since cross-sectional periods are typically used in literature, this longitudinal comparison-based study is anticipated to make a significant contribution. Given that cross-sectional studies disclose the situation at a particular point in time, longitudinal studies have the advantage of being able to detect changes and developments associated with the investigated phenomenon (Gökçe,

2006, s. 13). As Gürbüz & Şahin explain, longitudinal studies are conducted in three distinct ways: trend analysis, panel studies, and generational studies (2018, p. 113-114)

In trend analysis, which is specified among these, “trends” can be determined (Erdoğan, 2007, s. 149). In longitudinal studies that researchers use to observe changes, it is common for data previously collected by another researcher or institution to be analyzed as secondary data. In this study, secondary data analysis will be performed on the results of surveys conducted by SIS/TurkStat regarding religious broadcasting on radio and television.

Outlining Religious Radio and Television Programs: Related Literature

There are numerous works and investigations on religious broadcasting in Turkish literature. “İletişim veya Dehşet Çağı” by D. Mehmet Doğan provides a general framework for religious content and tendencies in mass media, discusses the issue of “religious broadcasting” by posing critical questions about religious transmissions on TRT, and offers suggestions (Doğan, 1993). Similarly, the book “İslam ve Radyo Televizyon” (Baydar, 1994) examines the distribution of religious programs in TRT’s general broadcasting and suggests a broadcast prototype that an Islamic television should have. The reference book “Fleşbek Türk Sinema-TV’sinde İslâmi Endişeler ve Çizgi Dışı Oluşumlar 1-2” was written by Salih Diriklik (1995) describes in detail the process of Islamic sensibility in cinema from the 1940s to the 1990s, as well as the perspectives and practices of the actors who actively contributed to/influenced the process. Diriklik also discusses the religious broadcasting on TRT and the religious orientation of private television since 1993, as well as the activities of media organizations that distinguish themselves through their religious discourse and programmatic changes. The book “Ekranın Büyüsüne Kapılmadan” (Abalı, 1997) gives a brief overview of religious broadcasts on TRT and private channels, expresses how Islamic broadcasting ought to be, and provides information on the media attitudes of Muslims.

In “Televizyon ve Kutsal” (Television and the Sacred), which was published at the same time as the preceding work, the relationship between visibility and the sacred is discussed with reference to the concept of a “sacred television” (Yalsızuçanlar, 1997), focusing more on the philosophical aspects of the topic. The impact of certain television programs is discussed in the book, which focuses on visibility, popular culture, amusement, and mediatic language. “Televizyon Dilindeki İslam” examines how the understanding and comprehension of religion is affected by religious broadcasts on television, the viewing trends of religious broadcasts on TRT, and the influence of television in terms of ways of knowledge (Bostancı, 2004, ss. 1-74). The terms alternative broadcasting (Abalı, 1997), subject-oriented television (Yalsızuçanlar, 1997), Islamic sensitivity on television (Diriklik, 1995), Islamic radio and television (Baydar, 1994), religious broadcasting - non-religious broadcasting (Doğan, 1993), Islam in the language of television (Bostancı, 2004) are used in these works. In addition, considering that there was a religious broadcasting approach directed by the public authority on television between 1968 and 1993, and that religious programs have been broadcast by both secular and religious private televisions since 1993, these works provide remarkable insight into the evolution of the television sector in Türkiye through religious broadcasts.

Academic interest in religious television shows began in the 2000s. There have been quantitative studies (Akyüz & Karakoç, 2015; Bilis, 2019; Çelebi, 2018; Çelikkaya, 2010; Çuhadar, 2019; Fedakar Gönül, 2019; Hayta, 2019; Kaya, 2019; M. Öztürk, 2016; Şimşek, 2020) that measure the tendency to watch and evaluate religious programs, the functionality of religious programs in terms of religious knowledge, and audience perception of religious programs, as well as qualitative studies based on document analysis, content, discourse, semiotic analysis, and interviews (Al, 2019; Cavlı, 2017; Solmaz, 2017; Turan, 2007; Ülger, 2007; Yenen, 2005). Religious programs were also discussed at scientific congresses. II. The International Religious Publications Congress (Balaban, 2004) and the Media and Religion Discussions Symposium (Çamdereli vd., 2016) can be mentioned

in this sense. Although their disciplines, subjects, problems, methods, analysis techniques, and results vary, it has been observed that the vast majority of studies provide cross-sectional information about religious programs on television (Akyüz & Karakoç, 2015; Bilis, 2019; Cavlı, 2017; Çelikkaya, 2010; Çuhadar, 2019; Elpeze Ergeç, 2006; Hayta, 2019; Kıvrak, 2019; Leylek, 1995; Şimşek, 2020; Ülger, 2007; Yenen, 2005) Using the dates 15 September to 14 October 2004 as a cross-section, for instance, Elpeze Ergeç exposes the distribution of religious content in public broadcaster, liberal commercial, and Islamist television channels (2006, ss. 189-190). The literature also contains studies that, while not specifically addressing religious television programs, do provide information on the airtime of religious programs (Çelenk, 2005, ss. 255-257; Şenyapılı, 1977). Additionally, statistics on religious programs airing for the year 2020 are available in the “Television Broadcasters Profile Survey” (RTÜK, 2014) and the “Television Viewing Measurement Yearbook” (TİAK, 2021).²

In terms of radio broadcasting, academic interest in radios broadcasting religious content appears to have begun in the 2000s. In Mehmet Akgül’s article “*Medya ve Din, Radyo İletişimi ve Gözyaşı FM Örneği*” (2008) he provides information based on literature and documents about the tendency to broadcast religious content on radio in the West and Türkiye, discusses the effectiveness of radio in religious communication, and then interprets the results of a survey conducted with listeners of the Konya-based radio station “Gözyaşı FM”. Yetgindağ (2015) conducted an additional study involving religious radio listeners. Yetgindağ provided information based on the literature regarding the broadcast of religious programs on Turkish radios and discussed the evolution of religious radios from the past to the present. In the application section of the study, qualitative interviews were conducted with listeners of the Istanbul-based radio station Akra FM in order to determine their motivations. Following these two studies is “*Türkiye’de Dini Yayıncılığın Gelişimi: Dini Radyolar*” by Sinem Akyön (2016), which provides more comprehensive information. Alternative broadcasting, local broadcasting, and religious broadcasting in Türkiye and other countries are discussed in the study’s theoretical section, while qualitative interviews with religious radio representatives inform the study’s empirical section. Bölükbaş (2016), who theoretically favors the concept of “community radio,” discussed the role of radios in the cultural existence of faith groups with listeners of İskenderpaşa’s Akra FM and Alevi’s Cem Radyo. The data collected from listeners using the “Community Radio Screening Scale” in the application section of the study described the listener experiences in terms of “commitment to the radio”, “communication with stakeholders”, “political-ideological reason”, and “environmental impact”. In addition, the broadcast streams and program types of these radio stations were analyzed

Data Set and Methodology

The study’s data was collected from secondary sources. In accordance with the Law No. 3984 (Establishment and Broadcasting of Radio and Television Enterprises, 1994) the State Institute of Statistics began surveying radio and television institutions in 1995, and the collected data were reported and published until 2015. From 1995 onwards, regional, and national radios and televisions were identified through the census method, while local radios and televisions were identified through the systematic simple sampling method. In 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001, organizations that did not respond to mail-in questionnaires were subjected to face-to-face interviews (SIS, 1998, 1999, 2001a). In the 1998 report, 331 radio and television broadcasting organizations completed 287 survey forms (SIS, 2001b) These forms account for 87 % of the total. In the 1999 report, 347 broadcasting organizations submitted 226 questionnaires (SIS, 2002). These forms encompass 65 % of all radio and television broadcasting organizations. In the 2000 report, 326 broadcasting organizations submitted a total of 246 usable questionnaires. These forms account for 75% of the whole (SIS, 2003a). From 326 broadcasting institutions, 224 usable questionnaire forms were collected for the 2001 report (SIS, 2003b). These forms account for 69 %

of the total. In the 2002 and 2003-2004 reports, all entrepreneurs were interviewed face-to-face using a systematic, uncomplicated sampling method (TurkStat, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a).

Since 2013, a web application has been used to compile data (TurkStat, t.y.) Consequently, the secondary data utilized in this study is derived from SIS and TurkStat surveys conducted between 1995 and 2015. The aforementioned rates do not, however, make the data representative of all Turkish radio and television stations. But, it was not possible to access the questionnaires.

Table 1. SIS-TurkStat program classification

	1995-2002	2003-2015
1	News	News programs
2	Magazine and current affairs	Sports programs
3	Sports	Culture programs
4	Music and entertainment	Religion and spiritual programs
5	Documentaries	Education programs
6	Culture and art	Infotainment programs
7	Education	Dramatic programs
8	Drama and series	Music programs
9	Motion pictures	Entertainment programs
10	Religious publication	Program promotions
11	Commercials	Commercials
12	Other	Reality show
13		Other

Table 1 shows the types of programs in the questionnaire sent to radio and television organizations. The participants were asked how many hours and minutes they devoted to each category of program. In the surveys between 1995-2002 and 2003-2015, it is seen that different preferences were applied in program classifications. The programs related to the problem of the study were classified as “Religious Broadcasting” between 1995-2002 and “Religious and Morale Programs” between 2003-2015. The statistics do not specify what exactly is meant by religious broadcasting and religion and moral programs. These two types of programs will be referred to as “Religious Programs” in this study. In conclusion, these statistics provide information suitable for longitudinal research. Statistics don’t include information about which religion the religious programs on radio and television are associated with. However, when looking at the basic trends in literature and publishing, it can be stated that these programs consist of Islamic content.

Two categories of research exist based on the time criterion. The first is cross sectional or instantaneous research, which discloses the status of the investigated phenomenon at a particular time. In other terms, a photograph is taken of the phenomenon. Longitudinal or periodic studies, on the other hand, are characterized by their significant advantage in detecting changes and developments in the investigated phenomenon (Gökçe, 2006, s. 13). The data used in the study between 1995 and 2007 come from publications (SIS, 1998, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; TurkStat, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b) whereas the data between 2008 and 2015 come from statistics published on the TurkStat website (TurkStat, t.y.). Namely, the data from 1995 to 2007

were reported in print by SIS and TurkStat; however, data between 2007 and 20015 are only included on the TurkStat website.

This research seeks answers to the following questions:

Research question 1: Has there been an increase in the number of radio, television, and radio-television organizations?

Research question 2: Has there been a change in the broadcasting time of religious programs on radio, television, and radio-television organizations?

Research question 3: Is there a relationship between the increase/decrease in the number of radio, television and radio-television organizations and religious programs?

Research question 4: Has there been a change in the proportion (%) of religious programs in all broadcasting time of radio, television, and radio-television organizations?

Research question 5: Is there a relationship between the increase/decrease in the broadcasting time of radio, television and radio-television organizations and the increase/decrease in religious programs?

Findings and Interpretation

In this section of the study, findings and interpretations based on statistics will be presented.

Rapid Decline and Slow Rise in the Number of Radio and Television Broadcasters in Türkiye

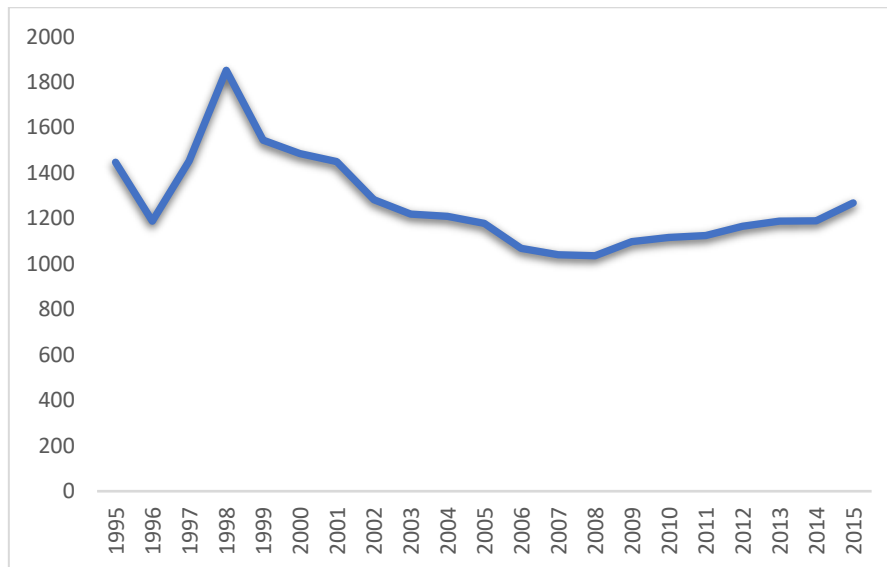


Figure 1. Total number of radio, television, and radio-television broadcasting organizations in Türkiye (1995-2015)

Radio and Television Institution Statistics classifies broadcasters by sector as radio, television, and radio and television, and by coverage area as local, regional, national, and those that broadcast via satellite, cable, or the internet. Between 1995 and 1998, the total number of broadcasters (radio, television, and radio and television) rose from 1448 to 1852; the number of broadcasters fell to 1545 in 1999 and then to 1036 by 2009. During this time period, the proportion of local broadcasters among all broadcasting organizations decreased from 93% to 80%. Alternatively stated, the vast majority of broadcasters are local organizations. In 2009, the number

of broadcasting organizations grew as satellite, cable, and internet broadcasting organizations were added to the sector. The number of broadcasting companies increased from 1098 in 2009 to 1268 in 2015. Since 2009, however, the proportion of local organizations has decreased from 80% to 59%, while the proportion of organizations that broadcast via satellite, cable, or the internet has increased from 8% to 26%. In consequence, the total number of broadcasting organizations has grown since 2009.

Figure 1 depicts the statistics of religious programs broadcast by organizations with only radio, only television, and both radio and television during the twenty years from 1995 to 2015.

Religious Programs on the Radio and Television

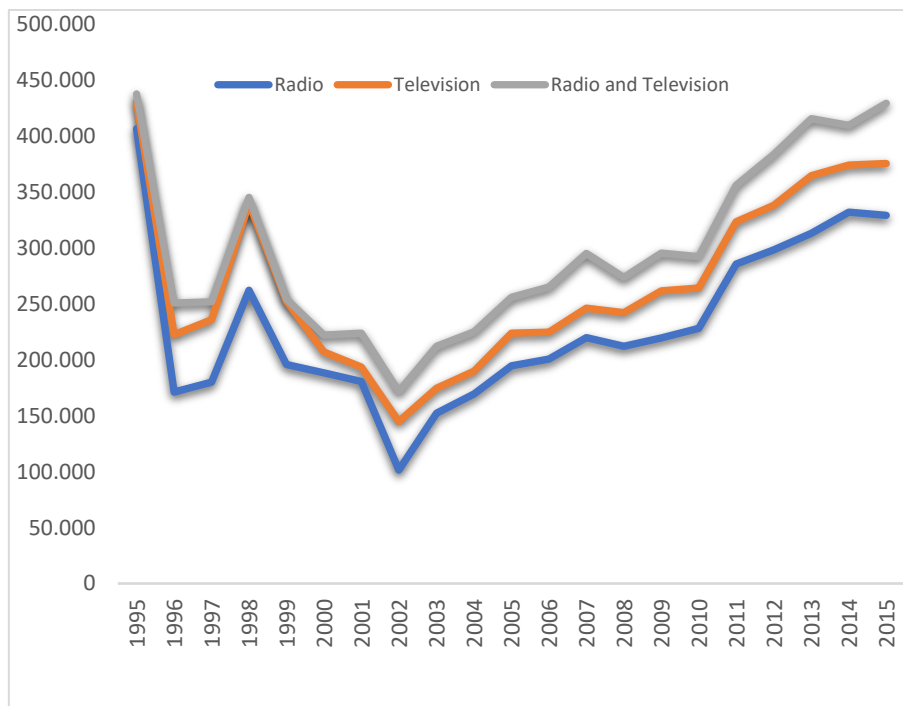


Figure 2. Duration of broadcasting religious programs on radio, television and radio-television organizations (1995-2015)

The duration of religious programs on radio and television fluctuated between 1995 and 2002; however, between 2002 and 2015, it increased consistently.

When Figures 1 and 2 are analyzed together, it can be determined that the number of religious programs increased as the number of broadcasting organizations increased. Consequently, it is advantageous to combine the total number of broadcasters with the total duration of religious programs.

There is no correlation between the number of broadcasting organizations and the duration of religious programs.

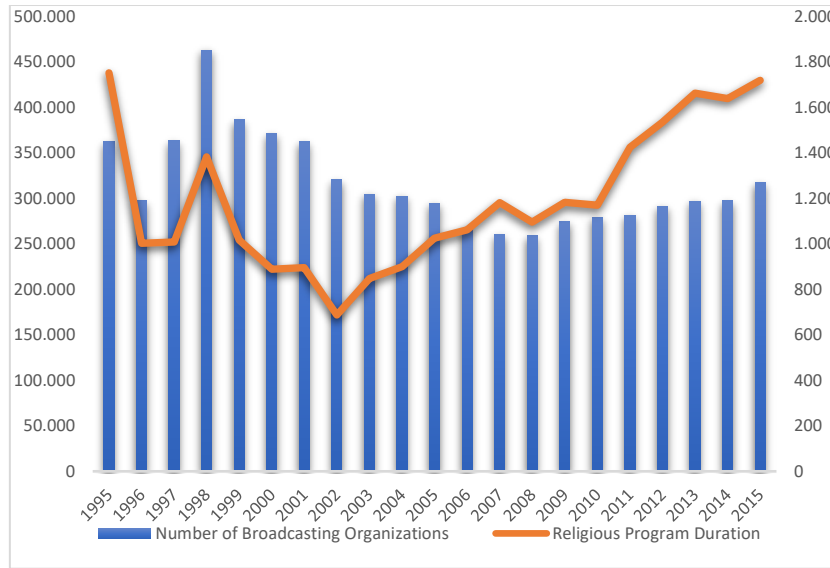


Figure 3. Total number of broadcasting organizations and total duration of religious programs (1995-2015).

In the light of the information in Figure 3, it does not appear significant to establish a direct correlation between the increase or decrease in the number of broadcasting organizations and the increase or decrease in religious programs. In 1995, 437,959 hours of the broadcasting time of 1,448 broadcasting organizations were allocated to religious programs, whereas in 2000, when there were 1,485, this time decreased to 222,309 hours. From 2002 to 2007, the number of broadcasting organizations decreased from 1,282 to 1,040, while the time allocated to religious programs increased from 171,812 hours to 295,332 hours. From 2008 to 2015, the number of broadcasting organizations rose from 1,036 to 1,268 and the duration of religious programs rose from 273,950 hours to 436,448 hours. While the number of broadcasters in 2015 (1 265) has not yet surpassed the number in 1995 (1 448), the duration of religious programs has approached that of 1995.

Statistics alone are insufficient to explain the reasons for this change. However, it should be emphasized that it cannot be solely explained by the increase or decrease in broadcasters.

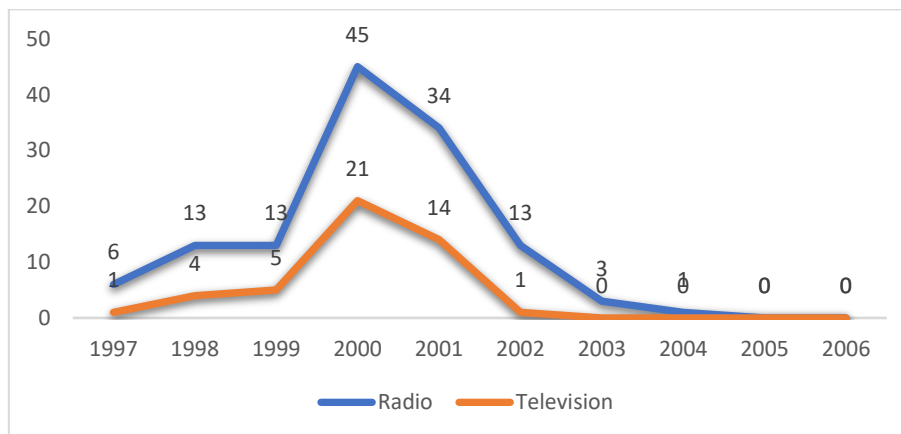


Figure 4. Number of radio and television organizations shut down for airing reactionary (irticai) broadcasts (1997-2006)
(TBMM, 2012, s. 1180)

From April 1994, when it began operations, until March 1998, RTÜK imposed various sanctions on both local and national radios and televisions on the grounds of “reactionary broadcasting” (G. Öztürk, 2008, s. 75). In this regard, the “reactionary broadcasting” sanctions led to a decline in the tendency to broadcast religious programs. Therefore, it can be said that the broadcasting trend of religious programs is influenced by politics. This possibility is strengthened when the number of radio and television stations shut down in Türkiye on the grounds that they broadcast reactionary programs (Figure 4) and the change in the airtime of religious programs (Figure 3) are used as a basis.

After analyzing the increase in the broadcasting time of religious programs by radio and television broadcasters in Türkiye in terms of hours, it is necessary to include the proportion of these programs within the total broadcasting time in order to make sense of the change in religious programs within the overall broadcasting profile. For this purpose, the ratio of the time allocated to religious programs relative to all broadcasts will be presented first, followed by a time-based presentation of the increase in total broadcasting time and the time allocated to religious programs.

Proportions of Religious Programs on Radio and Television

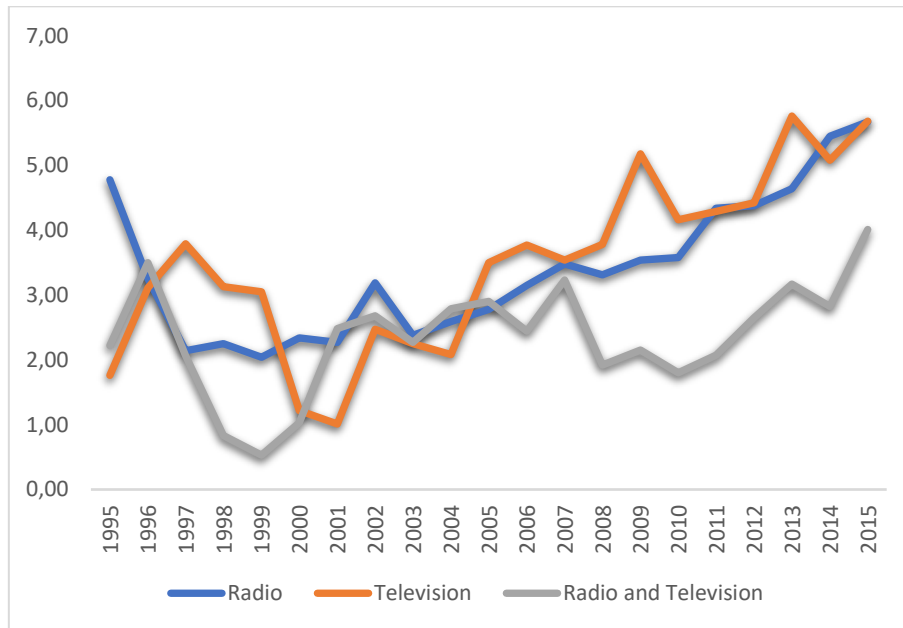


Figure 5. Proportion of time allocated to religious programs in all broadcasting time of radio, television, and radio-television organizations (1995-2015)

If Figure 5's change trend is evaluated separately, it can be seen that in 1995, 4.78 % of all broadcasting time was allocated to religious programs by organizations that only broadcast on radio. This rate decreased to 3.25% in 1996 and fluctuated between 2.14 and 2.25 % from 1997 to 2001. In 2002, 3.19% of television programs were religious; between 2003 and 2005, that percentage decreased to an average of 2.5%. Since 2011, religious programs, which increased by an average of 3.31 % between 2006 and 2010, have continued to rise. The percentage of total broadcast time devoted to religious programs rose to 5.67 % in 2015.

In 1995, only television broadcasters had a 1.76 % share of all broadcast time allocated to religious programs. In contrast to radio broadcasters, the percentage of religious programs on television broadcasters increased to 3.11% in 1996, but then gradually declined between 1997 and 2001. In 2001, the percentage of religious programs relative to all other forms of programs decreased to 1%, a lower percentage than in 1995. In 2002, 2.47% of programs were religious; between 2003 and 2005, the average was 2.61 %. The ratio of religious programs, which was 4.09% on average between 2006 and 2010, has steadily increased since 2011 and reached 5.68 % in 2015.

The rate of religious programs increased from 2.22% in 1995 to 3.5 % in 1996 for broadcasters that include radio and television broadcasting within the same organization. Similar to other categories of organizations, a decline (to 1%) was observed between 1997 and 2000. The religious program rate was 2.48% in 2001 and 2.59% on average between 2002 and 2006. The percentage of religious programs, which stood at 3.23% in 2007, fluctuated until 2011. Between these years, there was an average of 2.23% religious programs. Since 2011, the percentage of religious programs has steadily risen, reaching 4,1% in 2015.

In this context, the time allocated to religious programs by broadcasting organizations within the total broadcasting time, even if the proportion of religious programs increases when the broadcasting rate of religious programs is evaluated on its own, invalidates the conclusion that there has been an intermittently significant increase in religiosity in Türkiye. However, this circumstance also reveals the actuality of the media. According to data from 2015, 5.67% of radio broadcasting organizations, 5.68% of television broadcasting organizations, and 4.1% of both radio and television broadcasting organizations transmit religious programs. Only 5% of radio and television programs are religious.

It is not possible to directly correlate the rise of religious programs with total airtime.

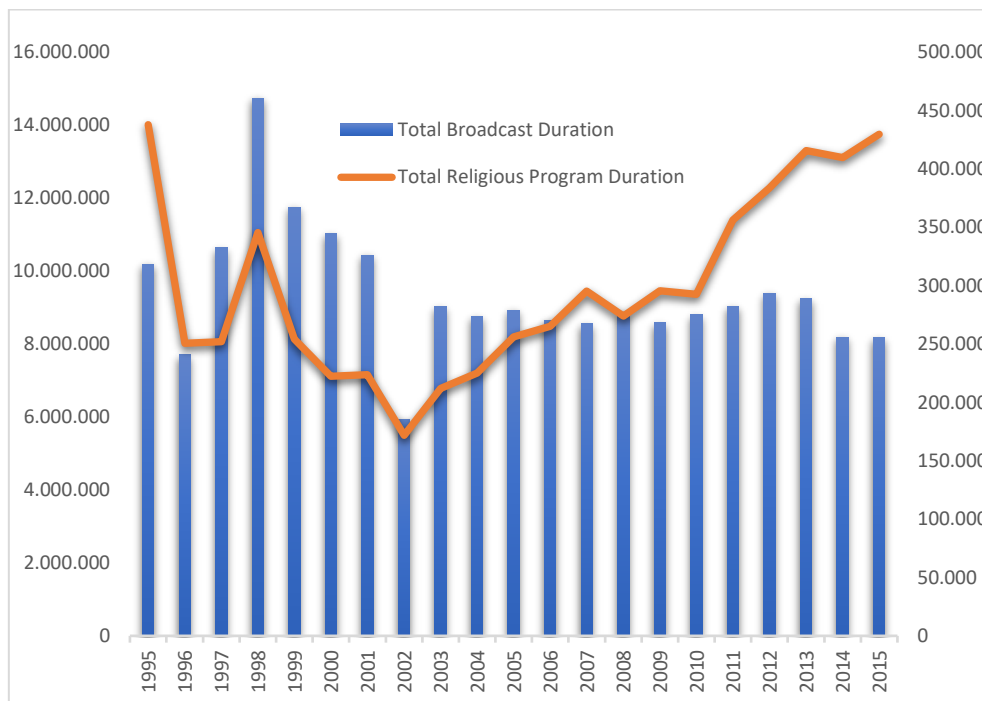


Figure 6. Proportions of religious programs in total broadcasting time (1995-2015)

As shown in Figure 6, the total broadcasting duration of radio-only, television-only, and both radio and television broadcasters has varied over time. The increase or decrease in the length of religious programs has not paralleled the rise or fall in total broadcasting time. The number of broadcast hours decreased from 10,187,594 in 1995 to 7,708,014 in 1996. From 1996 to 1998, the total amount of airtime increased to 14,741,940 hours. There was a significant decline in total airtime from 1999 to 2002, from 11,748,982 hours to 5,934,002 hours. The increase or decrease in total broadcasting time and the increase or decrease in the duration of religious programs exhibited a parallel trend between 1995 and 2002. This trend, however, cannot be said to have persisted since 2003. This is because, while total broadcast time fluctuated between 8 and 9 million from 2003 to 2015, the duration of religious programs increased from 212,099 to 436,643. Therefore, a direct correlation between total airtime and the length of religious programs does not appear to be meaningful.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study revealed that the duration of religious programs has increased steadily, albeit with some decreases, since the turn of the century; that the time allocated to religious programs in total broadcasting time and their ratio in all broadcasting time have increased; and that this trend cannot be explained solely by the increase in the number of broadcasters and broadcasting time.

Complex factors such as legal infrastructure, sectoral trends, audience expectations, ownership structure, cost, and producer qualifications influence radio and television program broadcasting. It is unrealistic to attribute the rise in religious program broadcasts to a single factor. At this juncture, it is possible to make various inferences and engage in an academic discussion of the issue by citing various reasons.

The decline in the number of radio and television stations sanctioned for “irtica/reaction” since the beginning of the 21st century and the confirmation of this by sector representatives may provide insight³ into the rise in religious programs. Thus, the trend of broadcasting religious programs can be considered to be influenced by both legal texts and political developments.

It is well-known that guidance-irşat is implemented as a factor in religiously oriented organizations that broadcast religious programs on radio and television. For instance, Diyanet TV explains that it broadcasts for the purpose of “enlightening society about religion”; Semerkand media “presenting the vastness of the Sufi perspective and the depth of the heart”; Dost TV “calling to know oneself and one’s Lord”; and Lalegül TV “broadcasting programs that will benefit its viewers for the happiness of the world and the hereafter”. One of the factors contributing to the rise of religious programs is the advent of religiously oriented channels, particularly in the 2000s (Dost TV in 2005, TRT Diyanet in 2012, Semerkand TV in 2014, etc.). In other words, the change in the broadcaster profile brought about by the entrance of thematic (education-culture) radios and televisions with a religious orientation can be linked to the tendency to broadcast religious programs. Aside from broadcasters known for their religious broadcasting and adopting a conservative/religious discourse, radio and television channels offering general broadcast content have begun to air religious programs since the 2000s. This phenomenon has affected other radio and television stations, and the industry’s attitude toward religious programs has shifted.

Another factor can be said to be influenced by the societal preferences for viewing/listening to religious programs. It is common knowledge in the radio and television industries that audience/listener expectations dictate broadcast content. Thus, it can be assumed that

broadcasting organizations have incorporated the persistent demands of society for access to religious content on radio and television.

The increase in religious programs can also be explained by the fact that they are a viable format in the ratings race, particularly during Ramadan, when viewership is high. It would be incorrect to conclude that religious programs are “entirely” driven by advertising revenues. However, the content of advertisements transmitted in religious programs also reveals that these programs are not independent from commercial results and that they contribute to the advertising revenue of radio and television stations.

In conclusion, we can say that political, social, and sectorial factors have increased or decreased religious broadcasting. However, additional research with sector representatives (media service providers, advertising agencies, advertisers, etc) is required to determine the factors that influence the propensity to broadcast religious programs and to clarify the inferences made here.

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Türkiye’de Radyo ve Televizyonda Dinî Programlar: Boylamsal Bir Deęerlendirme

Mustafa ÇUHADAR*

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Radyo ve televizyon sektörünün kamu yayıncılıęı anlayıřıyla bařladıęı Türkiye’de dinî program yayınlama eęilimi radyo aısından 1950’li yıllarda, televizyondaysa 1970’li yıllarda bařlamıřtır. Radyoda öncelikle Kur’an-ı Kerim tilaveti řeklinde bařlayan dinî içerik sunma tercihi zamanla söz/sohbet formatındaki programlarla devam etmiřtir. Radyoda Kur’an-ı Kerim tilaveti, dinî sohbet, dinî soru cevap ve musikiden müteřekkil program formatı, kamu yayıncılıęında bir tür olarak belirginlik kazanmıřtır. Türkiye’ni kamu yayıncısı Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu’nun (TRT) radyo kanallarında zaman zaman haftalık yayın periyotlarında (Din ve Ahlak Programı gibi) zaman zaman da günlük yayın periyotlarında (Ramazan ayı gibi) dinî programlar halen yayınlanmaktadır. Bařka bir ifadeyle kamu yayıncılıęı aısından 1950’lerden itibaren radyoda dinî program yayınlanmayan bir dönem olmamıřtır. Kamu yayıncılıęının televizyon ayaęındaysa dinî programlar 1974’teki mevlit programı, ardından 1975’teki iftar programıyla bařlamıřtır. Ancak bu programlar yılın sadece belirli döneminde (kandiller, Ramazan ayı) ekrana gelmiřtir. 1980’li yıllarla birlikte bu tercihte deęiřiklięi gidilmiş ve TRT’nin TV 1 isimli televizyonundaki “İnan Dünyası” programı haftalık yayın periyoduna girmiřtir. Böylelikle televizyonda 1970’lerde bařlayan dinî program yayınlama trendi, 1980’lerle birlikte yükselmiş ve "dinî program" formatı televizyonda bir tür olarak belirginlik kazanmıřtır. Ancak bu artışın genel yayın içindeki kapladığı sürenin oldukça düşük olduęunu söylemekte yarar bulunmaktadır. 1990’lı yıllarla birlikte radyo ve televizyon sektöründeki gelişmeler doğrultusunda TV 1 kanalına ek olarak TRT’nin TV 2, TRT International (TRT INT), TRT GAP gibi kanaları yayın hayatına bařlamış ve bu kanalarda da dinî programlar ekrana gelmiřtir. Günümüzde TRT’nin hem bazı radyolarında (Radyo 1, Radyo Kurdî, Antalya, Çukurova, Gap-Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Trabzon radyoları) hem de bazı televizyon kanallarında (TRT 1, TRT 2, TRT Avaz, TRT Kurdi, TRT Türk) dinî programlar yayınlanmaktadır. Ancak bu radyo ve televizyon kanallarının tamamında haftalık periyotlarla dinî program yayınlanmamaktadır. Dinî günlerle iliřkili olarak Ramazan ayı, kandiller gibi mukaddes zamanlarda yayınlar bulunmaktadır. Kamu yayıncılıęı aısından son dönemde yapılan en önemli deęiřimse, Türkiye’nin ilk resmî dinî çocuk kanalının (TRT Diyanet Çocuk) yayın hayatına bařlamasıdır. Dolayısıyla kamu yayıncılıęı aısından gemiřten bugüne dinî program yayınlama eęiliminde görece artış bulunduęu söylenebilir. Üstelik dinî programlar farklı formatlara bürünerek (Kur’an-ı Kerimi Güzel Okuma Yarışması gibi) sürdürülmektedir.

Kamu yayıncılıęında 1990’lı yıllarla birlikte radyo ve televizyon kanallarındaki sayı ve temalar artarken Türkiye’de radyo ve televizyon sektörüne tecimsel yayıncılar da dahil olmuřtur. Türkiye’de

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devletin radyo ve televizyon yayıncılığındaki tekeli kırılmış, radyo ve televizyon sektörü farklı bir yapıya kavuşmuştur. Türkiye’de ilk açılan radyolar arasında dinî yönelimleriyle öne çıkan yayınlar başlamış; dinî grupların televizyon sektörüne girmesiyle yayıncılık profilinde değişimler gözlenmiştir. Örneğin devletin kontrollü ve resmî dinî söylemi yerine dinî cemaat/grup/yapıların devletten bağımsız, hatta resmî söylemle teorik olarak çatışmalı söylemleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Salt söylem düzeyinde değil, yayın prototipiyle de dinî yönelimli radyo ve televizyonlar, sektörel durumu değiştirmiştir. Daha önce kamu yayıncılığında Kur’an-ı Kerim tilaveti her gün yayınlanmazken özel radyo ve televizyonlarda her gün Kur’an-ı Kerim tilavetleri; haftada birkaç güne yayılan İslamî içerikli sohbet programları; Cuma namazlarının naklen yayınlanması; canlı bağlantılarla İslamî sorulara cevaplar verme gibi birbirinden farklı türde programlar radyo ve televizyonlarda görülmeye başlanmıştır.

Radyo ve televizyon sektöründeki dinî program yayınlama eğilimi, akademik çalışmalarında temel konularından biri olmuştur. Birbirinden farklı disiplinlerdeki araştırmacılar radyo ve televizyonlarda ne tür dinî programlar yayınlandığını; dinî programlar ile dindarlık arasında bir ilişki bulunup bulunmadığını; dinî yönelimli radyo ve televizyonların yayıncılık tarihi içindeki konumunu; dinî programların dinleyenler ya da izleyenler tarafından nasıl algılandığını; dinî programlarda yer alan “hocaların” ya da “medya vaizlerinin” ne ölçüde etkili olduğunu sorgulamışlardır.

Bu çerçevede literatürde dinî programlara yönelik, doküman incelemelerine, içerik ve söylem analizine, göstergebilimsel çözümlemelere, görüşmelere dayanan nitel çalışmalar bulunduğu gibi dinî programları izleme ve değerlendirme eğilimlerini, dini bilgilenme açısından dini programların işlevselliğini, dinî programlarla ilgili izleyici algısını ölçen nicel çalışmalar da yer almaktadır. Disiplinleri, konuları, problemleri, yöntemleri, analiz teknikleri ve sonuçları birbirinden farklılık arz etse de televizyondaki dini programları konu alan çalışmaların kahir ekseriyetinde genellikle televizyondaki dini programlarla ilgili kesitsel bilgilere verildiği müşahede edilmektedir. Aynı şekilde araştırmalarda da kesitsel bilgilerle durum analizi yapıldığı görülmektedir.

Yapılan literatür taramasında boyamsal çalışmalara yeterince yer verilmediği görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, radyo ve televizyondaki dinî programlarla ilgili boyamsal bir araştırma olması yönüyle literatürdeki genel eğilimden farklılaşmaktadır. Zaman ölçütü temel alınarak araştırmaların kesitsel ve boyamsal olarak ikiye ayrıldığı bilinmektedir. Boyamsal çalışmaların en önemli üstünlüğü, araştırılan olguya ilişkin değişim ve gelişimi tespit etmektir. Bu açıdan 1995-2015 yılları arasında radyo ve televizyondaki dinî programların yayın süresini merkeze alan bu çalışmanın literatürdeki boşluğu önemli ölçüde doldurması beklenmektedir. Trend analizi tekniği kullanılan çalışmada değişimi belirlemek üzere ikincil kaynaklar kullanılmıştır. Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü (DİE) ile başlayan ve Türkiye İstatistik Enstitüsü (TÜİK) ile devam eden “Radyo ve Televizyon Kurum İstatistikleri”ndeki bulgular analiz edilmiştir.

Çalışmanın temel problemi, radyo ve televizyonlarda yayınlanan dinî program sürelerinin değişip değişmediğidir. Bu çerçevede dinî programların radyo ve televizyonda yayınlanma süresinde ve bütün yayın türleri (haber, magazin, eğlence vd.) içerisindeki oranında değişim bulunup bulunmadığını tespit etmek, bu çalışmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır.

Yayıncı kuruluşların sayısındaki artış ya da azalışın dinî programların artış ya da azalışıyla doğrudan ilgisini kurmak verilere göre mümkün görünmemektedir. 1995 yılında 1.448 yayın kuruluşunun yayın süresinin 437.959 saati dinî programlara ayrılırken; 1485 yayın kuruluşunun bulunduğu 2000 yılında bu süre 222.307 saat olarak belirlenmiştir. 2002 yılından itibaren 2007 yılına kadar yayıncı kuruluşların sayısı 1.282’den 1.040’a kadar gerilerken dinî programlara ayrılan süre 171.812 saatten 295.326 saate yükselmiştir. 2008 yılından 2015 yılına kadar yayıncı kuruluş sayısı 1.036’dan 1.268’e çıkarken dinî programların süresi 273.950 saatten 429.643 saate yükselmiştir. Yani 2015 yılındaki yayıncı kuruluş sayısı (1.265), 1995 yılındaki yayıncı kuruluş sayısına (1.448) henüz ulaşamamışken dinî program süresi 1995 yılındaki süreye yaklaşmıştır.

1995-2015 yılları arasında yayımlanan söz konusu istatistikler baz alınarak yapılan çalışmanın sonucunda, radyo ve televizyonlarda dinî programların 1995'ten 2002 yılına kadar çıkışlı ve inişli bir seyir izlediği; 2002 yılından 2015 yılına kadar, özellikle de 2011 yılından itibaren sürekli artış gösterdiği belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada ayrıca, radyo ve televizyon kuruluşlarının sayısındaki değişim ile dinî programların yayın süresindeki değişim karşılaştırılmış; dinî programların artışının, radyo ve televizyon kuruluşlarının sayının yükselişiyle “doğrudan” ilgili olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmada dinî program yayınlanma sürelerindeki değişimin, tek başına radyo ve televizyon yayıncı kuruluşlarının sayısı ve toplam yayın süresiyle açıklanamayacağı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu itibarla çalışmanın tartışma ve sonuç kısmında muhtemel dinî, politik, sektörel ve toplumsal çıkarımlarda bulunulmuştur. Ancak bu çıkarımların akademik olarak tartışılması, sektör temsilcilerin katılımıyla çalışmalar yapılması, bu yolla Türkiye’de radyo ve televizyonlarda dinî program yayınlama eğiliminde etkili olan faktörlerin araştırılması gerektiği önerilmiştir.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geçirilmiştir ve dergi beklentilerini karşılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu çalışmada “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuştur.

In this study, the rules stated in the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed.

Notes

¹ Abbas Abalı is a pseudonym used by Muhsin Mete.

² TIAK only includes TV stations that receive measurement services from it in its analysis.

³ See (Akyön, 2016)



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Framing the Study of Digital Religion: Waves of Academic Research, Theoretical Approaches and Themes*

Yunus ERGEN**

Abstract

The phenomenon of “digital religion” has emerged as a research field over the past quarter century as religious experiences integrate into the digital sphere. Within this field, researchers have adopted various theoretical frameworks and empirical methodologies to illuminate the complex dynamics that arise from the interaction between digital culture and religion. However, the existing literature on this topic is characterized by fragmentation, which makes a comprehensive understanding of its trajectory difficult. This fragmentation is particularly noticeable in the absence of a coherent narrative that outlines the field’s development. This study aims to provide a scholarly framework for understanding the trajectory of Digital Religion Studies (DRSs), encompassing successive waves of academic research, theoretical paradigms, and thematic foci. This study provides a qualitative assessment of existing literature on the relationship between digital culture and religion through a comprehensive review. A thorough literature review reveals that research in the field of digital religion can be classified into four distinct phases: descriptive, categorical, theoretical, and integrative. The prominent theoretical frameworks that have emerged media ecology, mediation, mediatization, religious-social shaping of technology (RSST), and hypermediation. Finally, the thematic categorization of research primarily revolves around topics, such as rituals, authenticity, identity, community, authority, and embodiment.

Keywords: Digital Religion, Research Waves, Theoretical Approaches, Themes

Dijital Din Çalışmalarını Çerçevelemek: Akademik Araştırma Dalgaları, Teorik Yaklaşımlar ve Temalar

Öz

Dini yaşamın dijital bir hüviyete bürünmesiyle birlikte dijital din olgusu oluşmaya başlamıştır. Son çeyrek asırda gelişim kaydederek olgunlaşan bu olgunun aynı zamanda akademik bir araştırma sahasına dönüştüğü de aşîkârdır. Bu sahada çalışma yürüten araştırmacılar dijital kültür ve din etkileşiminden doğan problemlerin çözümüne yönelik çeşitli araştırmalar yürüterek teorik ve ampirik yaklaşımlar ile farklı temalar geliştirmişlerdir. Ne var ki konuyla ilgili mevcut literatür, yörüngesinin kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını zorlaştıran bir parçalanma ile karakterize edilmektedir. Bu parçalanmışlık, özellikle alanın gelişimini özetleyen tutarlı bir anlatının yokluğunda kolaylıkla fark edilmektedir. Buradan hareketle bu makale, birbirini takip eden akademik araştırma dalgalarını, teorik paradigmaları ve tematik odakları kapsayan dijital din çalışmalarının yörüngesini anlamak için bilimsel bir çerçeve sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda makalede, dijital kültür ve din ilişkisini inceleyen mevcut literatürün kapsamlı bir incelemesi yapılarak niteliksel bir değerlendirme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Literatürün kapsamlı incelemesi sonucunda, söz konusu sahadaki araştırmaların tanımlayıcı, metodolojik, teorik ve bütünlük olmak üzere dört ayrı dalga halinde kategorize edildiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ortaya çıkan kayda değer teorik yaklaşımlar arasında medya ekolojisi, dolayım, medyatikleşme, teknolojinin dini-toplumsal şekillenmesi ve hiperdolayım yeri almaktadır. Son olarak, araştırmaların tematik kategorizasyonunun ağırlıklı olarak ritüel, otantiklik, kimlik, topluluk, otorite ve somutlaşma olmak üzere altı tema etrafında irdelendiği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Din, Araştırma Dalgaları, Teorik Yaklaşımlar, Temalar

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Introduction

With the continuous integration of emerging digital technologies into daily life, the widespread adoption of digital media, and the ascendancy of digital culture as the prevailing societal ethos, individuals' daily routines have undergone significant transformation, assuming a distinctly digital character. Presently, for the majority of people, routine activities encompass tasks such as accessing the Internet via portable digital devices, checking email communications, seeking information on topics of interest, engaging in social interactions with friends, utilizing digital navigation tools for travel, streaming music or podcasts through digital platforms during journeys, regular engagement with social media platforms, monitoring follower counts, and evaluating post-engagement metrics, all of which have become commonplace. Consequently, it can be posited that digitization has become an ordinary facet of everyday life (Karaarslan, 2021, p. 51). This routine extends to religious life. To such an extent that contemporary individuals frequently access religious knowledge through digital media, engage in digital religious discussions, participate in digital religious communities, perform religious rituals digitally, and cultivate religious beliefs or develop digital religious identities through involvement in a digitalized process of religious socialization. As a result, it can be asserted that religious life now assumes a digitalized identity. This phenomenon underscores the notion that religion is undergoing digitization.

Certainly, the digitalization of religion, in its most comprehensive interpretation, can be characterized as the process of integrating religious practices and all facets of religious discourse with digital technologies. This transformative phenomenon can be traced back to the 1980s, a period concurrent with the widespread adoption of the Internet. During this formative era, when web technologies were still in their infancy, the Christian community initially ventured into the realm of disseminating religious content through digital means. Initially, this religious content adopted a primarily text-based structure, akin to the broader array of content available on the burgeoning internet. However, as the 1990s unfolded, there has been a notable surge in the proliferation of religious content, coinciding with the emergence and growth of online religious communities and e-mails. Concurrently, this period bore witness to the establishment of dedicated religious websites and the inception of online or cyber churches, primarily within Christian tradition. Notably, other institutional religions, including but not limited to Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam, also found their foothold in the digital realm during this time. Consequently, the Internet has unveiled new avenues for individuals to explore and engage with their religious beliefs and experiences, offering an ever-expanding array of websites, chat rooms, and e-mail discussion groups dedicated to a myriad of faith-related topics (Campbell, 2006, pp. 4–5, Campbell, 2010, p. 22).

Between the years 1980 and 2000, the discourse surrounding the interplay of religion and digital technologies predominantly revolved around conceptual frameworks such as “electronic religion,” “online religion” and “cyber religion.” Among these, the term “cyber religion” gained prominence. Cyber religion, as defined by Højsgaard (2005), is characterized as any form of religious content disseminated through the Internet. This concept emerged from the prevailing notion that cyberspace constitutes an alternate realm, detached from the mundane aspects of individuals' daily lives (p. 50). The concept of cyber religion, however, carries inherent complexities as it conjures both utopian and dystopian visions of cyberspace as a mythical domain that liberates individuals from conventional societal and physical constraints while simultaneously ensnaring them within a “false” reality experienced behind the screen. A similar predicament arose with the term “virtual religion,” which was proposed as an alternative to “cyber religion” in the mid-2000s. This term aimed to underscore the distinctive features of online spaces in contrast to their offline counterparts but was marred by its close association with the concept of “virtual reality.” During this period, the notion of virtual reality primarily referred to digitally simulated environments, often perceived as diverging from the authentic physical world, thereby creating an impression of faith

and religiosity that was incomplete, artificial, or counterfeited. Therefore, the utility of the term “virtual religion” in academic discourse has dwindled over time (Campbell, 2013a, p. 2; Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, pp. 2–4).

One of the most noteworthy conceptual debates revolves around the distinctions between “online religion” and “religion online”. Coined by Christopher Helland (2000, 2005), this differentiation aims to discern whether religious content and communities heavily draw upon offline sources and practices, or whether they manifest unique forms of engagement stemming from digitally originated religious content and communities. In this respect, “religion online” pertains to the utilization of the internet as a unidirectional communication tool by religious entities, while “online religion” describes the deployment of the Internet and digital media as avenues for interactive engagement within religious communities. This categorical demarcation proves instrumental in elucidating the existence of religious communities that concurrently inhabit both the online and offline realms. It also underscores the significant role played by the Internet and digital technologies in giving rise to novel forms of religious practices. In subsequent years, the terms “online religion” and “religion online” have been employed divergently in scholarly discourse and are subject to varied debates (Campbell, 2012; Campbell and Lövheim, 2011; Cheong et al., 2009; Frost and Youngblood, 2014; Rahman, 2016; Young, 2004). Notably, the term “online religion” has gained prominence for providing a comprehensive technical and sociological framework to explicate networked religious practices (Eken, 2020; Eken, 2021).

In the 2010s, the ongoing relationship between religion and the Internet, as well as computer-based digital technologies, underwent a paradigm shift and began to be examined within the framework of “digital religion”. Particularly since 2012, the concept of digital religion has gained widespread currency across international conferences, symposiums, research centers, research projects, and the titles of scholarly books and articles (Campbell, 2013a, p. 2; Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, pp. 2–4). This concept continues to serve as a focal point for contemporary discussions on the subject. In recent scholarship, the term digital religion has been frequently employed to delineate established institutional religions, including digital Islam, digital Christianity, digital Judaism, digital Buddhism, and digital Hinduism (Choong, 2023; Golan, 2022; Haidi, 2023; Lengauer, 2018; Ostrovskaya and Badmatsyrenov, 2022; Zaid et al., 2022; Zeiler, 2022b). This usage underscores the examination of how traditional religious frameworks engage in digital technology. Moreover, there is a preference for characterizing religious holy books, rituals, and practices within the digital realm. Instances of this include the study of the digital Quran, digital Bible, digital church, digital pilgrimage, digital hadith, and related subjects, all of which have become focal points in scholarly investigations of digital religion (Campbell and Dyer, 2022; Golan and Martini, 2018; Hakak et al., 2018; Hakak et al., 2022; Hutchings, 2017).

Naturally, the concept of digital religion has been established within the scholarly arena in tandem with the progression of academic investigations. The maturation of this concept over time has catalyzed its evolution into a distinct research field. Presently, it is evident that the conceptualization of DRSs have ascended to a prominent status within the realm of academic inquiry. This field has undergone a maturation process that spans approximately quarter century. From a broader perspective, DRSs have undergone substantial changes in recent decades. Existing research and reviews addressing the evolution of DRSs have exhibited a range of focal points. While some studies have exclusively concentrated on theoretical approaches (Campbell, 2017b; Çiçek, 2022; Hjarvard, 2011) within the field, others have delved into methodological advancements (Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016; Dereli, 2022a)¹. A subset of research endeavors incorporates an examination of both theoretical frameworks and methodological developments, further augmented by an exploration of the field’s chronological development. However, the segmentation of these studies presents a challenge for researchers aiming to conduct comprehensive investigations in the field, as disparate perspectives may not offer a sufficiently holistic outlook. Compounding this issue, many studies tend to adopt a singular viewpoint, whether

it emphasizes theoretical approaches or methodological orientations, resulting in a lack of well-rounded assessment of the field's multifaceted nature.

Acknowledging the challenges in the existing literature, it is worth noting that there are notable attempts to address these shortcomings. Two studies particularly stand out as pivotal in framing the current landscape of DRs. The first of these is a review article by Campbell and Evolvi (2019). In this seminal study, the authors scrutinized the evolution of the DRs field across successive waves of academic research, delineating theoretical approaches and highlighting certain thematic issues. However, it is discernible that not all prominent theoretical frameworks are comprehensively covered in this study, and some research areas within the broader spectrum of DRs themes are not exhaustively addressed. The second noteworthy study in the realm of DRs is a research paper authored by Haberli (2020), which appeared just a year after Campbell and Evolvi's study. Haberli's contribution can be viewed as an introductory exploration seeking to offer a holistic perspective of the DRs field. However, a notable characteristic of this research lies in its methodological focus assessing theoretical approaches within DRs from a methodological standpoint. Despite this approach, the study fails to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the theories that have been employed in the field of DRs and for specific purposes. In other words, the theories used in the field of DRs are not addressed in this study. Moreover, this article does not cover the full range of current thematic issues in the field of DRs. Thus, while Haberli's article constitutes a valuable step towards a more comprehensive understanding, it requires further research endeavors to provide a more thorough examination of the theoretical implications and thematic dimensions within the evolving landscape of DRs.

Although there are various studies in the literature that attempt to frame the development process of the DRs field, it is difficult to say that these studies are large-scale and current. In fact, as mentioned above, while some studies deal with the development of the field from a single aspect (for example, only theoretical approaches or methodological orientations), some studies do not provide a holistic perspective that shows the development of the field in all aspects. Furthermore, the existing body of literature often falls short of drawing attention to thematic issues within the realm of DRs, and there is a notable absence of up-to-date assessments of these concerns. Addressing these lacunae in the scholarly discourse contributes future research endeavors to adopt a more integrated and comprehensive approach. From this point of view, this study aims to address these scholarly gaps by advocating for a more integrated and comprehensive approach. In doing so, it aspires to contribute to future research initiatives by providing a thorough and contemporary foundation for the exploration and understanding of DRs. Another aim of this study is to illuminate the reflections of this transformation and shed light on DRs as a comprehensive discipline.

To achieve these aims, an extensive literature review is conducted, entailing a qualitative assessment of DRs across the dimensions of academic research waves, theoretical frameworks, and thematic developments. Within this framework, the initial step entails chronologically delineating the development of DRs, thereby discerning the trajectories of academic inquiry. This analysis seeks to identify not only the temporal evolution, but also the broader trends that have shaped the field. Subsequently, attention will be directed towards the salient theoretical paradigms that serve as the foundation for DRs, accompanied by an exploration of the contextual domains in which these frameworks find applications. Finally, the study undertakes a categorization of the dominant themes in the field and assesses the ways in which these themes have emerged in the landscape of DRs, and in what ways they have been addressed in current work.

The Development of Digital Religion Studies: A Brief Overview

As an academic research field, DRs delve into the intricate intersections of digital media, digital culture, and religion. This multidisciplinary domain encompasses a wide array of topics,

including the examination of how religious communities engage with the Internet, the modes through which religiosity is expressed in digital media, and the degree to which digital engagement can be perceived as a spiritual endeavor. With a history spanning nearly quarter century, this field has been referred to by various names, such as cyber religious studies, which serve to describe the novel manifestations of religious practices that emerge through computer networks and virtual religious studies, underscoring the inherent tensions within these practices. The term DRSs have been employed to characterize the examination of the technological and cultural sphere, particularly as scholars have contemplated the blending or blurring of online and offline religious spaces. This convergence gives rise to a hybrid landscape, in which offline religious contexts intersect with newly emerging online spaces (Campbell, 2017a, p. 228; Campbell, 2017b, pp. 16–17; Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 1). In this context, DRSs have emerged as a burgeoning interdisciplinary research field driven by the objective of understanding the extent to which traditional religious practices adapt to digital environments. In addition, it seeks to elucidate how digital culture informs the religious activities of offline religious groups within the tapestry of everyday life. In this respect, DRSs seek to explore the intricate connections and interrelationships between online and offline religious experiences while acknowledging how these contexts evolve, merge, coalesce ambiguously, and occasionally transgress traditional boundaries over time (Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 6).

DRSs at their core highlight the increasing recognition that digital media and digital culture have become integral aspects of daily life, serving as a common platform for religious engagement. In this context, it is frequently asserted that digital culture presents a distinct phenomenon within the realm of religion. This distinct nature prompts an examination across various scientific disciplines. DRSs, primarily situated at the intersection of media and communication studies and theology studies, facilitate the convergence of diverse academic fields, including sociology (especially the sociology of religion), psychology, philosophy, and economics, within scholarly discourse. From this perspective, DRSs have an interdisciplinary framework (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 7).

DRSs, which have developed simultaneously with Internet studies, include a wide range of research strategies, technological approaches, and studies that examine the effects of digital media on culture from a religious perspective (Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 5). The first examples of studies in the field can be found in the mid-1990s. The articles written at this time are seen as the starting point of DRSs. For example, Gregory P. Grieve (1995), who investigated the interaction of neo-Pagans with the Internet, drew attention to the fact that religious communities could use the Internet as a space. A year later, Stephen D. O’Leary’s *Cyberspace as Sacred Space* (1996) and *The Unknown God of the Internet* (1996), co-authored by O’Leary and Brenda E. Brasher, were the first quality works in the literature on the Internet and religion. Both studies focused on the ways in which Christianity is presented on the Internet and argued that religious practices can also be practiced online. These early studies emphasized the rise of religion from paganism to Christianity on the Internet (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 2).

The field of Internet and religion studies experienced significant growth until the mid-2000s and was predominantly referred to as cyber religion studies. In fact, up to that point, the terms Internet and cyberspace were often used interchangeably (Campbell, 2012b, p. 681; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 6). Cyber-religion was employed to depict religious practices, congregations, and manifestations of community that emerged within online platforms. This phenomenon gave rise to various concepts such as cyber-faith, cyber-church, and cyber-temple. Research in this domain has focused on examining the process of articulating religious practices and religious content in the cyberspace, as well as its potential impacts on religious expression and belief (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 3). In the subsequent years, the study of cyber-religion expanded its scope beyond institutional religions, including Islam², Judaism, and Buddhism, to encompass new religious movements. Indeed, inquiries into how different religions are represented or negotiated online,

the ethical and moral challenges posed by digital technologies, whether the Internet can serve as a means to reconnect individuals with spirituality in postmodern societies, and how traditional forms of religiosity are reflected in online environments have all emerged as central themes within the field of cyber religion (Campbell, 2012b, p. 681).

By the mid-2000s, with the advent of the Internet ushering in a proliferation of technologies collectively referred to as new or digital media, it became increasingly apparent that constraining the study of the intersection between religion and technology solely to the realms of the Internet or cyberspace was overly limiting. Consequently, there emerged a conceptual expansion aimed at encompassing novel subject matter and research domains. Initially, the term “virtual religion” was favored over the designation of “cyber religion studies”, although the former proved somewhat problematic due to its association with virtual reality. Subsequently, scholars adopted the term “digital religion” as a more comprehensive framework for delineating and investigating the interplay between digital media, digital culture, and religion (Campbell, 2021b, p. 8; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 6). With the introduction of the term “digital religion”, the field of research concerned with the Internet and its relationship with religion underwent a broad redefinition, coming to be widely known as DRs. Since the 2010s, this academic domain has evolved to prioritize the development of research theories and methodologies (Campbell, 2021b, p. 10; Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 11). However, in tandem with the proliferation of social media platforms and the ascendancy of digital media as the most prominent means of communication, the focus of DRs have significantly shifted towards these platforms. Over the subsequent decade, this field has burgeoned and enriched by the contributions of scholars from diverse perspectives and academic disciplines.

As the decade ended, the examination of digital religion underwent a transformative process in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Historically, numerous religious communities had been hesitant to engage with technology or to recognize the significance of comprehending digital culture. However, the advent of lockdowns in the year 2020 compelled many of these communities to transition to online platforms, necessitating their acquisition of digital literacy for religious purposes and prompting them to contemplate the synchronization and equilibrium of online and offline religious practices. This sudden shift provided a considerable impetus to the field of DRs. Presently, DRs have become a prevalent topic of exploration across diverse academic domains, including traditional ones such as media and communication studies, philosophy of technology, and theology, as well as emerging disciplines like mobile media studies and information science (Campbell, 2021b, p. 11). The DRs continues to evolve as a dynamic research field, encompassing a broad spectrum of subjects. These include ethical inquiries arising from technology-influenced worldviews like artificial intelligence and transhumanism, ethnographic investigations into how religious communities employ social media, explorations of virtual reality, and the exploration of emerging facets of digital culture such as the Internet of things and big data (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 2).

As the field of DRs have evolved within the academic sphere, it has given rise to a plethora of research trends, each aligning with distinct perspectives on the Internet from both the general public and scholarly circles. These evolving trends have been systematically categorized into discrete waves by researchers dedicated their efforts to this domain, and their examination has been delineated into four distinct thematic categories.

Waves of Academic Research in Digital Religion Studies

Morten T. Hojsgaard and Margit Warburg (2005) have characterized the development of academic research on the early relationship between religion and the Internet into three research waves. In subsequent years, Mia Lövheim and Heidi A. Campbell (2017) attempted to add a fourth wave to this categorization. Accordingly, in the field of DRs, the first wave is described as

descriptive, the second wave as categorical, the third wave as theoretical, and the fourth wave as integrative (Campbell, 2006, p. 8; Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 3; Campbell and Sheldon, 2022, p. 76; Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 10).

In the initial wave of research, commonly known as the descriptive phase, academic investigations into the religious utilization of the Internet approached the surreal potential of the digital communication medium with either utopian fascination or dystopian apprehension (Højsgaard and Warburg, 2005, p. 5). These early studies were primarily concerned with the inquiry of whether the Internet constituted an emancipatory utopia, leading towards a global village, a forum devoid of oppression and a liberation of humanity, or conversely, a bleak dystopia that estranged individuals from society, ultimately thrusting them into the “wasteland of reality” (Grieve, 2022, pp. 33–34). In this context, the inaugural wave of research, commencing in the mid-1990s, predominantly sought to define and chronicle online religious practices within the paradigms of utopian and dystopian frameworks. Indeed, most of this research was founded upon ethnographic and textual analyses of online religious activities, documenting the emergence of novel forms of community and ritual (Campbell, 2021a, p. 11; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 6; Tsuria et al., 2017, p. 79). Moreover, the majority of investigations during this first wave were centered on individual case studies, aiming to comprehensively elucidate and scrutinize these cases from all angles (Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, it can be posited that the first wave of research exhibited analogous characteristics to early studies in computer-mediated communication (Campbell, 2011, p. 236), and this pattern persisted until the onset of the new millennium.

In the second wave of research, which commenced in the 2000s and was structured categorically, researchers began to acknowledge the crucial role of computer networks and digital technologies. This period witnessed a shift towards a more pragmatic approach, wherein it became evident that the Internet, while a potent technological tool, did not operate in isolation as the sole determinant of religious evolution. Instead, scholars began to recognize the substantial influence of individual experiences on this transformative process (Højsgaard & Warburg, 2005, p. 9). In essence, second wave research underscored that technology, by itself, lacked the capacity to unilaterally shape the trajectory of religion. It underscored the active roles played by individuals and institutions that harnessed technology, fostering the development of what we now understand as digital religion. This perspective ushered in a more intricate and nuanced comprehension of digital religion (Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 12; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 6). As a matter of fact, research efforts pivoted towards a heightened examination of how individuals and communities engaged in religious practices within the digital realm. One of the prominent questions that emerged was the exploration of how online digital communities either aligned with or challenged traditional offline communities (Campbell, 2011, p. 240). To address inquiries of this nature and others like it, researchers devised specific typologies to categorize digital religious practices, employing various methodological approaches such as online surveys and online ethnography (Campbell, 2021a, p. 11; Tsuria et al., 2017, p. 79). With the advancement of web technologies during this second wave of research, the proliferation of online worship spaces became conspicuous, giving rise to the emergence of virtual temples and cyber churches. Additionally, personal blogs experienced a significant surge in usage for religious purposes during this period. This development prompted researchers to acknowledge that relying solely on data from single-case studies was inadequate for making comprehensive claims about digital religious practices. For this reason, there was a growing need for conducting more comparative case studies (Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 6).

The third wave of research is distinguished by a shift towards theoretical and interpretive endeavors, in which scholars’ endeavor to identify methodologies and instruments for scrutinizing data and assessing discoveries within the broader framework of theoretical paradigms. In this wave, online studies pertaining to rituals, communities, and identities have been scrutinized in

greater depth, and novel qualitative-oriented approaches have been employed to explore how the integration of the Internet into everyday life influences and shapes digital religious practices. Within this context, scholars have drawn deductions regarding the manifestation of online religious practices, such as religious rituals, communities, and identities. Furthermore, a fresh line of research has emerged, centering on the impact of the Internet on religious authorities, the empowerment of new religious leaders, and the opportunities it provides for traditional leaders to reassert their influence in the online sphere. This has also given rise to novel theoretical and methodological frameworks. For instance, some scholars have sought to furnish systematic interpretive tools for analyzing the negotiation patterns between offline religious communities and digital media, as well as for obtaining a nuanced comprehension of online authority negotiations (Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 7; Evolvi, 2021, p. 4; Tsuria et al., 2017, p. 79). With the advent of a third wave of research, the field of DRSs have experienced growth in terms of both quantity and quality. The advancements brought about by Web 2.0, technology, and social media have played significant roles in this development. In this way, third wave research has extended beyond mere attempts to chart the landscape of online religious life and has instead delved into how online-offline religious interaction and integration have evolved concerning the themes of ritual, identity, community, and authority. (Campbell, 2011, p. 241; Grieve, 2022, p. 34).

The ultimate phase of DRSs, identified as the fourth wave, places greater emphasis on examining ritual, identity, community, and authority, while delving into the utilization of digital media in everyday life. Research within this fourth wave, encompassing contemporary DRSs, delves into more specialized subjects such as mobile religious applications, digital religious video games, digital religious symbolism, and digital religious memes/caps. This wave is characterized as an integrated or convergent stage, as it consolidates the insights gained from the previous three waves, culminating in a more mature field of study (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 10). Over the past decade, the concept of digital religion has taken center stage in this wave. Within this framework, refined methodological approaches³ have emerged, leading to the development of new typologies for classification and interpretation, with a particular focus on the hybrid or blended aspects of digital religion that bridge the online-offline divide. In addition to addressing existential, ethical, and political dimensions of digital religion, this wave has also brought attention to issues of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality (Campbell, 2021a, p. 11; Campbell and Altenhofen, 2016, p. 12; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 7).

As can be seen, DRSs have been categorized into four research waves. Although each of these waves offers an important perspective on the development of DRSs, it is possible to say that all waves, although they have a chronological aspect, are currently continuing their development or that the new wave does not negate the previous wave. This is because the methodological orientations present in the first wave are also preferred in current DRSs. Similarly, it cannot be said that the theoretical orientations of the second wave were completely rejected or ignored. Therefore, it would be more accurate to consider all research waves as part of the DRSs process.

In addition to the four established waves (descriptive, categorical, theoretical, and integrated) that delineate the evolutionary trajectory of DRSs, there is a growing recognition in the literature that a fifth wave is emerging (Phillips et al., 2019). This nascent wave is characterized by its convergence with various disciplines, including musicology, race studies, and feminist studies, within the domain of DRSs (Campbell and Tsuria, 2022b, p. 10). Given the ceaseless advancements in digital technologies, it is inevitable that new waves will continue to manifest. Therefore, it can be anticipated that the fifth wave will further mature in the forthcoming years as diverse academic disciplines increasingly engage with the field of DRSs.

Theoretical Approaches in Digital Religion Studies

The progression of research within the field of DRs have given rise to the exploration of distinct inquiries, guided by a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. As the field continues to expand, these approaches are interlinked and serve as influential points of reference. To address these questions, certain theoretical frameworks have been employed and new theories have been formulated. The prominent theoretical perspectives on DRs are media ecology, mediation, mediatization, religious social shaping of technology (RSST), and hypermediation. Each of these approaches provides a distinct lens through which to comprehend the intricate relationship between religion, media, and culture, facilitating diverse assessments of how religion operates within the domain of digital media and digital culture (Campbell, 2017b, pp. 17–18; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 7; Lundby and Evolvi, 2022, p. 235). Notably, many of these approaches initially found their roots in conventional studies on media and religion, subsequently undergoing adaptation for the context of DRs. For instance, mediation and mediatization theories were originally devised to frame the interplay between traditional media and religion. However, there are also approaches like the RSST and hypermediation, which were developed explicitly to address the examination of digital religion. Each of these approaches is profoundly context dependent. For this reason, it is more meaningful to briefly highlight their significance within the realm of DRs rather than delve into exhaustive details for each.

The concept of media ecology, which centers on the impact of media and communication technologies on individuals, was initially formulated by the renowned media theorist Neil Postman. However, it was through the seminal contributions of Marshall McLuhan that this concept truly acquired its depth and significance (Strate, 2004, pp. 3–4). McLuhan, celebrated for his notion of electronic networks constituting a “global village,” revitalized the field of media and communication studies with his famous assertion that “the medium is the message” during the pre-digital, or traditional media, era. These conceptualizations, propositions, or ideas that McLuhan developed for comprehending media, particularly focusing on television, exerted considerable influence on the evolution of media ecology as a theoretical framework and facilitated its adaptation to the digital media landscape in subsequent years. Media ecology theory underscores that media serves as a medium and should be examined as such, while also acknowledging its formative influence on individuals. This presumption subsequently gave rise to the concept of technological determinism, which was significantly informed by McLuhan’s studies. The recognition that media ecology and the resultant technological determinism perspectives could be applied to the realm of digital media has become increasingly evident over time. Within this context, the media ecology theory employed in studies related to digital religion has been shaped by strategies developed primarily for religious institutions, especially the Church, to effectively harness media for the dissemination of religious messages to adherents (Lundby and Evolvi, 2022, pp. 236–237). Thereby, religion has become an integral component of the media ecology, evolving substantially in consonance with the dynamics of this ecological milieu. As a result, research endeavors investigating the interplay between digital media and religion have benefited immensely from the insights and principles advanced by this ecological approach.

Mediation is an additional concept and theoretical framework that finds frequent application in the field of media and communication studies. In essence, mediation pertains to the tangible acts of communication conducted through a medium within a specific social context (Hjarvard, 2011, p. 124). To put it differently, it does not denote the direct enactment of the communication act but rather its realization through an intermediary medium. From a theoretical standpoint, mediation centers on the communication processes that revolve around the relationship between individuals and culture. This theory posits that media serve as vehicles for the creation and expression of cultural meanings. In the context of media and religion studies, scholars such as Gordon Lynch, Birgit Meyer, and Stewart Hoover have adapted mediation theory, primarily guided by the notion

that media constitutes an intrinsic component of religious practice rather than merely a tool for influencing religion (Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 7; Lundby and Evolvi, 2022, p. 237). Within the realm of DRSs, this theory has primarily been employed to explore the mediation of religious content or meaning. The mediation of meaning provides a vantage point for investigating individuals' religious experiences through the narratives, symbols, and cultures propagated via digital media. This approach aids researchers in discerning how digital media can mold religious identities and in pinpointing the contexts and mechanisms through which religion is constructed or disseminated within the digital cultural milieu (Campbell, 2017b, pp. 19–21).

Mediatization theory is another prominent theoretical framework frequently employed in the study of digital religion. It centers on the process through which transformations in media and communication disseminate across and reshape other societal domains, including politics, religion, and consumption. Regarded as a quintessential postmodern phenomenon, mediatization is not only a prevalent lens in traditional media research but also a salient framework in digital media studies (Lövheim and Hjarvard, 2019, p. 207; Morgan, 2011, pp. 137–138). Mediatization denotes an enduring process in which societal and cultural institutions, as well as modes of interaction, undergo transformation owing to the escalating influence of the media. It scrutinizes the dynamics of change within media and communication while simultaneously adopting a critical perspective toward the societal and cultural shifts engendered by the media (Couldry and Hepp, 2013, p. 197; Hjarvard, 2011, p. 124).

The theory of the mediatization of religion aims to provide insight into the mechanisms by which changes in religion manifest themselves at both the structural level and in the realm of social interaction (Lövheim & Hjarvard, 2019, p. 208). With the integration of religion into the media landscape, a process of mediatization has also been set in motion. This process is marked by several discernible stages. First and foremost, the media has assumed a pivotal, if not the predominant, role as a source of information pertaining to religious matters. Functioning as both a producer and disseminator of religious experiences, the media has emerged as a significant platform for the expression and dissemination of individual beliefs. However, it is important to acknowledge that religious content and experiences are molded to align with the demands of popular media genres. Established religious symbols, rituals, and beliefs are repurposed as the raw material for the media's storytelling, addressing issues that span the secular and sacred spectrum (often referred to as the "post-secular"⁴ context). Ultimately, the media, as a cultural and social medium, has assumed numerous cultural and social functions that were traditionally the domain of institutionalized religions. It now provides spiritual and moral guidance while fostering a sense of community and belonging (Hjarvard, 2008, p. 24; Hjarvard, 2011, p. 124). Concurrently, mediatization theory emphasizes the role of the Internet as a media institution that shapes popular conceptions of religion and consequently molds religious discourses within the public sphere. In this regard, the theory proves instrumental in analyzing the interactions between religious institutions and digital media and how these interactions shape perceptions of religious authority. Indeed, mediatization theory underscores the novel public spaces created by digital media where individuals or groups can express their opinions in ways that were previously unattainable within their religious contexts (Campbell, 2017b, pp. 19–21). Consequently, the theory is increasingly employed in the study of digital religion to probe the religious implications and impacts of digital media.

The concept of the religious-social shaping of technology (RSST⁵), also known as "negotiation theory," represents a relatively recent addition to the field of DRSs, offering a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing how individuals and religious communities make decisions regarding their interactions with digital media. This approach endeavors to uncover the processes that influence a user's religious engagement with any given technology and to identify the specific conditions that may result in changes in technology use or belief because of such engagement. Fundamental to this approach is the underlying assumption that the success,

failure, or adaptation of a particular technology within a specific user group is contingent not only upon the inherent attributes of the technology itself but also on the users' capacity to socially construct the technology in accordance with their moral and spiritual objectives (Campbell, 2012a, pp. 84–85; Campbell, 2017b, p. 20). What sets the RSST approach apart is its commitment to delving deeper into the intricate ways in which spiritual, moral, and theological practices guide the negotiation of technology. As such, it strives to encapsulate a more profound understanding of the role that history and tradition play in the deliberative processes of religious communities. In essence, this approach entails not merely scrutinizing how contemporary values and beliefs influence motivations for technology use, but also uncovering the historical origins and rhetorical foundations of these discourses within a given religious community (Campbell, 2010, p. 59). Originally formulated for application in the study of digital religion, it serves to elucidate the nature of religious communities' engagement with digital media by examining their traditions and histories, their core values and principles, their decisions concerning the adoption, rejection, or adaptation of technology, and their discourses concerning technology utilization (Campbell, 2017b, p. 21; Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 7).

The final approach used in DRSs is hypermediation. The development of the Internet and the proliferation of digital media has enabled the expansion of mediation in the context of online spaces. For this reason, media theorist Carlos Scolari (2015) conceptualized the online mediation of communication as hypermediation. Rather than referring to a specific product or media genre, Scolari frames the concept as referring to the complex web of social processes of production, consumption and exchange that take place in environments characterized by multidimensional and multi-actor media technologies and languages. In contrast, hypermediation is understood more as the mediation of cognitive, social and cultural processes generated by digital technologies. This is because hypermediation processes make sense with digital media and digital culture characterized by multimedia or transmedia environments (wikis, blogs, social media, etc.), hypertextual structures and generators (pp. 1098–1099). The concept of hypermediation has been adapted to digital religion by scholars at the Center for Media, Religion and Culture at the University of Colorado Boulder (Evolvi, 2021, p. 12). In particular, Giulia Evolvi (2018) used the concept as a theoretical approach in her research on digital religion, framing it as “hypermediated religious spaces” characterized by rapid and emotional exchanges between online and offline spaces (p. 15). As such, hypermediation has been interpreted as a critique of classical secularization theory and religious change has been contextualized through hypermediated spaces, taking into account the propositions of post-secular theory (Evolvi, 2021, p. 17). According to Evolvi (2018), who states that religious change usually takes place through spaces, hypermediated spaces function as digital spaces where the trajectories of today's religious change can be traced. As a matter of fact, digital spaces increase religious acts that occur in physical spaces, enable the formation of digital religious communities, and help people discuss their religiosity (p. 4). Therefore, in terms of DRSs, it is understood that hypermediation is perceived as mediated digital spaces that enable the realization of religious experiences and are used functionally in tracing the trajectories of religious changes occurring in these spaces.

Each of the previously mentioned approaches has been employed in diverse ways within the field of DRSs and remains relevant to this day. In addition to these approaches, various theories are also applied in the DRSs (Çiçek, 2022). Nevertheless, these extensively utilized approaches, which have formed a substantial citation network, are deemed significant for framing the contexts in which DRSs are investigated.

Themes in Digital Religion Studies

DRSs have evolved over time, delving into themes, topics, and context. Communication scholar Heidi A. Campbell (2013b), who played a pioneering role in defining and establishing DRSs as an academic research field that focuses on the relationship between digital media, digital culture,

and religion, categorized this field into six themes in her edited work titled *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in new media worlds*. Her categorization was based on her previous research and discussions with other researchers in the field. These themes are ritual, identity, authenticity, community, authority, and, in the broadest sense, religion⁶. In the second edition of the book, *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in digital media*, which she co-edited with Ruth Tsuria (2022a), Campbell added a new theme called embodiment. While each of these themes can be considered a separate research area within DRs, it is also possible to examine them collectively in a comprehensive study.

Ritual

The dynamic nature of digital culture enables individuals to engage in and encounter religious rituals beyond traditional settings. In this way, the structure of these traditions, along with the meanings attributed to them, can undergo transformation. For instance, memorialization rituals have expanded to encompass a wide spectrum of practices within the digital landscape. These practices range from the establishment of digital cemeteries, allowing individuals to commemorate their pets or loved ones, to the emergence of online temples that blend secular and sacred (post-secular) elements (Campbell, 2012, p. 78). Moreover, the realm of digital religious rituals extends beyond these examples. It encompasses activities such as individuals reading, watching, listening to, discussing, or writing about religious content on digital media, as well as the acquisition of religious materials like books and movies. Furthermore, participation in virtual tours of religious sites, such as the Kaaba or the Vatican, the utilization of digital tools to locate religious centers like mosques and churches, and engagement in collective religious practices such as hatim groups and prayer chains, all constitute forms of digital religious rituals (Dawson, 2005, p. 15). The digital landscape, with its evolving capabilities and interconnectedness, provides a platform where traditional religious practices coexist with innovative expressions of spirituality, thus reshaping the landscape of religious engagement and participation.

The exploration of the theme of ritual holds a pivotal position within the realm of DRs. In these scholarly inquiries, religious rituals have frequently been scrutinized, particularly through the lens of authenticity. Helland (2013), contends that a substantial portion of the predominant issues pertaining to digital rituals has revolved around the twin pillars of authenticity and authority within the broader context of digital religion. Indeed, several pressing questions have crystallized from these inquiries, encompassing queries such as:

“Are online rituals authentic expressions of religious rituals? Can a virtual pilgrimage genuinely constitute a sacred journey? Is it imperative for participants, creators, or hosts of online rituals to possess some form of religious accreditation? Does physical presence hold no significance in the participation of religious rituals conducted online? Do online rituals possess the efficacy to facilitate genuine spiritual transformations, or are they perceived as superficial and lacking in transformative potential? Are online rituals acknowledged as genuine rituals within the confines of religious traditions?” (p. 25).

These and akin questions have been explored across diverse contexts throughout the successive waves of research in DRs. In more recent studies, the focus has shifted towards an examination of digital media itself and its structural role within the sphere of digital religious rituals. Consequently, scholars have delved into the concept of media as a religious space, scrutinizing the rituals enacted within this space, which encompass facets such as nationality, identity, and politics (Helland and Kienzl, 2022, p. 49). The evolving landscape of DRs continues to offer fresh insights into the multifaceted relationship between technology, ritual, and spirituality, thereby enriching our comprehension of the intricate dynamics at play in the digital age.

Contemporary ritual studies within the field of DRs exhibit a diverse range of focuses. Recent investigations have delved into the manifestation of material religion online, exploring digital religious practices, and artifacts (Campbell and Connelly, 2020; DeWall and Van Tongeren,

2022; Wolf et al., 2022). Furthermore, more specialized inquiries provide insights into the execution of religious rituals through social media platforms (Åhman & Thorén, 2021; Anwar & Mujib, 2022; Eken, 2020; Ferguson et al., 2021). However, the predominant trend in recent years within digital ritual studies in DRS has been an exploration of how religions grapple with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ben-Lulu, 2021; Cornejo-Valle and Martin-Andino, 2023; Huygens, 2021; Jacobi et al., 2022; Kapoor et al., 2022; Lorea, 2020). This predominant thematic orientation towards COVID-19 can be understood as a response to the limitations imposed by lockdown periods, wherein individuals are deprived of physical spaces to engage in their religious rituals. The exigency of the pandemic has prompted a surge in scholarly inquiries focused on the adaptation of religious rituals to the digital realm, shedding light on the dynamic interplay between technology and spirituality during a period of unprecedented global challenges.

Authenticity

Authenticity in online Internet research generally focuses on whether social actions have the same quality as their offline counterparts. This focus is also followed in DRSS. In these studies, authenticity is mainly examined in terms of religious rituals and answers are sought to questions such as “why are online rituals not considered as real as offline rituals?”, “can we talk about a sharp distinction between real (offline) and virtual (online), is this distinction an analytical and correct distinction?”, “can people’s presence and experiences in virtual environments be considered real and authentic?”, “can digital space be considered as a real and authentic space?”. While the phenomenon of authenticity, which is examined around such questions, was frequently discussed in the early years of DRSS, with the maturity of the field as a research field, the assumption that authenticity already exists has become widespread (Radde-Antweiler, 2013, pp. 88–89). In other words, there seems to be a consensus on the idea that religious content and rituals in digital media are authentic and real and can be considered authentic in this respect.

The idea of seeing digital religious content and actions as authentic poses some challenges. Given the relationship between online and offline through the human body, the dichotomy of the virtual and the real plays an important role in judging the online space as authentic or as mere simulation. Much of the research on digital religion has criticized this dichotomous relationship in various ways. However, trustworthiness is also cited as one of the issues that arise with the acceptance of digital media as authentic. In digital media, users are confronted with huge data sets that they need to categorize and evaluate. This leads to deepening skepticism about which data is trustworthy or not. Given the sheer volume of digital religious data, the problem of trustworthiness also arises for digital religious content (Radde-Antweiler, 2013, p. 98). Therefore, it can be said that in order to ensure authenticity, the reliability of the source of digital religious content is also important.

On the other hand, in digital religion research, the question of what makes religious content and ritual authentic is no longer a matter for theologians or theologians to decide but has evolved into a phenomenon shaped by the digital religious idioms of users themselves. In other words, the authenticity of religious contents, practices or rituals is not only determined by religious experts, but also by the producers who produce religious contents and at the same time consume them by experiencing them. This is because producers free religious contents and rituals from a static objectivity, mediatize and mediatize them in a more subjective way, and thus give them a different authentic structure (Alıcı, 2021, pp. 88–89). The intensity of this authenticity varies in line with the beliefs and orientations of individuals and is relative.

Given its inherently relative nature, authenticity is one of the less-explored themes in the realm of DRSS. Nevertheless, despite their relatively understudied status, contemporary research on DRSS has continued to address the theme of authenticity. Current authenticity inquiries in the DRS literature have concentrated on several key aspects. Notable among these are explorations into whether online visitation of sacred sites can be deemed authentic, the authenticity of online

practices within religious communities, and the assessment of authenticity in the online broadcasting of sacred worship and rituals (Golan and Martini, 2019; Iqbal, 2020; Przywara et al., 2021). These studies have contributed to a growing body of work aimed at understanding the nuanced dimensions of authenticity in the context of digitally mediated religious experiences.

Identity

The impact of digital culture on the formation and presentation of identity has been and continues to be one of the main topics and research areas of DRSs. In today's societies, the circulation of different beliefs and worldviews and the technical mediation of social interaction that challenges the traditional role of religion in individual and collective identity formation are increasingly mediated by digital technologies. Thus, identity as an important theme in the study of digital religion offers important clues to help understand how digital culture is transforming religion (Lövheim, 2013, p. 41; Lövheim and Lundmark, 2022, p. 56). In fact, with the increase in the social prevalence of Internet and computer technologies, the areas of representation of identity have expanded and digital identities have started to form. The possibilities and consequences of using the Internet, which provides opportunities such as gaming, entertainment, social sharing and self-representation, have brought new issues such as changes in the understanding of authentic identity. Digital media, which increases individuals' expectations of openness and intimacy, allows them to reflect their private moments in a public space through texts and visuals. In addition, individuals who develop the ability to represent themselves and to monitor and regulate this representation through digital media have the opportunity to have more control over their representative identities (Lövheim, 2013, pp. 44–45). This is also the case for the formation process of religious identities. Individuals' participation in religious rituals in digital media, their involvement in religious communities and their participation in religious interaction through these communities affect the process of shaping their religious identities. The contexts in which this process develops has been one of the main issues that DRSs focus on.

In DRSs, religious identity has generally been addressed in the context of the relationship between online and offline identities. Indeed, the focus of early research in the field was on the question of how traditional, i.e., offline, forms of religious identity are constructed in the digital, i.e., online space. This question has been attempted to be answered by focusing on various religious minority groups and sects in subsequent waves of DRSs (Campbell and Evolvi, 2019, p. 8; Lövheim, 2013, pp. 45–47). Most of the studies focusing on the theme of identity in current DRSs show that the formation of religious identities in digital culture takes place differently from traditional and modern cultures. This is because religious identities are shaped by a process that is integrated into the discursive, social, economic and technological possibilities of digital culture, rather than maturing by following a specific tradition based on a geographical location as in the traditional and modern period. In this respect, digital religious identities can be said to be mediatized individual autobiographies. This increases the possibility of individual representation and expression of religion. Thus, it shows that religious identity in digital culture has evolved as a social process that is deeply connected to the individuals' need to stay connected, find meaning and take action in everyday life (Lövheim and Lundmark, 2022, pp. 66–67). However, today, the online and offline contexts of religious identity are not sharply demarcated and are fluid. In this context, it can be said that religiosity, which is a reflection of religious identity, has started to be experienced simultaneously in both physical and digital environments and complement each other (Dereli, 2020).

Even today, studies of religious identity in the field of DRSs, which function as a complement to religious identity and have a fluid structure, are being addressed in the context of theories of secularization (Guzek and Bobkowski, 2023). However, research has also focused on specific issues. Among the various foci are the changing religious identities of Muslim women in online

environments (Agbarya and John, 2023); the role of religious symbols shared on social media in the formation of religious identities (Alif, 2023; Amir, 2019); the online religious identity formation of contemporary youth under the influence of postmodern cultural phenomena (Khlysheva et al., 2020); the relationship between sectarian online hate speech and religious identity (Siegel and Badaan, 2020); and how students, teachers, and parents use social media platforms to incorporate religious identity into the educational space, learning experiences, and classroom exchanges (Bhatia, 2021). From this perspective, the theme of identity emerges as one of the most intensively studied aspects in the field of DRSs, reflecting a rich and diverse scholarly landscape that explores the dynamic intersections between digital technologies and religious identity formation.

Community

Communities are a prominent theme in DRSs as one of the most important areas of research. Digital religious' communities correspond to the collective relations formed by individuals who come together in digital media for purposes such as reinforcing religious beliefs, performing religious rituals, exchanging ideas or participating in discussions on religious issues, and solving religious problems through digital media. The digitalization of religious communities' dates to the 1980s, the first years of the social use of the Internet. These communities, which first emerged based on the Christian religion, have started to be seen around other celestial and institutional religions since the 1990s. Since then, there has been an academic interest in studying the structure of digital religious communities (Campbell, 2006, p. 6; Campbell, 2013a, pp. 59–60). This interest can be seen in all waves of academic research in DRSs.

Much of the early research on digital culture focused on questions such as what happens in digital space, how social clusters in this space can be seen as communities, and how digital life affects individual and collective identities. The first studies to investigate the appearance of religious communities in digital media have generally attempted to understand and define the structure of these communities. Within this framework, researchers have attempted to identify, conceptualize and explain the rise of digital religious communities. By the late 1990s, research on digital communities became more specific, becoming more descriptive rather than descriptive of the phenomenon. As excitement about the transformative nature of the Internet began to wane, and a more realistic view of its positive and negative impacts on society emerged, research gained momentum towards critical forms of analysis. In the ensuing years, research has moved towards a theoretical and interpretive focus, developing around the online-offline dichotomy and focusing on the religious experiences of community members. Current research on digital religious communities, on the other hand, emphasizes the transcendence of the online-offline dichotomy and frames individuals' interactions with religious communities in both online and offline spaces as part of everyday life. Today, many different and new fields of research on digital religious communities have emerged, ranging from artificial intelligence to robotics, big data to metadata (Campbell, 2013a, pp. 60–64; Campbell and Sheldon, 2022, p. 104).

Contemporary studies on digital religious communities span the spectrum of institutional and non-institutionalized religious organizations or beliefs. This broad range of studies delves into the diverse ways in which religious communities navigate and operate in digital space. The studies investigate a spectrum of topics, including strategies employed by these communities for the establishment and maintenance of authority within the digital realm (Berger and Golan, 2023; Dozan and Hadi, 2020; Foulidi et al., 2020; Neumaier, 2019; Okun and Nimrod, 2020; Rizka, 2019). In the DRSs field, specific inquiries on the theme of community have addressed a range of nuanced issues. Some studies have delved into specific religious denominations and examined the digital dynamics within these particular religious communities (Badmatsyrenov et al., 2022; Okun and Nimrod, 2017; Rizvi Jafree, 2022). Additionally, gender differences within digital religious communities have become a focal point of investigation, shedding light on how diverse gender identities engage and contribute to these online religious spaces (Andok, 2019). Furthermore,

similar to other themes within DRSs, there is a discernible influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, evident in contemporary studies on digital religious communities (Oxholm et al., 2021; Shiba et al., 2023; Sukamto & Parulian, 2020). Scholars have explored the ways in which digital platforms have been utilized by religious communities to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between technology, communities, and the broader socio-religious landscape.

Authority

The concept of authority is at the center of debates about how religious communities are shaped within digital culture and how digital religious content producers influence or interact with traditional religious leaders. It can be argued that authority has become a framework for considering the ability of certain individuals or structures to gain or maintain influence over a particular group of people in digital culture. However, it is possible to say that the basic characteristics of authority are often not well defined. Indeed, the concept of religious authority suffers from the same lack of definition when used in DRSs. In other words, authority in digital religious studies brings with it an ambiguity as it is used as an inclusive term rather than evoking a clearly defined category (Campbell, 2021a, p. 18). Despite this ambiguity, the phenomenon of authority has been examined in various contexts since the first wave of research in digital religious studies. While the role of religious authority received relatively little attention in the early stages of DRSs, it has gained popularity in recent years, with research being conducted across a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, theology, sociology, media and communication (Cheong, 2022, p. 87).

Early research focusing on the relationship between religious authority and digital culture has predominantly developed around two orientations. The first is the view that digital media challenge traditional religious authorities, while the second is that digital media reinforce or co-exist with traditional religious authorities. Based on these perspectives in digital religious authority research, it is possible to say that digital media have strengthening and weakening effects on religious authority, while it can also be stated that existing traditional religious authorities are maintained in digital media or that digital media serve a complementary function to these authorities. Therefore, when the question is asked, “does digital media median religious authority or strengthen it?”, the answer can be said to be positive in both respects (Campbell, 2021a, p. 48; Cheong, 2022, p. 96). This is because individuals or communities that contribute to the production of religious content in digital media can gain authority by following the content they produce. Moreover, traditional religious leaders may have the authority to establish their offline influence online as they adopt digital tools and platforms (Campbell, 2021a, p. 49). On the other hand, the lack of authority research in DRSs compared to other themes (Cheong, 2013, p. 73) makes it difficult to draw a clear framework on how the structure of religious authority is shaped in digital media.

Despite these inherent challenges, the discourse on authority within the DRSs field has achieved considerable volume. Research on authority predominantly centers on the strategies employed by representatives and leaders of Abrahamic religions in digital spaces (Giorgi, 2019; Kolodziejska and Neumaier, 2017; Selby and Sayeed, 2023; Tsuria and Campbell, 2021; Whyte, 2022; Yunus et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there are ongoing debates on how various religious communities and sects establish and sustain digital religious authority (Dozan and Hadi, 2020; Evolvi, 2020; Tabti, 2019). The examination of gender roles and women's identity within the context of authority constitutes an additional dimension of scholarly dialogue (Çelebioğlu, 2022; Muttaqin, 2020). Furthermore, the theme of authority was investigated as an integral component of the religious learning process within DRSs (Berger and Golan, 2023; Fakhruroji, 2019; Rizka, 2019; Solahudin and Fakhruroji, 2020). Studies on authority in the field of DRSs predominantly utilize online platforms, such as websites, social media, and mobile applications, as focal points for exploration. This

research landscape underscores the significance of digital spaces in shaping and contesting religious authority and illuminating the multifaceted dynamics at the intersection of technology, religion, and leadership in the contemporary digital era.

Embodiment

Embodiment refers to the reciprocal relationship between the body and its performances or the experiences as interactions that constitute it (Radde-Antweiler, 2022, p. 104). Accordingly, embodiment is understood to have a direct relationship with the human body. From a religious perspective, it can be said that embodiment is related to religious activities and rituals that people perform with their bodies. Religious practices and rituals often have a bodily, that is, a concrete aspect. In fact, being physically present in religious rites or rituals is of vital importance for religious communication and interaction. For example, individuals use their bodies to move in worship spaces, open their hands in prayer, move their gestures and facial expressions, touch the bodies of others, light candles, sing, etc. These and similar bodily engagements are the main means of worshipping the Creator, performing spiritual practices, sharing faith with others and building a community of believers. The more the senses and bodily activities are used in worship, the more opportunities there are to connect individually and collectively in rituals and rites whose main purpose is to enter the presence of the divine (Gasser, 2021, p. 182). In this respect, it can be said that the very presence of the body as a tangible entity in religious rituals determines the value of these rituals. However, with the digitalization of religion, the way has opened for religious rituals to be performed independently of the body. The realization of these rituals independent of the physical body and in “intangible” environments has led to discussions of embodiment that question the role of the individual’s body in digital religious studies.

It can be said that embodiment debates in DRs have developed in an ambivalent structure. It is often seen that religious activities performed in real and digital environments are evaluated separately from each other. It is stated that religious activities performed in the digital space as an abstract and disembodied space will not replace religious practices in the physical environment based on concrete and body but can only increase them as an additional activity. In this respect, it is seen that the phenomenon of embodiment in DRs focuses more on the real-virtual dichotomy, examines the context of the digital as a space, and develops by linking various issues such as mediatization and the problem of materiality (Radde-Antweiler, 2022, p. 104). Embodiment research, which is seen as a relatively new and undiscovered field of DRs, has a more linguistic and visual communication-oriented orientation (Gasser, 2021, p. 190). Especially with the conduct of research on video games and religion, the phenomenon of embodiment has become more evident (Zeiler, 2022a). However, the relationship between the digital afterlife and the body is also discussed around the phenomenon of embodiment (Lagerkvist, 2022). Nowadays, artificial intelligence is being examined and developed within the framework of new approaches to human beings such as post-humanism and transhumanism (Mercer and Trothen, 2021).

Conclusion

The examination of the digital religion phenomenon has undergone transformative evolution over the past twenty-five years, establishing itself as a distinct and intellectually robust field of inquiry known as Digital Religious Studies (DRs). Throughout its developmental trajectory, this emergent field has experienced successive waves of research, evolved theoretical approaches, and shifted its thematic foci. Scholars within DRs have rigorously investigated the intricate interplay between religious experiences and the digital environment, endeavoring to unravel the multifaceted dynamics that emerge from the intersection of digital culture and religious phenomena. Nevertheless, the current body of literature grapples with the conspicuous challenge of overarching fragmentation that impedes a comprehensive and cohesive comprehension of the field's developmental trajectory. This fragmentation is exacerbated by the lack of a unified

narrative that elucidates the field's evolutionary nuances. Thus, this study endeavored to bridge this gap by providing a scholarly framework that delineates the trajectory of DRSS.

Through an exhaustive qualitative assessment, this study identified four distinct phases in the evolution of research in the field of DRSS: descriptive, categorical, theoretical, and integrative. The trajectory of this evolution is further expounded by examining prominent theoretical frameworks that have crystallized within the discourse, including media ecology, mediation, mediatization, religious-social shaping of technology (RSST), and hypermediation. Moreover, a meticulous thematic categorization of existing literature underscores the extensive terrain covered by scholars in this field. Themes such as ritual, authenticity, identity, community, authority, and embodiment have emerged as pivotal focal points, illuminating the diverse dimensions explored within the DRSS landscape.

Concerning the chronology of academic research waves, this study delineated distinct phases in the evolution of DRSS. The initial stages primarily revolved around understanding the influence of technology on religious practices. However, subsequent waves have shifted their focus towards investigating how digital media fundamentally reconfigures the essence of religion itself. This evolutionary perspective has the potential to guide future researchers in the exploration of DRSS. In terms of theoretical approaches, this study surveyed various theoretical frameworks that engage with the multifaceted dimensions of digital religion encompassing social, cultural, and psychological facets.

Given the intricate nature of digital religion, the diversity of these approaches is paramount. This study underscores the necessity for further theoretical development to elucidate the way religion acquires meaning in the digital realm and how individuals interpret these novel experiences of digital religion. Particularly, considering the distinct ontological frameworks characterizing each institutional or non-institutional religion, along with their diverse sources of influence (such as sacred texts and authoritative figures), disparate teachings, and distinctive ritualistic practices, the imperative of tailored theoretical frameworks to understand the intricacies of each religious belief system and organizational structure becomes evident. Essentially, it can be posited that individualized theoretical approaches are required for comprehending the intricate interplay between each religion and its engagement with digital media and culture. This stems from the challenge of asserting that any singular theory can universally provide a nuanced perspective on the processes of digitalization within the realm of all religions.

When digital religious themes were examined, it was determined that each theme stood out as a separate research field. The discussions carried out within the framework of these themes have multidimensional and comprehensive depth. However, it can be said that the issues shaping the field are mostly shaped around the themes of rituals, identity, community, and authority. It is easy to see that there is voluminous academic literature centered on these themes. In the meantime, new themes such as embodiment will reveal the different contexts of DRSS. I believe that it would be meaningful for researchers who conduct studies in the field to pay special attention to these themes according to their areas of interest or the issues they problematize. In fact, I think that one of the prerequisites for bringing a more privileged perspective to the current problems in the field is to focus on these themes in more detail.

On the other hand, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Specifically, a deeper understanding can be attained by focusing on specific temporal periods or examining particular geographic regions. Additionally, by adopting a broader historical perspective to explore the development of digital religion, a more comprehensive understanding of long-term trends can be achieved. Future researchers can significantly contribute to the advancement of DRSS by extending the scope of work in this arena and offering diverse perspectives.

In conclusion, this study synthesized the existing body of knowledge in this field and provides guidance for future research endeavors by dissecting the developmental trajectory of DRSS. Comprehension of how the digital landscape shapes religion is a significant concern for contemporary societies, and this study has made substantive contributions towards a more profound understanding. Within the contours of this framework, it becomes evident that the maturation of DRSS contributes to a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the intricate interplay between digital and religious realms. The successive waves of research outlined in this study illuminate the chronological development of the field, whereas the identified theoretical approaches serve as indispensable conceptual tools, enabling a deeper analysis of the intersection between digital and religious phenomena. Furthermore, thematic categorization underscores the expansive scope of research in this burgeoning field.

Moving forward along the trajectory of DRSS, it has become imperative to cultivate the integration of diverse perspectives and sustain interdisciplinary collaboration. Such efforts are essential to ensure scientific enrichment and foster a holistic understanding of this dynamic field. Embracing this inclusive approach will undoubtedly contribute to the continued advancement and depth of knowledge within the evolving landscape of DRSS.

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Dijital Din alıřmalarını erevelemek: Akademik Arařtırma Dalgaları, Teorik Yaklařımlar ve Temalar

Yunus ERGEN*

Geniřletilmiş zet

Dini yařamın ve pratiklerin dijital teknolojilerle birleřmesi ve internet ortamında dolařıma girmesiyle, internet ve din iliřkisi akademik tartıřmaların da odađına oturmuřtur. İnternetin henüz ok yaygın olmadığı ilk dnemlerde daha ok metin tabanlı dini ieriklerin dolařımda olduđu bir evreden, internetin ve paralel bir řekilde dijitalleřmenin toplumsal yaygınlıđının artmasıyla birlikte hemen her trden dini ieriđe rastlanan “dijital” bir evreye geilmiřtir. Dahası artık kurumsal dinlerin yanı sıra akla gelebilecek her trl dini yapılanmanın internetin ve dijital teknolojilerin sunduđu imkndan istifade etmeye bařladıđı grlmřtr. Bylelikle dini pratikler, dini kimlikler, dini topluluklar ve dini otoriteler internette farklı vehelerde gn yzne ıkmaya ve bireyler tarafından deneyimlenmeye bařlamıřtır. Sz konusu bu vehelerin nasıl bir grnm arz ettiđi, hangi bađlamalarda ervelendiđi ve hangi problemleri dođurduđu gibi sorular arařtırmacıların odaklandıđı temel meseleler haline gelmiřtir.

Erken dnem internet ve din iliřkisini inceleyen arařtırmacılar, yrtmř oldukları alıřmaları daha ok elektronik din, evrimii din, siber din gibi kavramsallařtırmalar etrafında ele almıřtır. Ancak dijital teknolojilerde yařanan radikal geliřmeler neticesinde artan dijitalleřmenin etkisiyle sz konusu alıřmalar, daha ok “dijital din alıřmaları” adı altında yrtlmeye bařlamıřtır. Elbette sahanın bylesi bir kavramsallařtırmayla anılmasında dijital medyanın ve dijital kltrn uluslararası lekte hızlı geliřimi ve dnřm de etkili olmuřtur. Yanı sıra dijital medyanın nemli bir parasını oluřturan sosyal medya platformlarının geniř halk kesimleri tarafından kullanılmasıyla birlikte dini yařamın bu platformlarda deneyimlenmesinin de yolu aılmıřtır. Bylelikle dijital din alıřmaları, bir arařtırma sahası olarak rřtn ispat etmeye bařlamıř, kapsamı ve odaklandıđı hususlar ise olduka geniřlemiřtir.

Akademik bir arařtırma sahası olarak yaklařık eyrek asırlık bir zaman diliminde geliřim kaydeden dijital din alıřmaları, bu sre ierisinde eřitli arařtırma dalgaları, teorik yaklařımlar ve temalar etrafında irdelenmiřtir. Kronolojik bir yn haiz olan sahadaki bu alıřmalar, drt arařtırma dalgasına ayrılarak kavramsallařtırılmıřtır. Bu dalgaların her birinde eřitli disiplinlerden arařtırmacılar, farklı bađlamalarda, farklı teorik yaklařımlar ve temalar odađında arařtırmalar yrterek olduka yksek hacimli sayılabilecek ciddi bir alanyazının oluřmasına katkı sađlamıřtır. Bu makale, sz konusu yazının nasıl bir grnm arz ettiđini ervelemek ve sahada alıřma yrtecek arařtırmacılara bir rehber oluřturmak amacıyla kaleme alınmıřtır. Bu itibarla, makalede ncelikli olarak akademik bir arařtırma sahası olarak dijital din alıřmalarının geliřimine ynelik kısa bir deđerlendirme gerekleřtirilmiřtir. Bylelikle sahanın geliřim srecine bir projeksiyon tutulmuřtur. Daha sonra, dijital din alıřmalarının olgunlařma evrelerini ortaya koyan mevcut arařtırma

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dalgalarına yer verilmiştir. Ardından, dijital din çalışmalarında öne çıkan teorik yaklaşımlar ele alınmış ve son olarak dijital dini temaların neler olduğuna değinilmiştir.

Tanımlayıcı, metodolojik, teorik ve bütünlük şeklinde belirginleşen araştırma dalgalarının her biri dijital din çalışmaları sahasının zamansal açıdan ayrı bir yönüne ışık tutmaktadır. Sözgelimi tanımlayıcı dalgada, erken dönem internet ve din ilişkisi irdelenmiş, detaylı analizler ve değerlendirmelerden ziyade sahada “ne oluyor?” sorusuna yanıt aranmıştır. Bu bağlamda sahadaki ilk araştırmaların ana hedefi, mevcut durumun analizi ve tanımlanması olmuştur. Tanımlayıcı ekseninde gelişim kaydeden araştırmalar zamanla metodolojik açıdan farklılaşmaya başlamış ve geleneksel araştırma yöntemlerine çevrimiçi bir hüviyet kazandırılarak sahadaki uygulama gayreti içerisinde olunmuştur. Bu dalgayla birlikte söz konusu araştırmalar artık “ne oluyor?” sorusunun ötesine geçerek, “neden ve nasıl oluyor?” sorularını odağına almıştır. İnternet ve din ilişkisinden doğan problemlerin altında yatan gerekçeleri tespit etmeye çalışan metodolojik araştırmalara aynı zamanda teorik çerçeveler de oluşturulmuş ve araştırmaların odağı bu düzlemdeki tartışmalarla yoğunlaşarak zenginleşmiştir. Özellikle çevrimiçi ritüel, topluluk ve kimlik çalışmaları daha ayrıntılı olarak araştırılmış ve internetin günlük yaşamdaki yerleşikliğinin dijital dini pratiği nasıl etkilediği ve şekillendirdiği, nitel ağırlıklı yeni yöntemlerle incelenmiştir. Bu çerçevede araştırmacılar, dini ritüeller, topluluklar ve kimlikler gibi dijital din örneklerinin nasıl tezahür ettiğine yönelik çıkarımlarda bulunmuşlardır. Dahası internetin ve dijitalleşmenin dini otoritelere nasıl meydan okuduğu, yeni dini liderleri nasıl güçlendirdiği ve geleneksel liderlerin çevrimiçi etkilerini yeniden öne sürmeleri için ne gibi fırsatlar sunduğuna yönelik otorite temalı yeni araştırmalar da ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum, yeni teorik ve metodolojik çerçeveleri de şekillendirmiş ve araştırmalar daha “bütüncül” bir bakış açısıyla yürütülmeye başlamıştır. Dijital din çalışmalarının bu son dalgasında ritüel, kimlik, otantiklik, topluluk ve otoriteye daha yoğun bir biçimde odaklanılarak dijital medyanın ve kültürün gündelik hayattaki dini kullanım biçimleri -çevrimiçi-çevrimdışı dikotomisi de aşılarak irdelenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Dijital din çalışmalarının ikinci araştırma dalgasından itibaren öne çıkmaya başlayan teorik yaklaşımların, zaman içerisinde olgunlaşarak alandaki problemlerin çözümüne yönelik ciddi katkılar sağladığı anlaşılmaktadır. Çoğunluğu medya ve iletişim disiplini çerçevesinde geliştirilen bu teorik yaklaşımlar arasında medya ekolojisi, dolayım, medyatikleşme, teknolojinin dini-toplumsal şekillenmesi ve hiperdolayımın ön plana çıktığı ve önemli bir atfı oluşturduğu görülmektedir. Bu teoriler, her ne kadar medya ve iletişim disiplini çerçevesinde ortaya çıkmış olsalar da multidisipliner ve interdisipliner bir yönü bulunan dijital din çalışmalarının gelişimini etkilemiştir. Bununla birlikte sahadaki mevcut sorunların tespit edilmesine ve bu sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerilerinin geliştirilmesine hizmet etmiştir.

Dijital din çalışmalarının hangi konuları odağına aldığı ve bu konuların hangi bağlamlarda irdelendiği ise daha çok dijital dini temaların şekillendirilmesiyle açıklığa kavuşmuştur. Bu temalar sahadaki ilk araştırmaların gerçekleştirilmesiyle birlikte ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Zamanla farklı disiplinlerden araştırmacıların sahaya girerek çeşitli araştırmalar yürütmesi sonucunda söz konusu temalar kategorik bir ayrıma tabii tutularak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Böylelikle bu temalar ritüel, otantiklik, kimlik, topluluk, otorite ve somutlaşma şeklinde belirginleşmiştir. Her biri dijital din çalışmalarının farklı bağlamlarına ışık tutan bu altı temanın yürütülen araştırmalarda bütüncül bir yaklaşımla aynı anda ele alınabildiği görülürken, bir veya birkaç temanın söz konusu araştırmalara konu edinildiği de görülmektedir. Dijital din çalışmalarındaki temaların kavramsallaştırılması, bu alanda çalışmayı düşünen araştırmacılara ise problematize edecekleri meselelerin sınırlarını çizebilmeleri açısından büyük kolaylık sağlamıştır.

Netice itibarıyla bu çalışma, parçalı ve karmaşık bir görüntü arz eden dijital din çalışmalarını araştırma eğilimleri, teorik perspektifler ve tematik odaklar ekseninde çerçeveyerek, sahadaki yürütülecek sonraki araştırmalara panoramik bir bakış sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Gündelik hayatın

hemen her alanına sirayet eden dijitalleşmeden payına düşeni büyük ölçüde alan dini yaşamın ve deneyimlerin günümüzde nasıl şekillendiği ve dijitalleşmenin söz konusu yaşama ve deneyimlere ne gibi etkilerinin olduğunu farklı veçhelerden ortaya çıkarmak adına hem teorik hem de pratik düzlemde daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğu açıktır.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

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In this study, the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed.

Notes

¹ It is crucial to underscore the noteworthy aspects of Dereli's (2022a) study. In this study, Dereli introduced a comprehensive methodological perspective within the field of sociology of religion, which has evolved into a distinct sub-discipline within theology. While Dereli's focus is more on digital methods and techniques, the objective is to provide insights into the functional application of these digital tools. This is valuable not only for researchers delving into DRSs but also for those investigating diverse topics within the broader discipline of sociology of religion. Although Dereli's study may not directly frame the methodological development of the DRSs field, its significance lies in providing a robust understanding of how digital methods and techniques can be effectively employed. Consequently, while not explicitly mapping the methodological evolution of DRSs, Dereli's study remains important for researchers seeking to embark on studies within the DRSs domain and for those engaged in broader inquiries within the sociology of religion. A parallel observation holds true in Çiçek's (2022) study. In this research, Çiçek examined theories and approaches related to digitalization from the vantage point of the sociology of religion. The merit of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of theories employed within the DRSs domain, considering them within their historical context. However, as Çiçek herself acknowledges, the theoretical approaches covered in this study do not encompass the entirety of theories utilized in the field of DRSs. Notably, the theory of hypermediation has been excluded from Çiçek's analysis. It is evident, then, that the scope of the study is somewhat limited, both in terms of providing an assessment solely from the perspective of sociology of religion and in not analyzing all prominent theories within the broader DRSs landscape. Despite this limitation, Çiçek's study remains valuable for its contribution to understanding digitalization theories within the sociology of religion, serving as a foundational resource for researchers engaging in DRSs inquiries and related areas.

² Research on cyber-Islam began in the late 1990s, initiated by the pioneering study of anthropologist Jon W. Anderson. In addition to Anderson, it is noteworthy to mention Gary R. Bunt as a prominent and prolific figure in the field of cyber Islam (Rozehnal, 2022, pp. 7–8). In its early stages, this research primarily centered on online Islamic forums, blogs, websites, and the issuance of fatwas within these digital spaces. However, with the evolution of the Internet and the widespread adoption of web 2.0 applications, the research focus shifted towards more specialized domains, including e-jihad, e-ummah, e-dawa, and e-dawah. In recent years, a discernible trend has emerged within the realm of DRSs, where various investigations have delved into specific facets of this multifaceted field. Notably, there has been a proliferation of studies concentrating on aspects such as digital religious identities, religious rituals, and forms of religious narratives, with a particular emphasis on Islam and the Muslim community.

³ Online text analysis, online interviewing, digital ethnography, etc. stand out as frequently used methods in the fourth wave of digital religion research (Tsuria et al., 2017).

⁴ For a comprehensive assessment of post-secular theory, see Dereli's (2022b) review.

⁵ The RSST is rooted in the theory of the Social Shaping of Technology (SST). The SST is a research field and theoretical framework that investigates technological change and user innovation as intrinsically social processes. SST is closely affiliated with academic disciplines such as Science and Technology Studies, the Sociology of Technology, and Media Studies. This theory has evolved through the deliberate challenge it poses to techno-determinist paradigms, which assume that technology represents an inexorable force governed by its internal technical logic. In stark contrast to these techno-determinist paradigms, SST regards technology as an outcome arising from the dynamic interplay between technical and social factors during both its design and usage phases. In essence, technology is perceived as a social process. This perspective underscores the capacity of diverse social user groups to influence and shape technologies to align with their distinct purposes and needs (Campbell, 2005, pp. 2–3, 2010, p. 50).

⁶ The religion theme explains the contexts in which digital religion develops and how religious practices are operationalized in digital media. In this respect, it is possible to say that the theme of religion is an introduction to the other themes of digital religion. Since the historical depth of how digital religion has been shaped has been explained in detail in the previous sections, this theme is not included in the rest of the study.



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Religious Language on Social Media: Perspectives of Content Producers and Users*

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Abstract

Nowadays, when the distinction between the digital and physical worlds is becoming less and less clear, social media is becoming the most important platform to meet people's communication needs. People are increasingly using social media to access the information they need about their beliefs as well as many other issues. While some of those who produce religious content on social media continue to convey their messages using traditional religious language, some content producers produce content in accordance with the popular language of social media. In this study, the issue of how the religious language in social media should be addressed by referring to the opinions of both content producers and social media users. In the research conducted within the study, semi-structured interviews were made with 27 social media users and 5 content producers, and the collected data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. According to the findings, the language that social media users and content producers should use when sharing religious content on social media should be consistent, sincere, away from financial expectations, concise, tolerant, aesthetic, appropriate to the language of youth and holistic. In addition, religious content should be away from prohibitive language and should not distort the essence of religious values for the sake of popularity.

Keywords: Social Media, Religious Communication, Religious Language

Sosyal Medyada Din Dili: İçerik Üreticilerin ve Kullanıcıların Bakış Açıları

Öz

Dijital ve fiziksel dünyalar arasındaki ayrımın her geçen gün daha az belirgin hale geldiği bugünlerde sosyal medya, insanların iletişim gereksinimlerini karşılamak için en önemli platform haline gelmektedir. İnsanlar birçok farklı konuda olduğu gibi inançları konusunda da ihtiyaç duydukları bilgiye erişmek için sosyal medyadan giderek daha fazla yararlanmaktadır. Sosyal medyada dini içerik üretenlerin bazıları geleneksel din dilini kullanarak mesajlarını iletmeye devam ederken kimi içerik üreticiler ise sosyal medyanın beraberinde getirdiği popüler dile uygun içerikler üretmektedirler. Bu çalışmada hem içerik üreticilerin hem de sosyal medya kullanıcılarının görüşlerine başvurularak sosyal medyadaki din dilinin nasıl olması gerektiği konusu ele alınmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında gerçekleştirilen araştırmada 27 sosyal medya kullanıcısı ve 5 içerik üretici ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme gerçekleştirilmiş, elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre sosyal medya kullanıcılarının ve içerik üreticilerin sosyal medyada dinî içerikler paylaşılırken kullanılması gereken dil; tutarlı, samimi, maddi beklentilerden uzak, kısa ve öz, hoşgörülü, estetik, gençlerin diline uygun ve bütüncül olmalıdır. Ayrıca dinî içerikler yasaklayıcı dilden uzak olmalı ve popülerlik adına dinî değerlerin özünü bozmamalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya, Dinî İletişim, Din Dili

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Introduction

Religion, which is one of the key components shaping culture, is closely intertwined with media. Religions, which serve as a means of communication between the divine and the human, both contribute to the formation of communication methods and are influenced by various forms of communication and media tools. Communication that occurs between God and humanity, religious leaders and their followers, or among believers themselves plays a pivotal role in the dissemination of religious knowledge (Kaplan, 2022, p. 985).

God has conveyed His messages to humans through prophets and sacred texts, inviting them to the right path. It is also a responsibility for believers to share these divine messages with others. Believers have carried out this duty through both spoken and non-verbal forms of communication. Developments in communication technologies, ranging from the simplest to the most complex, have also had an impact on the structure of religions and beliefs. Especially, religions with sacred texts have been able to establish enduring traditions through the written word that will persist through the ages. The emergence and continuity of religions are processes that encompass the communicative aspect as well (Haberli, 2022, p. 388).

In our modern age, most communication occurs through mass media, which has led to a focus on media in communication studies. Consequently, analyzing religious communication within the context of the interplay between religion and media provides researchers with a broad area of study. Social media plays a significant role in this field since it increasingly meets our everyday communication needs.

Social media, like other forms of communication, has its unique language (Manovich, 2001, p. 38). Content that adapts to this language tends to receive more attention and engagement on social media, while content that conflicts with this language may be less visible. On the other hand, religious knowledge, texts, and narratives are rooted in authoritative sources. Due to the influence of religious texts, the religious language clashes with the language of new communication technologies influenced by postmodernism. In the postmodern era, there is a new way of understanding knowledge, where truth is determined by mass consensus (Ekinci, 2015, p. 277).

The dissemination of religious knowledge and content to individuals increasingly relies on mass communication and social media. However, as with any form of communication, the nature of the communication process involves various intermediaries between the source and the recipient, which can affect the encoding and interpretation of the message. This process, known as mediation, also occurs in religious communication. In the Western context, research on this topic has been conducted for some time, and it has recently become an academic field in Türkiye. Especially, the way social media platforms mediate religious messages and content to align them with their structures affects the essence of the message. In this reciprocal interaction, the use of a suitable religious language by content creators on social media for effective religious communication has been determined as the problem of this study. This study focuses on understanding the language used in religious communication on social media. The aim of this study is to determine the way in which individuals and platforms that produce religious content on social media can convey religious content to their followers in the most appropriate way.

1. Religious Language and Religious Communication

Religious communication is divided into two distinct dimensions: vertical communication between the God and His creations, and horizontal communication among the created beings. The metaphysical dimension of the first makes it a subject of theology, while the horizontal communication among believers follows the general rules of communication. A similar distinction is observed between theological language and religious language. Although these two concepts may seem alike, theological language defines speaking about God, whereas religious language

signifies a much broader foundational approach towards God. Religious language is a form of communication that unveils the speaker's personal perspective and way of life. In this light, the expression of religious beliefs demonstrates that faith is not solely a mental conviction but also an existential one (Koç, 2017, pp. 12–21). In other words, the religious language encompasses all forms of expressing one's beliefs, thoughts, speech, and actions. From this perspective, religious language is not limited to verbal expressions alone; it is a much broader concept that encompasses every moment of a person's life (Kesenci, 2018, p. 113).

In the light of developments in the postmodern era, religion is being discussed in different contexts than it used to be in the past. These discussions extend beyond beliefs and rituals in theology and touch upon various aspects of everyday life. As a result, both the discourse surrounding religion in various areas such as ethics, family, shopping, and daily life, and the expressions related to these topics in relation to religion by different actors, have become visible in different platforms. The concept of religious language should encompass all of these areas (Tekin, 2021). In Western resources, the concept of religious language, developed in the context of Christianity, is closely related to the "religious experience." According to this approach, religious language only covers the spiritual realm where religious experiences occur. In other words, this language is the "expression of the sacred." However, in Islamic thought, religious language is not limited to the realm of religious experience; it encompasses all demands related to what is considered right, good, and beautiful outside the boundaries of religious experience. Religion is not confined to a distinct realm but is directly related to all aspects of life. Therefore, in Islamic thought, religious language is approached in a broader sense, covering all aspects of life (Görgün, 2015).

According to another definition, religious language is essentially about talking about God, but there is no consensus on the boundaries of talking about God. Speaking about the existence, attributes, or beloved servants of God, or discussing one's belief in God, can all be considered as talking about God, even if the word "God" is not explicitly mentioned (Koç, 2017, p. 20). In a more straightforward definition, Alston suggests that the concept of "religious language" is a result of the "bad habits" of philosophers in developing special terminology when talking about any field. According to him, religious language for any belief refers to the use of any language for any purpose related to religion, such as prayer, worship, rituals, sermons, and more (Alston, 2005). Considering all of these approaches, within the scope of this study, the concept of religious language is defined as a form of discourse that includes every kind of expression related to religion.

Religious information uses religious texts and narratives as references, and therefore, it relies on authority. In contrast to the prevailing postmodern approach today, religious texts possess binding authority and, due to this attribute, religious knowledge finds itself in conflict with new communication technologies. In the recent communication setting dominated by postmodern epistemology, the determining factor for truth is not a single authority, but rather mass consensus (Ekinci, 2015, p. 277). At this point, presenting religious knowledge, rooted in divine authority, within the realm of social media that prioritizes mass consensus poses a challenge. Consequently, religious messages either need to be delivered on social media without awaiting mass consensus or they need to be adapted to the language of this platform, undergoing a process of mediatization (Çamdereli, 2018, pp. 52–54).

Religious communication has an important place in communication studies due to its ancient history. Köylü stating that religious communication is the oldest form of communication and suggests that the prophetic preaches carried out by the messengers sent to address humanity throughout history serve as an example of religious communication (2015, pp. 101–105). Throughout history, religious communication has predominantly adhered to the rules of communal social structures and has remained limited to face-to-face interactions until recent times. Even in the late 20th century, in metropolitan areas with populations surpassing millions, religious communication mostly occurred in person. However, religious communication through media was

reserved for specialized subjects (Baydar, 1994, pp. 7–9). With the advent of the 21st century, the evolution of media and communication technologies has led to the portrayal of Islam in popular media formats. Especially during days and nights of religious significance, television programs manifest the clearest reflections of this altered communication style. In these programs, fundamental religious information is presented in a superficial manner, often addressing similar sensational topics each year (Çamdereli, 2018, p. 80).

The relationship between religion and media has long been a subject of ongoing debate. For instance, conservative Christians express concerns about the persuasive power of advertisements and the “devilish nature of media” due to their connection to consumer culture and international capitalism. They believe that the media has stripped away the authority of cultural norm setters, such as educators and church leaders, leading to the mainstreaming of extreme views. On the other hand, many Christian groups emphasize the importance of teaching media literacy skills to children to prevent their negative influence from media. Another approach suggests producing content that aligns with the language of the mainstream entertainment industry rather than rejecting popular culture entirely. According to this view, it is possible to create and disseminate media content that offers an alternative value system while maintaining the style of popular culture. Commercial media producers are also becoming more receptive to such projects as they realize the size of their religious audience. However, some Evangelicals are concerned that this could commercialize Christianity and turn Jesus into just another commodity (Jenkins, 2016, pp. 301–305).

The prevailing contemporary understanding of religion no longer encompasses the traditional way of life prescribed by religion, nor does it involve efforts to comprehend and interpret the universe in the traditional sense. Meanwhile, the religious language, which carries this endeavor, is regarded as a selective stance. The ideal Muslim type from the past has disappeared in the influence of postmodernity, and the traditional religious language, which cannot be translated into the language of the postmodern era, has been considered a mysterious realm that exists outside of time. Even in areas where Muslims can only establish a superficial connection with postmodernity, religion can only find a weak foothold. This situation ultimately leads to the secularization of religious language over time (Subaşı, 2018, p. 59). According to popular belief, it is expected that an individual fulfills the requirements of the value system to which they belong and represents that world. While complete alignment between belonging and representation may be difficult to achieve, there is at least a minimum level of compatibility between belonging and representation. In today’s postmodern society, however, it is possible to believe in one value system, think in another, and act in yet another. One reason for this is the fragmentary effect of postmodernity, and another reason is the religious language being used. The religious language used today is shaped according to the value world of the past, but it is used to make sense of the reality of the 21st century. This religious language both belongs to a meaning world from the past that very few people today know in detail (making it difficult for them to understand) and has largely deteriorated and lost its authenticity in the process of modernization (Fazlıoğlu, 2015, pp. 196–198).

In religious communication, as in all forms of communication, various characteristics related to the individual, environment, and culture are utilized, and all of these elements influence the functioning of religious communication. As a result, delivering religious teachings to people in different cultures and different settings requires the development of communication forms tailored to the specific culture and environment. Religious messages should be encoded in a way that the recipient can understand correctly.

Religions and their followers tend to use any legitimate means to reach more people with their teachings. The goal in doing so is to enable more individuals to engage with the truths indicated by the religion. Communication is one of the main methods that religions and believers

resort to in order to achieve this objective. Religious messages are conveyed to others both through interpersonal communication and mass media (Gündüz, 2010, p. 46). As an outcome of new communication technologies, the task of encoding and transmitting religious messages, which was largely the responsibility of religious leaders in the past, has now expanded to include content creators on social media platforms. On the other hand, the advantages provided by physical spaces, such as places of worship, for religious communication in the past are not present in today's media and social media environments. Therefore, it is additionally challenging for the audience to focus on religious messages, as they have to overcome various distractions. Hazim and Musdholifah discuss three significant effects of this change (2021, pp. 45–46). Firstly, the source of acquiring religious knowledge has shifted from religious authorities to the media. Secondly, the media has become a space that emphasizes individual beliefs and experiences more prominently. Lastly, the media positions itself as a moral and spiritual guide by assuming the cultural and social functions of religious authorities. According to Hjarvard, the media taking over these societal roles from religion also represents a crucial aspect of secularization (2011, p. 133). Similarly, Castells points out that when delivering religious messages through electronic media, there is a contradiction in the presence of things prohibited by religion, such as violence and pornography, alongside these messages (2018, p. 119). This suggests that religious messages in the media often lose their divine context.

2. Religious Communication in the Virtual Space

The year 1978 marks the first time that religion found its place on computer networks. In this era when the internet was not yet widespread, the Bulletin Board System (BBS), implemented by Ward Christensen and Randy Suess on a dial-up connection, became the platform for the initial discussions on religion. BBS was essentially a space where individuals could engage in conversations on various topics and exchange ideas, with religion being one of those subjects. Moreover, these discussions in the virtual realm extended to intense debates under the “create your own religion” category on the ORIGINS forum site. Another form of connection during the pre-internet era was USENET, which was particularly used by university students for forum discussions and file sharing. USENET also served as a virtual space where people from different locations engaged in religious discussions. It was not until the 1990s when the World Wide Web became widespread that religious discussions in the virtual realm began to take place on a larger scale (Dereli, 2020, p. 76).

The beginning of what we now call the Web 1.0 era was in the early 1990s when the World Wide Web started to gain popularity. During this period, the internet had less interactivity, and users were primarily consumers of content rather than creators. The convergence of religion and media continued during the Web 1.0 era. Especially, religious groups began to publish their content on their own websites, marking a significant shift of offline religious content into the online sphere. This content included religious books, magazines, articles, and audio and video sermons. Furthermore, with the improvement of internet connections and other technological advancements, internet users gradually gained the ability to interact with the content they encountered online. This trend intensified with the rise of social networks, particularly after the establishment of Facebook in 2004, which allowed users to produce their own content and engage extensively with content created by others. These developments also brought about a turning point in the field of religion and media. The blurring boundaries between the online and offline realms, along with the increasing centralization of the internet in everyday life, led to traditional religious communities transforming into online communities. Reading sacred texts on the internet or mobile devices, performing prayer rituals in the virtual realm, celebrating significant religious holidays online, and, most importantly, using social media extensively for acquiring religious knowledge are all reflections of this transformation. This process, conceptualized by Heidi Campbell as “digital religion,” has led to the adaptation of religious messages to the language and context of online spaces. Consequently, religious education and face-to-face religious

communication increasingly occur in the online sphere, erasing traditional authorities and allowing individuals to shape their religious lives solely based on the information they acquire on social media. Moreover, the opportunities provided by social media have changed the approach to offline religious knowledge, enabling individuals to question information encountered during a sermon or read in a religious book through social media channels (Haberli, 2022, p. 394).

The advancements in new communication technologies in today's world have led to various religious practices being conducted in these online environments. However, the performance of individual religious practices through virtual means (such as lighting a virtual candle in a virtual church or visiting the grave of a deceased person in a virtual cemetery) will over time shape not only the form but also the meaning of these practices. Virtual wedding ceremonies, virtual sacrificial rituals, and celebration messages on holy days and nights have now become "just a click away" religious rituals (Çamdereli, 2018, p. 46). The increasing dominance of social media in daily life accelerates the adaptation of every activity to the language and logic of social media. Rituals influenced by religious references, such as *ilahi* recitations, *mevlit*² programs, weddings, and circumcision ceremonies, are rapidly being reorganized to be presented in this online space, often turning into extravagant shows. One of the most apparent examples is the baby "mevlit" ceremonies, which have been transformed into events resembling Western "baby shower" parties, complete with decorations and elaborate arrangements (Gazneli and Sofuoğlu Kılıç, 2020, p. 207).

In recent years, the influence of the internet and social media on mainstream Islamic views has been growing. Both religious authorities and internet influencers are creating content in the virtual space, giving rise to an "Islamic public sphere" or, in other words, a "virtual ummah" (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2010). Moreover, everything that Muslims share on social media, including their everyday activities, contributes to the formation of a new Islamic identity. This identity is seen as a convergence between traditional religious identity and popular culture (Frissen et al., 2017).

3. Mediatization of Religious Communication

The word media has the meanings of being in the center and mediating in its origin. Indeed, media is a tool that mediates people's communication and helps people in different times and places to communicate. Because of that reason, media is not only a tool but also an element that enables the construction of meaning (Chandler and Munday, 2018, p. 30). Many concepts have been developed to address the mediation of the media. The concept of mediatization is a new approach developed to address the role and impact of the media on transformations in the structure of society. In a general definition, mediatization is a long-term process that defines the change in the media, social and cultural institutions, and the forms of relations between people (Hazim and Musdholifah, 2021, p. 44).

Media determines the way people perceive their environment. The media is the biggest helper in organizing the individual's experiences of life and making sense of them. The fictional reality caused by this makes individuals live lives determined by the media (Lundby and Ronning, 1997, p. 19).

Mediatization is not only a concept related to the development of new media tools; beyond this, it also deals with the fact that communication is becoming more media-centered. People now talk about the media itself or media content; they communicate with the media while reading newspapers, watching television, or spending time on the Internet; they communicate with computer games or interactive media. From these points of view, mediatization is a comprehensive concept that deals with the changing form of communicative action. Changing daily habits, identities, social structures, and cultures are areas where the effects of mediatization can be seen (Krotz and Hepp, 2011, p. 138).

Before modernity, socialization, knowledge, and transmission of tradition were provided by social institutions such as family, school and place of worship. Thanks to the rapidly developing communication technologies after modernity, the media started to take over the role of social institutions. In particular, the media taking over the social functions performed by religious institutions constitutes an important pillar of secularization today (Hjarvard, 2011, p. 133). Thanks to these functions, how individuals perceive and live religion are also changing. Religious life articulated in digital culture gives rise to new feelings of belonging and new social positions. On the other hand, religion, which has become an object of the culture industry by taking place in the media, is instrumentalized by consumer culture in various dimensions (Öztaş and Ünalın, 2022, p. 447).

The representation of religion in the media brings along the design of religious messages in accordance with the media logic. The media's approach that prioritizes consumption and marketing causes religious discourse to be trapped in this approach. In other words, religious communication through the media is subjected to a secular analysis; it is trivialized, mediatized and objectified. Objectification of religious messages causes religious values to lose their sanctity and turn into an element of consumption. The sincere beliefs and feelings that religions expect from their followers are turned into a subject of discussion in the media, trivialized and consumed. For the media, each content is an opportunity to increase viewership rates and therefore advertising revenues, and the media can make all kinds of emotions and beliefs marketable in order to gather the curiosity and attention of its viewers (Gündüz, 2010, p. 48).

Today, the rise of virtual communication environments brings the substitution of religious practices with their equivalents, or at least the occurrence of some of them virtually. The act of individual worship through a medium (for example, lighting a virtual candle in a virtual church or visiting the grave of the deceased in a virtual environment and praying for them) will shape the form and meaning of worship over time. Virtual marriage ceremonies, virtual sacrifices, and messaging on holy days have become widespread thanks to the "one-click proximity" of access to religious rituals (Çamdereli, 2018, p. 46).

4. Method

4.1. Research Design

This research is designed as a case study. A case study allows the researcher to explore the "how" and "why" questions about the examined situation, providing an opportunity to collect comprehensive data. In a case study, the researcher does not start with a pre-established theory but rather decides which theory would be more suitable during the process of revealing the context (Akar, 2017).

4.2. Participants

The participants in the research were selected according to the maximum variation sampling method based on a qualitative research approach (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 118). This allowed for obtaining different perspectives and approaches by conducting interviews with participants with different characteristics in line with the research questions. Thus, the research problem could be addressed from different angles.

Two separate sample groups were selected for the research. The first group consisted of university students who were actively using social media and following religious content. In order to achieve maximum diversity in this group, 27 students from different cities and fields of study at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels were interviewed. The purpose of selecting university students as participants in the research is that young people who are digital natives can adapt to the language of social media more easily. Thus, it is aimed to obtain the expectations of the group that uses social media most intensively. The second sample group consisted of content creators

who were selected through snowball sampling method, and interviews were conducted with 5 content creators.

The participants of the research, who were university students, consisted of students studying at 14 different universities in 9 different cities. Among the participants, 17 were female, and 10 were male. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 28.

Table 1. List of participants

No	Name	City	University	Department	Year	Age
1	Selime	Ankara	Middle East Technical	English Language	4	22
2	Ayşe	İstanbul	29 Mayıs University	Turkish Language and	4	23
3	Reyhan	İstanbul	29 Mayıs University	Theology / Law	3	23
4	Halil	İstanbul	İbn Haldun University	Political Science and	4	23
5	Abdullah	İstanbul	İbn Haldun University	Political Science and	3	22
6	Arif	Isparta	Süleyman Demirel University	Electrical and	4	23
7	Alper	İstanbul	İbn Haldun University	Islamic Sciences	3	23
8	Melih	Konya	Selçuk University	Journalism	1	20
9	Rana	Afyonkarahisar	Afyonkarahisar Health	Physical Therapy and	1	19
10	Meltem	Trabzon	Karadeniz Technical University	Geomatics	3	23
11	Erdem	Eskişehir	Eskişehir Osmangazi	Theology	Prep.	19
12	Mine	Eskişehir	Eskişehir Osmangazi	Theology	Prep.	20
13	Safa	Eskişehir	Eskişehir Osmangazi	Theology	1	19
14	Hamit	İstanbul	İstanbul Technical University	Artificial Intelligence	2	21
15	Nihal	Ankara	Middle East Technical	Food Engineering	3	22
16	Zeynep	Konya	Necmettin Erbakan University	History / Theology	3	24
17	Şeyma	Ankara	Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt	Physical Therapy and	4	21
18	Rukiye	Ankara	Middle East Technical	Architecture	2	22
19	Sema	Düzce	Düzce University	Medicine	2	20
20	Saliha	Kütahya	Dumlupınar University	Sociology (M.A.)	Thesis	26
21	Melis	Kütahya	Dumlupınar University	Sociology (M.A.)	Thesis	28
22	Ülkü	Kütahya	Dumlupınar University	Sociology	3	25
23	Feyza	Konya	Selçuk University	Journalism	1	20
24	Kadir	Kütahya	Dumlupınar University	Mechanical	Thesis	25
25	Nazlı	Kütahya	Dumlupınar University	Sociology (M.A.)	Thesis	24
26	Gizem	Eskişehir	Anadolu University	Cinema and Television	3	21
27	Mustafa	Eskişehir	Anadolu University	Law	3	22

The other sample group of the research is the authorities of 5 accounts that are content producers for different social media platforms.

Table 2. List of content producers and their number of followers on different platforms as of April 20th, 2023

No	Name	Account name	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Youtube	Tiktok
1	Harun	Bi Dünya Haber	2.393	817	177.000	7.040	-
2	Enis	Enis Doko	-	82.700	14.900	40.000	-
3	Hamza	Hayber Gençlik	-	2.250	52.100	2.270	39.000
4	Zülal	Genç Müslümanlar	45.417	51.300	131.000	143.000	5468
5	Feride	Mosquesty	-	123.000	49.700	-	-

4.3. Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two different groups. The first group consisted of students who actively use social media and follow religious content, while the second group was composed of the administrators of social media accounts that share religious content. The reason for using semi-structured interview technique is to provide the opportunity to obtain data that can eliminate unclear points about the topic as the research progresses (Akman Dömbekci and Erişen, 2022).

The participants were asked about the religious language in social media and different questions were asked according to the course of the conversation.

Data of the study collected in April 2023. All of the interviews conducted online by using Zoom program and with the participants' permission, audio recordings were made during the interviews.

4.4. Ethics Committee Approval

According to the decision numbered 494344 dated 28/03/2023 by the Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu, the study has been deemed ethically appropriate.

4.5. Analysis of Data

Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, and in order to protect the personal information of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. During the analysis, the NVivo 12 software was used to categorize the data into themes and codes. Descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of data. The main aim of using this method is to present the findings obtained in a systematic and clear manner. In this method, first, the data obtained in the research are systematically and clearly described. Then, these descriptions are interpreted, and the cause-and-effect relationships between them are discussed.

5. Findings

In this study, the concept of religious language has been used in a holistic sense, beyond its specific meanings in the fields of philosophy and theology. The concept of religious language, which reflects one's thoughts and way of life as a whole when speaking about God with a comprehensive attitude (Koç, 2017), defines all forms of expressing religion within the scope of this study.

With the freedom of speech offered by social media, everyone has the opportunity to freely and limitlessly express their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes to others. However, it is a fact that not every social media user possesses the necessary and effective communication skills to comply with the requirements of this platform. Therefore, social media is always prone to communication problems, biases, and misunderstandings.

In such an environment, the expectations of social media users regarding religious language and the perspectives of content creators on the same subject are of utmost importance.

Consistency is one of the qualities that social media users expect from religious content creators. This consistency encompasses both the consistency between expressions made at different times and the consistency between words and actions. Saliha, one of the participants, pointed out the impact of this consistency on communication by saying, "As a social media user, I wonder if the person I follow actually acts like they preach in their daily life." Erdem supported this idea with the statement, "To me, it sounds absurd to give a speech about something we do not actually practice when it comes to explaining and promoting religion."

In order to reach a wider audience on social media, individuals and groups who support opinions other than their own are also considered as inconsistent. Feride, one of the content creators, said, "If there is a need to react, it should be done in a clear way, and what is good should

be shared in the same manner. Everyone determines this in their own way, but I think consistency is important here.” Feride expressed how inconsistency can be avoided.

Another point emphasized by participants in the religious communication on social media is sincerity. Sincerity can be used synonymously with consistency on one hand and also carries the meaning of genuineness on the other hand. Meltem mentioned that users often evaluate many contents based on their sincerity. According to her, the key quality that content creators should possess to attract people’s attention is sincerity. Şeyma defined the measure of sincerity as “showing one’s own life as it is.” Indeed, content creators who record and broadcast every detail of their daily lives on platforms like YouTube can quickly reach thousands of people. According to content creator Hamza, the important point here is that users should be willing to see what is happening or what might happen in their content creators’ lives.

The financial expectations of content creators also affect whether social media users perceive them as sincere or not. Especially when it comes to religion, realizing that any content creator has financial expectations can lead users to question their sincerity. Zülal, one of the content creators who are aware of this, stated that they consciously do not accept advertising offers to maintain a positive image of sincerity.

The attention span of individuals in front of the screens of computers and mobile devices is decreasing day by day. People now prefer to read summaries of books or quickly watch a movie rather than reading the entire book or watching the entire film. According to Pettman (2017), distraction today is not just an escape from boring things or a way to avoid facing reality, but it has become a reality itself. This, to some extent, also controls the media. As a result, individuals get lost in the addictive cycle of social media and become unable to focus on anything. Lost in this cycle, individuals start to prefer simpler and shallower content. Some participants have pointed out this phenomenon. To give an example, Abdullah emphasized the need for short videos and consumable content, but mentioned that these should only be used for simple topics. Halil took this a step further, suggesting that social media should only be used to convey very basic information in religious education. Selime also supported these views, stating that short and easily-consumable content on a specific topic is more effective in terms of religious communication in the fast-paced environment of social media. These approaches mean suggesting that religious communication should be shaped according to the environment in which it takes place. Although such content enables the message to reach more people, it may cause the religious message to lose its unique characteristic.

One important issue highlighted by participants in religious communication on social media is the concept of tolerance, which has theological and sociological significance. According to Habermas (2012, p. 238), the term tolerance emerged in 16th century Europe during a period of religious conflicts, signifying the respect for different beliefs. Over time, it gained a legal dimension with the enactment of laws promoting tolerance to protect religious minorities and oppressed communities. Not forcing people of different beliefs into another belief, coexistence, and the concept of tolerance are closely related to tolerance. Participants used the term tolerance in various contexts, including being polite. Abdullah expressed that the lack of tolerance or its absence affects the view of religion on social media fundamentally. According to him, negative attitudes towards religion are rooted in the sharp attitudes and expressions of individuals speaking on behalf of religion. On the other hand, as expressed by Feyza and Rana, the boundaries of tolerance should not dilute religious commandments and should not go beyond them.

Another problem encountered in religious communication on social media is that people who want to learn about religion often encounter prohibitive statements. Nazlı stated that people who do not even have basic knowledge about religion develop prejudice when they encounter prohibitive statements about religion on social media. To prevent this, she suggested that instead

of prohibitions, the positive sides of religion should be emphasized. According to Reyhan, a religious language based on prohibitions and punishments pushes social media users towards different preferences and attractive lifestyles. Ülkü and Selime noted that the prevalent language on social media today is based on humor and positive expressions, and religious language can also benefit from humor. They believe that in terms of religious communication, short messages about a certain topic are more effective in the fast-paced environment of social media.

Ellul talks about the declaration of the “triumph of the eye” in today’s world (2012, p. 143). Throughout history, people have created images through cave paintings, reliefs, sculptures, and many other methods. However, these images were limited in number and were only found in specific places until the recent past. Images were presented in temples and palaces, exclusively for the view of the aristocrats and rulers, not for farmers or the public. The visual experiences encountered by the common people were generally confined to educational pictures in places of worship. Today, images are ubiquitous, and individuals are constantly exposed to visual experiences. In an era where visuality is so dominant, the use of visual language is considered one of the most effective methods for conveying religious messages. In light of this information, Alper emphasized the importance of production in the process of religious communication. According to Arif, the prominence of visuality contributes significantly to religious communication, but Erdem, as in all aspects of life, believes that certain boundaries should be maintained in visual communication as well. According to him, not only the images but also the information and content presented along with these images should be accurate and of high quality. Visualization causes big transformations in religious communication, and it is also using in the presentation of traditional vaaz³ and lecturing culture today. Some content creators only record such religious content and share it online without any editing. At this point, Kadir states that today’s social media users do not embrace the style of vaaz and lectures of the past. Especially young people stay away from this content due to the long duration of the vaaz and the lack of visual appeal. A crucial example of this is given by the content creator Feride. In her account, she stated that messages consisting of texts supported by an aesthetic visual received more engagement than those consisting of texts only.

Trends that emerge within the language of social media are a way to reach large audiences in a short time. Users who create content that aligns with a popular trend can reach more people thanks to social media algorithms. Arif, in particular, suggested that it would be beneficial to use social media trends to reach young people. However, Reyhan is more cautious in this regard. According to her, trends reflect the characteristics of the society they originate from and export these characteristics to different cultures.

Even today, religious language largely carries verbal and visual styles that evoke the past. However, Gizem believes that this language needs to change, especially to capture the interest of young people, and that it is necessary to resort to popular culture to achieve this. This is important not only to show that religion is not just a thing of the past but also to demonstrate that it is possible to create beautiful and quality religious content even in contemporary times. According to Gizem, especially Muslims living in Western countries are less hesitant to expand the boundaries in this regard, while religious education in Türkiye tends to draw strict lines between belief and representation. Nevertheless, as with other issues, participants were concerned about changing the content of the religious language to make it more appealing to young people.

Another quality that participants believe should exist in religious communication on social media is aesthetic appeal. Ayşe, one of the participants, believes that religious content should also be meticulous and beautiful. According to her, messages that are careless, sloppy, and ugly, no matter how true they are, will not be accepted by people. Especially in today’s world, where technology makes it easier to design visually effective messages, aesthetics has become more important, according to Kadir. On the other hand, Erdem emphasized that not only the images but

also the information and content presented with these images should be accurate and of high quality to maintain the integrity of the message.

Participants in various topics have emphasized the importance of not exceeding the boundaries set by religion in religious communication. However, some participants have specifically focused on this issue. Concerns are mentioned in various aspects such as privacy, entertainment culture, humor, a gentle tone, and tolerance. Important issues discussed under this topic include the sharing of content that is not in line with the spirit of religion just to reach a larger audience, the adoption of an eclectic structure in understanding and representing religion, which blurs the line between belonging to the religion and its representation, and the softening of religious messages for the sake of acceptance by the target audience.

Content creator Hamza suggests that content creators can reach a wider audience by adapting to the language of social media. However, they choose not to do so on purpose. This is because social media trends, content, and styles often contain elements that do not align with religious values. Another factor that contributes to the misunderstanding of religion on social media is the use of fragmented religious language. Misinterpretations become inevitable due to the incomplete transmission of religious messages, the distracting nature of social media, and the superficial presentation of information. For example, Erdem and Mine argue that sharing Quranic verses separated from their preceding and succeeding verses hinders a correct understanding of the verses. As a result, people turn to religious messages not to truly understand the message but to validate their own beliefs. This also amounts to the instrumentalization of religious sources. Mine says, "Everyone interprets religion in their own way. So, we have a holy book, but everyone takes only a certain sentence from that book. We can't solve everything with just one sentence from the book. If that were the case, the Quran would not have so many pages; only one sentence would suffice. This should not be the case. I think people should focus on the big picture," emphasizing the need for comprehensive expression of religious messages.

In another topic about the religious language that should be used in social media, participants emphasize the need for more informative voice rather than aggressive. Alper argues that many religious contents on social media is created solely to criticize the thoughts of others and advocates for sharing only accurate information instead.

Another point that participants consider important is to stay away from politics in religious communication. Indeed, in Türkiye, many people find the combination of religion and politics disturbing. Content creators who participated in the study agree on this matter. According to the creators, sharing political opinions alongside religious messages prevents the proper understanding of religion. Hamza says, "We have the opportunity to touch the hearts and minds of our brothers and sisters from all sides. We do not provide political content because we do not want to lose them for the sake of politics that will change tomorrow." On the other hand, Zülal believes that politics in Türkiye has polarized people too much and led to prejudice. According to her, those who want to reach people with religious content should stay away from political posts.

Finally, the expectation of social media users regarding the religious language on this platform is that it should avoid controversial topics. Instead of highlighting points of disagreement in religious matters, it is more beneficial to create inclusive content. Zülal mentions that in her own posts, she features content from foreign preachers that will not spark debates on controversial topics related to Türkiye. According to Harun, the way to move away from divisive language is to focus on what needs to be done instead of pointing out what is wrong.

6. Conclusion

Throughout history, all religions and belief systems have used different forms of communication to spread their messages to more people. However, today's widely used modern

mass communication methods often align more with secularism. Media, especially through the global reach of popular culture, can either push religion out of people's lives or turn it into a product to consume. In the current postmodern era, where boundaries and values are constantly questioned and blurred, religion can coexist with opposing ideas and approaches. These eclectic approaches can find a place among mainstream thoughts, often thanks to social media.

How can religion be effectively expressed in response to the challenges posed by social media? This study involved discussions with university students who extensively use social media to access religious messages, as well as with the administrators of accounts that create religious content on social media. The aim was to establish a framework for what the religious language on social media should be like.

The findings indicate that the participants think that some changes are needed in the existing religious language on social media. According to them, in the current situation, religious communication on social media can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Based on the participants' opinions, which were categorized into ten main points, it is possible to outline the boundaries for constructing a religious language on social media. This language should be consistent both internally and in alignment with the values it represents. Authentic religious content, especially when shared without seeking material gain, tends to be more effective. Given the nature of social media, religious messages in this environment should be concise and straightforward, but not overly simplified to the extent that they lose their essence or fail to align with the nuances of social media's language.

Social media is increasingly favoring visual content over verbal messages. Consequently, religious messages should not rely solely on traditional verbal expressions but should also incorporate visual elements. These visual components should be well-crafted and aesthetically pleasing. Neglected or unappealing content not only fails to capture attention but also portrays religion as a relic of the past in the eyes of modern social media users.

In both everyday life and on social media, the religious language should be built on tolerance rather than fear. This means promoting a language of tolerance that goes beyond the boundaries set by religion, appealing to individuals with biases or less engagement with religious messages. Instead of a fragmented approach that could lead to viewing religion as eclectic, there is a need for a comprehensive language that understands religion holistically. Short content created to capture attention and reach more people on social media should not be detached from its context; it should always be expressed within a framework. Finally, the religious language on social media should prioritize factual information rather than potentially controversial extreme interpretations.

Fulfilling participants' expectations from religious language on social media can ensure that the religious message reaches more people. Nevertheless, as some participants emphasized, this approach may cause the religious message to lose its authenticity. Some of the points emphasized by the participants may help to preserve the authenticity of the message, but some other points may lead to mediatization of the message. Not expecting financial benefits, being sincere and consistent, and using a holistic language will help to maintain religious communication in a healthy way. On the other hand, excessive use of visual content and humor, stretching the limits of tolerance, shortening messages to increase readability means limiting the religious message to the patterns of social media. This limitation may prevent the message from being received correctly and may even lead to wrong thoughts. Participants are aware of the mediatization of religious communication, but some participants use expressions that affirm mediatization, even with good intentions.

Religious communication on social media has both advantages and disadvantages that should be considered. Social media's accessibility makes it possible to reach a wider audience, particularly among young people, with religious information and content. However, the religious

language used by those who produce religious content on social media can sometimes obscure the intended message. To address this and enhance the effectiveness of religious communication on social media, it's essential to understand the rules and language of social media users. Content creators who are proficient in this language can construct a new form of religious communication on social media.

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Sosyal Medyada Din Dili: İerik Üreticilerin ve Kullanıcıların Bakış Açıları

İsmail KAPLAN*

Ahmet Halûk YÜKSEL**

Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Dini iletişim; Allah ile yaratılanlar arasındaki dikey iletişim ve yaratılanların kendi aralarındaki yatay iletişim olmak üzere iki farklı boyutta ele alınmaktadır. İlkini metafizik boyutu onu ilahiyatın bir konusu yapmakta, inananlar arasındaki yatay iletişim ise iletişimin genel işleyiş kurallarına bağlı olarak gerçekleşmektedir.

Dini iletişim tarih boyunca büyük oranda cemaat tipi toplumsal yapılanmanın kurallarına göre gerçekleşmiştir ve yakın zamana kadar hâlâ yüz yüze ilişki ile sınırlı kalmıştır. Bununla birlikte medya aracılığıyla gerçekleşen dini iletişim yalnızca uzmanlık gerektiren konuları kapsamaktaydı (Baydar, 1994, ss. 7-9). Fakat 21. yüzyıl ile birlikte gelişen medya ve iletişim teknolojileri, İslam'ın medyada popüler biçimlerde de ele alınmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Özellikle dinî açıdan önem atfedilen gün ve gecelerde sunulan televizyon programları bu değişen iletişim dilinin yansımalarının en net biçimde görüldüğü alandır. Bu programlarda en temel dini bilgiler oldukça yüzeysel biçimde sunulmakta ve her yıl benzer magazineller konular ele alınmaktadır (Çamdereli, 2018, s. 80).

Yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin bir çıktısı olarak geçmişte büyük oranda din görevlisine düşen dinî iletileri kodlama ve aktarma görevi günümüzde sosyal medyadaki içerik üreticileri kapsayacak şekilde genişlemiştir. Diğer yandan geçmişte ibadethaneler gibi dini iletişimin mekanlarda ortamın iletişim için sağladığı avantajlar günümüzde medyada ve sosyal medyada bulunmadığı için alıcının tüm dikkat dağıtıcı unsurlardan sıyrılarak dinî iletiye odaklanması da zordur. Hazim ve Musdholifah (2021, ss. 45-46) yaşanan bu değişimin üç önemli etkisinden söz eder. İlk olarak dini bilgi edinmenin kaynağı dini otoriteden medyaya kaymıştır. İkinci olarak medya bireysel inanışlar ve tecrübelerin daha fazla ön plana çıkmasını sağlayan bir alana dönüşür. Son olarak medya, dinî otoritelerin kültürel ve sosyal işlevlerini üstlenerek kendisini ahlaki ve manevi bir rehber olarak konumlandırır.

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Çevrim içi alan ile çevrim dışı alan arasında gittikçe silikleşen sınırlar, internetin gündelik hayat içerisinde daha merkezi bir noktaya yerleşmesini beraberinde getirmiş, geleneksel dini cemaatlerin aynı zamanda birer sana cemaate dönüşmesine neden olmuştur. Heidi Campbell'ın "dijital din" tanımlamasıyla kavramsallaştırdığı bu süreç, dini iletilerin giderek daha fazla çevrimiçi ortamın dili uygun biçimde kodlanmasını beraberinde getirmektedir (Haberfi, 2022, s. 394).

Yöntem

Bu araştırma bir durum çalışması olarak desenlenmiştir. Araştırmada iki farklı gruba yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yapılmıştır. İlk grup sosyal medyayı aktif olarak kullanan ve dini içerikli iletileri takip eden öğrencilerden oluşmakta, ikinci grup ise sosyal medyada dini içerik paylaşan hesapların yöneticilerinden meydana gelmektedir. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, nitel araştırma yaklaşımından hareketle geliştirilen ve amaçlı örneklemenin bir alt türü kabul edilen (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016, s. 118) maksimum çeşitlilik örneklemesine göre seçilmiştir. Üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşan ilk örneklem grubundan 27 öğrenci ile görüşülmüştür. İkinci örneklem grubundan 5 içerik üreticisiyle görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular ve Yorum

Sosyal medyanın sunduğu ifade özgürlüğü ile herkes, kendi düşüncelerini, görüşlerini ve tutumlarını serbestçe ve sınırsızca diğer bireylere iletebilme fırsatına sahiptir. Bu durum aynı zamanda sosyal medyanın iletişim kazalarına, önyargılara ve yanlış anlamalara her zaman açık olması anlamına gelir. Bu tür bir ortamda, hem sosyal medya kullanıcılarının din dili hakkındaki beklentileri hem de içerik üreticilerinin aynı konudaki görüşleri son derece önemlidir.

Sosyal medya kullanıcılarının dinî içerik beledikleri özelliklerden birisi tutarlılıktır. Bu tutarlılık hem farklı zamanlarda dile getirilen ifadeler arasındaki tutarlılığı hem de söz ve eylem arasındaki tutarlılığı kapsamaktadır. Bununla ilgili bir başka özellik de samimiyettir. Bir yanıyla tutarlılık ile eş anlamda kullanılabilen samimiyet, diğer yanıyla içtenlik anlamını da içermektedir.

İçerik üreticilerinin maddi beklentileri sosyal medya kullanıcılarının onları samimi görüp görmemesini de etkilemektedir. Özellikle din konusu ele alındığında herhangi bir içerik üreticinin maddi beklentisinin olduğunu fark etmek kullanıcılarda sorgulamaya yol açmaktadır.

Günümüzde sosyal medyanın sürükleyici diline kapılıp giden bireyin dikkatini herhangi bir şeye yoğunlaştırması giderek zorlaşmaktadır. Bunun farkında olan içerik üreticiler daha kısa ve kolay anlaşılır içerikler üretmektedirler. Bununla birlikte dinî boyutta her konunun kısa ve kolay anlaşılır içeriklerle net biçimde sunulamayacağı da açıktır. Bu tarz içeriklerin parçacı bir din diline yönelmeden bütüncül olarak ele alınması gerekmektedir zira sosyal medyanın dikkat dağıtıcı özelliği ve yüzeysel bilgi sunumu sonucunda yanlış anlamalar kaçınılmaz hale gelmektedir.

Katılımcıların öne çıkardığı bir başka kavram ise hoşgörüdür. Farklı inançlara sahip insanları başka bir inanca zorlamamak, bir arada yaşam ve tahammül kavramları hoşgörü ile yakından ilişkilendirilen kavramlardır. Katılımcılar tarafından hoşgörü terimi, yukarıda bahsedilen anlamların yanı sıra nazik olmak anlamında da kullanılmıştır.

Sosyal medyada dinî iletişimle ilgili karşılaşılan bir başka problem, din hakkında bilgi edinmek isteyen kişilerin bu ortamda ilk olarak yasaklayıcı ifadelerle karşılaşmalarıdır. Din hakkında temel bilgileri dahi bilmeyen kişilerin sosyal medyada dinin yasaklayıcı ifadeleriyle karşılaşmalarının önüne geçmek adına yasakların değil dine ait güzelliklerin ön plana çıkarılması gerekmektedir.

Görselliğin bu kadar baskın olduğu bir dönemde, dinî mesajları iletmek için görsel dilin doğru ve güzel biçimde kullanımı en etkili yöntemlerden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir.

Günümüzde dahi din dili geçmişçi çağrıştıran sözel ve görsel bir üslup taşımaktadır. Sosyal medya çağında gençlerin ilgisini çekmek için popüler kültüre başvurulmasının gerekli olduğunu

düşünen görüşe göre bu aynı zamanda dinin yalnızca geçmişe ait bir olgu olmadığını, günümüzde de güzel ve kaliteli dini içerikler üretmenin mümkün olduğunu göstermek adına önemlidir.

Çeşitli başlıklarda katılımcılar dinî iletişimde dinin çizdiği sınırların dışına çıkılmaması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Bu konuda mahremiyet, eğlence kültürü, mizah, yumuşak üslup ve hoşgörü gibi konularda duyulan kaygılardan bahsedilmektedir. Dinin ruhuna uygun olmayan içeriklerin sırf daha fazla kişiye ulaşmak adına hazırlanıp paylaşılması, eklektik bir yapıya bürünen din anlayışı ile aidiyet ve temsil arasındaki bağın ortadan kalkması, hedef kitlenin kabulü adına dinî mesajların yumuşatılması bu başlık altında ele alınan önemli konulardır.

Sosyal medyada kullanılan din dilinin sahip olması gereken özelliklerle ilgili bir diğer başlıkta katılımcılar tartışma ve münakaşa dili yerine bilgi ağırlıklı bir dil kullanılması gerektiğini söylemektedirler. Bu aynı zamanda politik ve ayrıştırıcı ifadelerden uzak durmak anlamına da gelmektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Elde edilen bulgular, sosyal medyada var olan din dilinin belli noktalarda değişikliğe ihtiyacı olduğunu düşündüğünü göstermektedir. Mevcut haliyle dinî iletişimin sosyal medyadaki görünümü yanlış anlaşılmalara ve yorumlamaya neden olabilmektedir. Katılımcılar sosyal medyadaki din diline dair görüşlerini 10 başlıkta dile getirmektedir. Bu dil hem kendi içinde hem de temsil ettiği değerlerle karşılaştırıldığında tutarlılık göstermelidir. Samimi bir biçimde, özellikle maddi çıkar beklemezsizin sunulan dinî içerikler daha etkili olacaktır. Sosyal medyanın dili gereği bu ortamdaki dinî iletiler karmaşık ve uzun değil, basit ve kısa olmalıdır fakat bununla birlikte iletinin özünü kaybedecek ölçüde basite indirgenmemeli ve sosyal medyanın diline her boyutuyla eklenmemelidir. Gerek gündelik hayatta gerek sosyal medyada din dili korku üzerine değil hoşgörü üzerine inşa edilmelidir. Burada elbette dinin çizdiği sınırların ötesinde bir hoşgöründen bahsedilmemekte, önyargıları olan veya dinî iletilere daha az muhatap olan kişilerin ilgisini çekmeye yönelik hoşgörülü bir dil ifade edilmektedir. Dinin eklektik bir yapı olarak anlaşılmasına neden olacak parçacı bir yaklaşım yerine bütüncül olarak anlaşılacağı bir din diline ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Sosyal medyada ilgi çekmesi ve daha fazla kişiye ulaşması adına hazırlanan kısa içerikler bağlamından bağımsız olarak ele alınmamalı, mutlaka bir bağlam içinde ifade edilmelidir. Son olarak sosyal medyadaki din dili, tartışmaya yol açması muhtemel aşırı yorum yerine bilgiye dayalı olmalıdır. Katılımcıların sosyal medyadaki din dilinden beklentilerinin gerçekleşmesi, dini mesajın daha fazla kişiye ulaşmasını sağlayabilir. Yine de bazı katılımcıların üzerinde durduğu gibi bu yaklaşım dinî mesajın özgünlüğünü yitirmesine yol açabilir. Katılımcıların dinî iletişimin medyatikleşmesi konusunda farkındalığı mevcuttur fakat iyi niyetle bile olsa medyatikleşmeyi olumsuzlayan ifadeleri kimi katılımcılar kullanmaktadır.

Dinî iletişimin sosyal medya ortamında gerçekleştirilmesi olumlu ve olumsuz yanları ile birlikte ele alınması gereken bir konudur. Sosyal medyanın sağladığı kolaylıklar sayesinde dinî bilgilerin ve içeriklerin gençler başta olmak üzere çok daha geniş bir kitleye ulaştırılabileceği açıktır. Öte yandan sosyal medyada dini içerik üreten kişi ve kurumların kullandığı din dili, vermek istedikleri mesajı gölgeleyen bir dile dönüşebilmektedir. Bundan kaçınmak ve dinî iletişimi sosyal medyada daha etkili şekilde gerçekleştirebilmek için sosyal medyanın kurallarına ve sosyal medya kullanıcılarının diline hakim olmak gerekmektedir. Bu dile hakim olan içerik üreticiler, sosyal medyada yeni bir din dili inşa edebilirler.

Çalışmanın Etik İzin Bilgileri / Ethics Committee Approval

Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu 28/03/2023 tarihli, 494344 protokol nolu kararı çerçevesinde çalışma etik açıdan bir sakınca içermemektedir.

According to the decision numbered 494344 dated 28/03/2023 by the Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu, the study has been deemed ethically appropriate.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Yazarların çalışmadaki katkı oranları %80 ilk yazar, %20 ikinci yazar şeklindedir.
The contribution rates of the authors in the study are 80% first author and 20% second author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.
There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

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Bu çalışmada “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuştur.

In this study, the rules stated in the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed.

Notes

¹ The word “ilahi” is Turkish and is typically translated to “hymn” or “spiritual song” in English. It refers to religious or spiritual songs that are often sung in worship or during religious ceremonies.

² The word “Mevlit” is a Turkish term that refers to a religious event or ceremony in Islam, often held to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad or other important religious figures. In English, it is commonly translated as “Mawlid” or “Mawlid al-Nabi.”

³ A “vaaz” is a Turkish word that refers to a religious sermon or speech typically delivered by an Islamic cleric or religious leader. Vaaz is a form of religious discourse where the speaker imparts religious teachings, moral guidance, and spiritual advice to the audience, often during congregational prayers, religious gatherings, or special occasions within the Islamic community.



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An Evaluation on the Cinematographic Presentation of Historical and Spiritual Characters

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Abstract

While historical and spiritual characters have been present in Turkish cinema history since the 1950s, recent developments in filming technologies, increased interest in television, and the rise in popularity of TV series have contributed these characters to also appear on television screens. They have gained an unprecedented audience and follower potential. Television series that depict the life stories of religious figures have achieved great success with modern possibilities, and visualizing the spiritual teachings of these personalities and conveying them to people through series has become exceptionally important. As a result, multiple religious characters have been featured in television series, and these characters, previously only read about, have now come to life on screen. This study focuses on the presentation of historical/religious characters on screen, with specific reference to Imam Ghazali, Tapduk Emre, and Mahperi Hunat Hatun, who hold great importance in Turkish-Islamic history, as exemplars. The universe of the study consists of religious/Sufi characters on television, while its sample comprises the listed names. The main objective of the study is to research how these figures are depicted on screen. Through narrative analysis, it is concluded that the examined characters are mostly successfully portrayed on screen, although at times, there may be discrepancies between the depiction and the historical reality.

Keywords: Diriliş Ertuğrul, Mahperi Hunat Hatun, Uyanış Büyük Selçuklu, Ghazali, Yunus Emre Aşkın Yolculuğu

Tarihi-Mistik Karakterlerin Sinematografik Sunumu Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme

Öz

Türk sinema tarihinde dini ve mistik karakterler 1950'li yıllardan itibaren görülse de son dönemde çekim teknolojilerinin gelişmesi, televizyona rağbetin artması ve dizi film sektörünün popülerlik kazanması gibi nedenlerle bu karakterler televizyon ekranlarında da yer almış, daha önce olmadığı kadar izleyici ve takipçi potansiyeline sahip olmuştur. Modern imkânlar ile din büyüklerinin hayat hikâyelerine yer veren televizyon dizileri büyük bir başarı yakalamış, bu şahsiyetlerin manevî öğretilerini görselleştirmek ve diziler aracılığıyla bunu insanlara aktarmak önem kazanmıştır. Bu sebeple birden çok dini karakterin hayatına televizyon dizilerinde yer verilmiş, satır aralarında okunan bu karakterler ekranda canlılık ve somutluk kazanmıştır. TRT 1 kanalında tarihi/dini temalı dizi filmlerde gösterilen, Türk-İslam tarihi adına büyük öneme sahip olan İmam Gazâlî, Tapduk Emre ve Mahperi Hunat Hatun'un örneklem olarak seçildiği çalışmada bu karakterlerin ekranda sunumu üzerinde durulmuştur. Çalışmanın evrenini televizyonda dini/tasavvufi karakterler, örneklemini ise sayılan isimler oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı bu şahsiyetlerin ekranda nasıl gösterildiğini araştırmaktır. Anlatı analizi yönteminin tercih edildiği çalışma sonucunda, incelenen karakterlerin çoğunlukla başarılı bir şekilde ekranlara aktarıldığı, bazen de gösterilen ile karakterin gerçekte uyuşmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diriliş Ertuğrul, Mahperi Hunat Hatun, Uyanış Büyük Selçuklu, Gazali, Yunus Emre Aşkın Yolculuğu

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Introduction

For years, Turkish television channels have recycled similar themes and series like a never-ending loop. However, in recent years, a new trend has emerged where TV series with diverse and original topics have been produced, and these productions have gained popularity among the public due to their quality (Ballı, 2020). With the capital generated by their widespread success, producers have increased the overall quality of these series, ultimately enabling them to enter the global television market (Kutlu, 2022a, p. 151). Historical or religious characters adapted from real life to fiction have garnered attention in recent years, with audiences following these productions. Television series, in fact, bear the imprints of the society in which they are created. Through the portrayal of characters on screen, the social, cultural, and ideological values of the society are vividly presented to the viewers. Consequently, these characters are perceived by the audience as indicators of societal life (Kutlu, 2022b, p. 691).

Prominent figures from the realm of Sufism, such as Sheikh Edebali, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Yusuf Hemedani, Ahi Evran, Imam Ghazali, Yunus Emre, and Tapduk Emre, have been making appearances on screens since 2014. This trend, initiated under the umbrella of TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), commenced with the series "Diriliş: Ertuğrul" in 2014, followed by "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu" in 2015, "Payitaht Abdülhamid" in 2017, "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu" in 2020, "Mavera" in 2021, and "Aşkın Yolculuğu: Hacı Bayram-ı Veli" in 2022. These developments in the television series industry are considered a revolutionary accumulation of spiritual capital, not only for our country but also for all Muslim communities.

In light of this, this study focuses on the transition of religious or spiritual personalities from books to screens. The research examines how Imam Ghazali, Tapduk Emre, and Mahperi Hunat Hatun are portrayed on screen. Emphasizing the need for the presentation of Islamic or spiritual characters within a religious framework, the study occasionally compares events depicted on screen with the sources. The research is conducted from the perspective of narrative analysis, with a focus on religious values.

The figure under investigation in this research, Ghazali, is a thinker who regarded theology as an intellectual branch of knowledge, emphasized that it is not necessary for everyone at all times, and believed that someone in each locality should engage in this discipline to purify hearts of doubt concerning bid'ah (innovation) and deviation from the right path (Özerverli, 1996, p. 505). Ghazali, an eminent theologian and Sufi moralist, garnered a wide readership and is unquestionably one of the most influential thinkers in Islamic history (Casewit, 2020). His writings have received more academic attention in the West than those of any other Muslim scholars (Mitha, 2001). In addition to Ghazali, this research also evaluates the profile of Tapduk Emre, an understated master of spiritual significance and a virtually unknown mentor of Yunus Emre (Gölpınarlı, 2019), a spiritual folk hero (Duyamaz, 2019). Lastly, the study explores how Mahperi Hunat Hatun, the wife of I. Alaeddin Keykubad, one of the most powerful sultans of the Seljuk Empire (Turan, 1971), the mother of II. Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev, and one of the most important women in history (Edhem, 2011), is portrayed on screen (Çayırdağ, 2022).

1. Historical/Religious Films on Television

Television, as the most prevalent mass communication medium (Zorlu, 2016, p. 14), has captured attention by combining motion, sound, color, and light, appealing to multiple senses, and has become an indispensable part of human life (Büyükbaykal, 2007, p. 31). It has achieved a distinctive position with its unique storytelling style, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Television, possessing multiple features, is more effectively utilized compared to other mass communication tools (Oğuz, 2000, p. 27). Furthermore, its popularity has not waned among viewers since it includes broadcasts covering a wide range of topics, including historical, religious,

social, cultural, and both the old and the new, blending them seamlessly. For instance, television series have the ability to make historical events or periods intriguing. This intrigue stems from the dynamic nature and structure of the medium. By visualizing past realities alongside fiction, television maintains viewer interest. In historical films, when an event or individual is depicted, emphasis is placed on the human aspects, not limited to themes like war or death alone; historical events are interpreted and analyzed (Öztaş, 2007, p. 104).

Today, historical series, which serve as electronic platforms where tradition is updated, not only focus on characters and events but also provide viewers with insights into the psychological, socio-economic, cultural, and sociological values of the respective era. Moreover, individuals who engage in learning through multiple sensory organs tend to have higher retention rates. In this context, information acquired through series tends to stay in memory more effectively (Ocak and Selimoğlu, 2016, p. 433).

In series where both historical and religious themes converge, it is observed that religion becomes more widespread among wider audiences through mass communication mediums (Arslan, 2016, p. 5). These series do not confine their subjects solely to wars or inter-state diplomatic relations. Instead, historical narratives are enriched through cinematic possibilities, allowing the storyline to be explored comprehensively. The central characters in these productions hold significant importance in the lives of society members (Kirtepe, 2015, p. 119). Characters depicted on screen serve as role models for some viewers, with certain scenes from the series being perceived as fragments of real life. Furthermore, locations featured in the series leave an impression on viewers, leading to physical visits to these places. Within the scope of this study, the Bilecik-Söğüt region depicted in the "Diriliş: Ertuğrul" series saw an increase in visits by both domestic and foreign tourists after the series began airing, with a noticeable surge in tourism activity and an influx of tourists to shrine areas (Şahin & Acar, 2021, p. 2).

2. Methodology

In this study, films depicting the lives of significant figures in Sufi literature, such as Ghazali and Tapduk Emre, along with Mahperi Hunat Hatun, who is recognized as a religious leader due to her contributions to religious and historical structures during the Seljuk period, are examined. The primary objective of this research, which focuses on the appearances of these spiritual figures on television and their narrative characteristics, is to investigate how these personalities are portrayed on screen. The study questions how the lives of these figures, who hold great value in Islamic history and especially in the field of Sufism, are presented in different forms on screen. To achieve this, the study examines three TV series broadcast on TRT 1 channel.

The universe of the study is comprised of spiritual characters on television, and the sample includes Imam Ghazali, Tapduk Emre, and Mahperi Hunat Hatun. The reason for selecting only these three figures among the various spiritual characters is the necessity for an in-depth exploration of each character's life, making it impractical to cover all religious characters in a single study. It has been observed that studies on these three names are lacking in the literature. Additionally, the extended broadcast duration of the examined series, resulting in lengthy episodes, posed a challenge to the research. The comprehensive identification of each character's presentation in the series required considerable time. The TV series under scrutiny are as follows: "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu (2020)," "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu (2015)," and "Diriliş: Ertuğrul (2014)". During the research process, these three TV series were analyzed using narrative analysis methodology, with an in-depth examination of the scenes featuring the studied characters.

Narrative analysis discerns the ways in which human experiences are constructed within stories. It provides researchers with a rich framework to explore how people experience the world through the stories they tell (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 21). Narrative analysis is effective in investigating and interpreting the internal structures and components of stories, examining three

types of objects: the nature of the events narrated, how individuals grasp those events, and discourses related to the understanding of events (Edwards, 1997, p. 271). When storytellers narrate an experience, they give it a narrative form to make sense of the subject and employ tools in the narrative experience to express meaning to others (Bamberg, 2012, p. 3). In this study, the research objects are the films, which are considered narrative tools. "Meaning expression" pertains to spiritual characters of historical significance, while the "narrator" refers to the characteristics of characters depicted on screen. These characteristics are examined within the context of dialogue, human relationships, lighting, sound, camera angles, screenplay, plot progression, music, costumes, and set design, thereby dissecting the structures that construct the character on screen.

Narrative analysis, a prevalent and widely employed form of discourse analysis (Cortazzi, 1994, p. 157), often presented in story format (Riessman, 1993), offers a multi-disciplinary approach, including biography, oral history, life history, storytelling, and life narrative (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). This method examines and interprets narrative texts that are rich in sociological information (Franzosi, 1998, p. 517) and holistic stories describing people's lives. To utilize this method effectively, it is essential to identify narrative themes within the cultural event structures and main narratives of the story (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

Previous studies on the subject of the research are as follows: The study titled "Analysis of the Character-Theme Relationship in TV Series Music in Particular to "Awakening: Great Seljuk" TV Series Music" conducted by Özge Yıldız (2022) investigated the importance of TV series music with descriptive analysis and content analysis methods. Another study titled "The Effect of History-Themed TV Series and Films on Social Studies Course: A Qualitative Analysis" by Kenan Baş and Ahmet Edi (2021) analyzed the impact of the "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu" series, as well as "Payitaht Abdülhamid," "Kuruluş Osman," and "Muhteşem Yüzyıl," on the Social Studies course based on teacher opinions. Gülten Küçükbasmacı (2016) examined the topic through the concept of intertextuality in the study "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu: An Intertextual Approach to Television Series from the Perspective of Texts," focusing on Yunus Emre. Hüseyin Kürşat Türkan (2021) conducted the study "An Evaluation of the Tales Featured in the 'Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu' TV Series," which aimed to identify and analyze the tales in the series. Mustafa Kaya (2018) explored the impact of media on social and religious practices through the "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu" series. Selinay Yilmazer and Ozan Âşık (2021) conducted a reception study titled "An Investigation into the Image of Ottoman-Turkish Women Presented in the 'Diriliş: Ertuğrul' Series," focusing on characters such as Hayme Ana, Halime Sultan, and Selcan Hatun in the series. In this study, the portrayal of spiritual characters in TV series is investigated, with a specific focus on characters played in these series.

3. Analysis

Below, general information about the examined series is provided, followed by the analysis section. During the analysis process, reference has been made to written sources that depict the lives of the individuals in question. Each character has been examined under a separate heading. 'Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu': This TV series, a Turkish historical, drama, and fiction production, commenced airing on TRT 1 in September 2020. The screenplay was crafted by Serdar Özönel and Emre Konuk, with direction undertaken by Sedat İnci and Emre Konuk. The production was overseen by Akli Film Production. While the series narrates events from the Seljuk era in Turkish history, it also extensively features the spiritual figure Gazâlî, who lived during the same epoch. At the inception of the series, a note asserts, "The inspiration for the story and characters in the series is drawn from our history." The series concluded its first season with its 34th episode and subsequently, starting from the second season, it was retitled as "Alparslan: Büyük Selçuklu."

'Yunus Emre Aşkın Yolculuğu': A spiritual-themed series that aired on TRT 1 from June 18, 2015, to May 24, 2016. The screenplay was meticulously prepared by Mehmet Bozdağ and İsa Yıldız, with initial direction by Kamil Aydın and later, Emre Konuk. The production duties were carried out

on behalf of Tekden Film by Mehmet Bozdağ. Throughout the series, equal prominence was given to Tapduk Emre, who was Yunus Emre's mentor. In the first episode of the series, it is stated, "This project was prepared based on the Yunus Emre narrative from Ibrahim Has's 'Tezkireyi Has' and Mustafa Tatcı's compilations."

'Diriliş: Ertugrul': This television series of historical and fictional nature, produced by Tekden Film, debuted on TRT 1 on December 10, 2014. The screenplay team included Mehmet Bozdağ, Atilla Engin, and Aslı Zeynep Peker Bozdağ. Metin Günay assumed the directorial role for the series. Besides depicting historical figures such as İbn-i Arabi, Şeyh Edebali, and Ahi Evran, the series also featured the spiritual figure Mahperi Hunat Hatun. The series concluded with its 150th episode. The messages conveyed in the series can be considered as a precursor to those presented in the 'Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu' series. They are interconnected with the circumstances under which the Ottoman Empire was established, closely associated with the Seljuk State (Ballı, 2020).

3.1. Ghazali

In this section, the on-screen portrayal of Imam Ghazali, one of the prominent Islamic scholars who was born in 1058 (450 H) and died in 1111 (505 H), is examined. One of the significant series that introduces figures contributing spiritually to the Anatolian region is the series "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu (2020)." Scenes featuring Imam Ghazali have been analyzed in this series until the 34th episode. In the context of narrative analysis, which is the first step in narrative analysis, it is important to note that Ghazali is not the main character of the series but is portrayed as a historical religious scholar integrated into the narrative.

Ghazali, whose works numbered in the thousands (2022, p. 42), was an exceptional personality who combined religious rulings with the principles of Sufism (Köprülü, 1976, p. 219). His skill in writing is attributed to brevity, clarity, and conciseness (Casewit, 2020). He was commonly known by his honorific title "Hujjat al-Islam," and his full name was Abu Hamid (Çağrı, 1996). In the series, the name Ghazali is frequently mentioned alongside his honorific title Abu Hamid, presenting his scholarly profile to the viewers. Ghazali is known for being more appealing to general readers in Türkiye rather than the academic community, paradoxically (Ayni, 1911). Ghazali, portrayed in the series, has extended his influence from history into the present day through the medium of television. The need for scholars in his era (Gazâlî, 2012) is still significant in contemporary times, perhaps even more so.

The narrative tool used in the film is constructed around the themes of political and religious conflicts. Ghazali lived in a period when political and ideological differences were prevalent. During this time, the Abbasid caliph's rule in Baghdad was weakening, while the Great Seljuk Empire was expanding its borders and influence. Ghazali lived during the reigns of the rulers of this empire, Alp Arslan, Malik Shah, and Sultan Sanjar. In addition to political turmoil, this era also witnessed intellectual and ideological complexities, with attempts to spread Mu'tazilite doctrines. During this period, Islamic scholars who defended Islamic beliefs, including Ghazali (2022, p. 42), wrote responses to non-authoritative teachings and confronted philosophers such as the Batinites and the Meşşai (Özervanlı, 1996, p. 507). Ghazali aimed to expose the nature of teachings without evidence, thus undermining the notion that the philosophers' knowledge was superior to revelation (Griffel, 2016, p. 191), and he gained a significant position in the history of Muslim thought (Mitha, 2001). According to Ibn al-Arabi, Ghazali was a spiritual pole (Uludağ, 1996, p. 517). Presenting figures like Imam Ghazali in television series has been considered a positive development for the television industry. Unlike the past, especially during the Yeşilçam cinema era, where religious figures were often demeaned, television series have showcased a higher level of performance. In the series, the portrayal of Imam Ghazali highlights his scholarly contributions as well as his role as a guiding figure within the political context of the Seljuk era. Thus, this character becomes an integral part of the story. His scholarly character does not get lost amidst the prevailing

political themes in the narrative. In the series, Ghazali comes to Isfahan, mingling with the people, unyielding in defending the faith and teachings. The character aligns with his scholarly profile.

In the series, he was involved in scientific debates, accused of being a scientist of logic, and also accused of being close to Sultan Melikşah and causing discord. In the 6th episode, when an arrow is shot into his chest, he expresses his deliverance with the words, "This book became an armor protecting us from evil arrows" (İnci, 2020, min.13, sec. 17). The editing technique allows scene transitions and time travel within the series. Ghazali mentions that he delved into the depths of knowledge from his early years (2022, p. 6). He fought against those who misinterpreted aspects of religion (Bağdadi, 2014, p. 31). Ghazali's extraordinary memory (Çağrı, 1996, p. 490) is demonstrated within the film's narrative. These scenes continually depict him being engrossed in books, reflecting the life of a scholar and his profession, with a medrese setting filled with books that represent the transfer of knowledge and the teacher-student relationship. In the 12th episode, when asked how he conducted judicial affairs in the presence of the Sultan, he responded with, "Knowledge is only sought for the sake of Allah" (İnci, 2020, min. 82, sec. 27). These lines serve as an example of religious discourse conveyed effectively through the screens. Ghazali is portrayed as a perfect religious figure with his intellect and political acumen in a scene in the 23rd episode. When a merchant arrogantly places a bag of gold on the table to help build a madrasah, Ghazali responds by saying, "The scholars who will be educated in the madrasah to be established with this gold may one day deviate from the right path" (İnci, 2020, min. 33, sec. 50). These scenes, supported by the script, paint the picture of a distinguished religious scholar who is capable of handling even the most heated debates without showing impatience. He patiently listens to his opponents. In his portrayed scenes, he maintains his dignity while preserving his politeness. This is where the third mechanism of narrative analysis, 'the narrator,' comes into play, where gestures and expressions support the narrative. When examining the cinematic representation of a historical figure like Ghazali, it becomes evident that camera angles, casting, dialogues, lighting, coloring, set design, costumes, and other elements attribute a sense of sacredness to the character. The film uses images to stimulate thought and generate meaning (Bazin, 2005), and it has the potential to convey what words alone cannot (Balázs, 2013).

In the 8th episode, Ghazali addresses a young child as "Müderris Efendi," (İnci, 2020, min. 70, sec. 40) sits him down, and answers his questions. The camera angle in these scenes is eye-level, reflecting Ghazali's compassionate and humble nature. Ghazali's indescribable spiritual doctrine (Gianotti, 2001) is depicted through heartwarming and soul-touching expressions he uses towards people. The large hall in the middle of the madrasah, illuminated from above, is imbued with a sense of sanctity, while the rooms on the sides are kept in darkness. This sets the spiritual atmosphere of Ghazali in the central hall. In the 19th episode, he intervenes to prevent a group from inciting conflict among the people. He says, "You find reasons for rebellion within yourselves," (İnci, 2020, min. 55, sec. 37) aiming to prevent chaos and conflicts in society. In these scenes, his behavior and statements, constructed with the support of the screenplay, portray Ghazali as a unifying and reconciliatory figure. With his identity that explains the 'expression of meaning,' Ghazali has demonstrated throughout his life a unique approach to associating the good with the beautiful (Vasalou, 2022).

In the 7th episode, when heretical books are gathered to be burned, the scenes are filmed from a wide angle to foreshadow the impending great difficulties. In a scene emphasizing the 'expression of meaning,' Ghazali intervenes at the last moment, saying, "Ideas are engraved in minds; books are merely a means," (İnci, 2020, min. 63, sec. 20) highlighting the importance of ideas over books. Ghazali is depicted as a combative character amidst these conflicts.

In the 26th episode, he consoles and comforts someone who is crying, saying, "Tears are the interpreter of the heart. They convey what words cannot" (İnci, 2020, min. 78, sec. 46). In these scenes, Ghazali walks down a corridor with light streaming in from a window, while the crying

person's face is half visible and half in shadow. The unlit part symbolizes the person's psychological state. Ghazali is not merely known as a scholarly religious figure but also has a Sufi identity (Akın, 2016, p. 402). In the series, his introduction to Sufism is portrayed in the following manner: When he visited the renowned Sufi Yusuf Hamedani, he was handed a bucket at a well and told, "Draw water, my child." Ghazali drew water, but since the bucket had a hole, the water did not stay inside and flowed away. Holding the empty bucket, Yusuf Hamedani said, "If the water were in the bucket as much as the bucket is in the water, it would have quenched our thirst." Through the metaphor of water and the bucket, Yusuf Hamedani explains to Ghazali that he should turn from external and rational knowledge to internal and esoteric knowledge. In the series, Yusuf Hamedani is portrayed as Ghazali's master. Ghazali's encounter with Sufism has been presented as a significant turning point in his life. The scenes involving Ghazali are presented in costumes that reflect the modesty of the characters, in line with the identity of 'the narrator.' The costumes, simple and devoid of extravagance, contribute to the portrayal of the characters' humility. The examined TV series, "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu," does not neglect Ghazali's spiritual dimension but presents him not just as a scholar but also as a figure deeply involved in Sufi practices. The events depicted in the series, along with the locations where they occur, create a cohesive narrative. Moreover, the dialogues attempt to reflect the language of the time.

In conclusion, the TV series "Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu" portrays Imam Ghazali as a concrete embodiment of the narrative tool in narrative analysis. The events that the series has concretized as 'the expression of meaning' have contributed visually to Sufi literature. Ghazali's image and teachings serve as a successful example of how a mystic can be portrayed on screen as 'the narrator' mechanism. The narrative and plot structures of the examined TV series have been constructed faithfully to the original story. The music and settings within the series have created a unity with the narrative, and the dialogues attempt to reflect the speech of the era.

3.2. Tapduk Emre

Another television production that introduces Sufi figures is the series "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu" (2015). In this section, the 44 episodes of "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu" are examined, focusing on the characters Yunus Emre and his master Tapduk Emre, who are positioned as the main protagonists in the narrative. These two distinguished figures from Sufi history are presented to the viewers through their exemplary behavior and discourse in the series, with both of them playing the role of "narrative analysis." In the series, Tapduk Emre is portrayed as a constant guide to people, just as he was in real life, through his teachings. It has been observed that Tapduk Emre's costumes and dialogues, in terms of "expression of meaning," reflect his maturity.

While the series does narrate events from Yunus Emre's life, it is Tapduk Emre's teachings that have the most powerful impact on the overall theme of the series. As the dominant "narrator" in the series due to his teachings, Tapduk Emre is portrayed as a person with a smiling face, extremely gentle in nature. In real life, Yunus Emre is widely recognized as a folk poet, while Tapduk Emre is a Sufi figure about whom little is known when one examines the literature. Perhaps for this reason, Tapduk Emre takes a more prominent role in the series. It is mentioned that Tapduk Emre's eyes were blind (Tatçı, 2012). In the early episodes of the series, Tapduk Emre's eyes are shown as partially blind, emphasizing his role as a "narrator" who explains unseen phenomena. In the 1st episode, he often mentions that he cannot see (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 42, sec. 33), in the 3rd episode, he states that he can see but with his eyes half-closed (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 3, sec. 10), and in the 42nd episode, he is depicted as completely blind (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 85, sec. 4). This characteristic of the "narrator" explaining unseen facts has facilitated the understanding of abstract concepts in the script. At one point, there is a famine in Yunus Emre's hometown, and he comes to Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, whose goodness he has heard of, to ask for wheat. This event, shown as a dream in the 6th episode, includes a conversation where Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli asks, "What if I gave you blessings instead of wheat?" (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 27, sec. 3). This dream sequence is

visualized on screen through cinematic techniques. Yunus initially asks for wheat but later realizes his mistake and returns. Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli informs him that the time has passed, and he has given the key to his heart to Tapduk Emre. Yunus then goes to Tapduk Emre's dergah. Shown with his back turned to Yunus in the same episode, Tapduk Emre, through his "feeling" characteristic, senses Yunus's arrival before even seeing him and asks, "If you are Yunus, then where is Judge Yunus?" Yunus responds with "He has passed away," (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 39, sec. 2) and thus, Yunus Emre embarks on a love journey that will last for many years. Throughout the series, wide-angle shots of roads are often used as an evocative element to narrate the protagonist's journey of love.

In the 7th episode, as an auxiliary factor in the "expression of meaning," the lower self (nafs) is shown through a mirror. This abstract concept is visualized on screen through cinematic editing techniques, with Yunus's lower self continuously speaking (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 50, sec. 43). In the 25th episode, Tapduk Emre forgives Yunus for all his mistakes and accepts him as his disciple (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 58, sec. 59). The "narrative analysis" structure of the series is built upon Tapduk Emre's boundless tolerance. In the 34th episode, Tapduk Emre tells Yunus Emre, "Love removes human rudeness and matures them," (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 64, sec. 20) in the 36th episode, he says, "We have come to mend hearts," (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 63, sec. 10) and in the 42nd episode, he looks at the firewood gathered by Yunus and asks, "Isn't there a single crooked piece of wood in the mountains?" Yunus responds, "Even the crooked ones cannot enter your dergah" (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 44, sec. 50). In the context of "expression of meaning," Tapduk Emre's teaching room, kitchen, and the place where his family stays are frequently shown with historical and spiritual decorations.

The most well-known story in the companionship of Tapduk Emre and Yunus Emre is the threshold event (Duymaz, 2019, p. 9). According to Köprülü (1976), Yunus Emre returned to his master's side forty years later. The wife of his master said, "When he asks who you are, I will say you are Yunus. If he asks, 'Is this our Yunus?' then understand that your ordeal is over." The next morning, when his master asked, "Is this our Yunus?" Yunus Emre fell to his feet (p.169). In the series, this event is depicted in the 42nd (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 82, sec. 9) and 43rd episodes (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 9, sec. 10), with close-up shots emphasizing the significance of the threshold. In these scenes, antique items are used as props, and the setting is illuminated with candlelight to match the context. In the 44th episode, Tapduk Emre says, "We have enthusiasm, my Yunus Emre, recite poetry so that the souls can hear," (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 51, sec. 1) and Yunus Emre begins to recite his poems. In these scenes, emotional background music is used to complement the "expression of meaning" and the "narrative analysis" element. The music enhances character awareness in the context of "expression of meaning" and strengthens the narrative through its role as a "narrator."

In most episodes of the series, scenes of Tapduk Emre talking to Yunus are depicted in historical settings, with dim lighting, historical costumes, and emotional background music, creating an atmosphere for the Sufi theme of the narrative. At times, while having conversations indoors, Tapduk and Yunus Emre are shown listening to the nightingale's song in the garden in the 21st episode (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 30, sec. 20). To complete the "expression of meaning," Tapduk Emre is portrayed throughout the series as a person for whom every action and word results in goodness and beauty. As a "narrator," in each episode, he imparts knowledge that guides people. For example, in the 35th episode, he tells Yunus Emre, "Whomever we love, their name should always be on our tongues," (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 34, sec. 35) explaining the subtleties of the path of love. In the 5th episode, he says, "We don't know who we are, but we know that we are not a sheikh," (Aydın & Konuk, 2015, min. 33, sec. 20) demonstrating his humility. Additionally, in the 36th episode, Tapduk Emre addresses his students he encounters in the courtyard as "Beloveds" (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 39, sec. 59). His words reflect his loving inner world, and throughout the series, he uses this affectionate expression. In the same episode, after

finishing a lesson, he says to a young boy named Ismail, "You've done enough for today, Ismail. If you wish, you may leave," (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 48, sec. 40) showcasing his profound humility. In another instance, in the 15th episode, when he is released from prison, he addresses Sencer, who is said to be one of the fiercest thieves in Nallıhan, with the words, "Come to us anytime you like, Sencer. You can have a bowl of soup in our humble abode." (Aydın and Konuk, 2015, min. 25, sec. 30). These expressions of goodwill are considered cinematic elements that reflect his boundless tolerance (Sert, 2021, p. 53). Tapduk Emre, who mended the broken hearts of his time but whose trace was lost in history (Tatcı, 2012), has come to life on screens through cinematographic elements and reached millions of viewers. The task of conveying and introducing him, a task that books might accomplish in the long run and perhaps with difficulty, has been successfully executed by the television industry in a short time. In conclusion, the series "Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu" is evaluated as a visual narrative book that encompasses the personality and teachings of Tapduk Emre.

3.3. Mahperi Hunat Hatun

Another important character who made a spiritual contribution to the Anatolian region but has limited information available about her life, like Tapduk Emre discussed in the previous section, is Mahperi Hunat Hatun. This character gained prominence on screens through the highly popular historical drama series "Diriliş: Ertuğrul," considered the pinnacle of historical drama production (Carney, 2018, p. 93).

Mahperi Hunat Hatun, originally known as Mahperi Hatun, meaning "moonlight," became the wife of Sultan I. Alâeddin Keykubâd and took on this name after her marriage (Gisèle, 2009). Mahperi Hatun was 18 years old when she got married (Bildirici, 2019) and initially a Christian, later converted to Islam by her own will (Turgut, 2015) during her lifetime. She passed away between 1254-1284 (Bekmez, 2020, p. 168). Hunat Hatun, who was the first wife of Alâeddin Keykubat, is considered the most virtuous among his four wives (Demir, 2020, p. 309). Hunat Hatun was known for her virtuous deeds (Hacıgökmen, 2012, p. 127) and for transmitting the beauty of Islamic-Turkish culture to future generations (Oral, 2014, p. 1). However, some debates (Türkmen, 2010) have placed her under suspicion regarding the death of Alâeddin Keykubat.

In the TV series, she is similarly portrayed as being responsible for the death of Seljuk Sultan. In the 109th episode of the series (Günay, 2014, min. 88, sec. 5), Sultan Gıyasettin confronts Hunat Hatun regarding the death of Seljuk ruler Alâeddin Keykubat. In their conversation, the Sultan asks his mother about her relationship with Emir Sadettin Köpek. Sultan Gıyasettin angrily accuses his mother, asking if she had a relationship with Emir Sadettin when he killed his father. In response, Hunat Hatun admits that Köpek only carried out her orders and says, "My sin is great, but I did it solely for your sake." In these scenes, Hunat Hatun, who confesses to being responsible for Alâeddin Keykubat's death, is portrayed as a character with negative "expression of meaning." She insists that her son, who is angrily wielding his sword and is depicted as a bad person in the context of "expression of meaning," should have Ertuğrul executed, or else the matter will reach them. Enraged, Gıyasettin draws his sword and holds it to his mother's throat, saying, "Don't call me your son, may curses fall upon the day you gave birth to me."

There is no concrete evidence in historical records to suggest that Hunat Hatun was involved in the events surrounding the sudden death of Alâeddin Keykubat, or that she orchestrated the rise of her son II. Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev to the throne and the subsequent removal and murder of Melike Hatun and her children (Bekmez, 2020, p. 169). It is unknown how much Mahperi Hatun knew about what was happening and whether she played a role in the events (Turgut, 2015, p. 10). After her husband's death, she lived as a devout Muslim (Çayırdağ, 2022, p. 123). Her construction of a zawiya in Kayseri İncesu in honor of the great Sufi of the era, Turessan-ı Veli, demonstrates her connection to Sufism (Turgut, 2015, p. 1). However, in the TV series, she is portrayed as debating with the famous Sufi İbn-i Arabi regarding the conspiracy in the 109th episode (Günay, 2014, min.

131, sec. 30). In the court set up in the palace, she tells Ibn-i Arabi, "Your scholarship does not grant you the right to speak in the court of justice."

In all the historical structures built by Hunat Hatun, the expression 'safvetü'd-dünya ve'd-din' is used (Bekmez, 2020, p. 183). These phrases, meaning "the beauty of the world and religion," were not written haphazardly. In "Bezm ü Rezm," historian Aziz bin Erdeşir Esterâbâdî conveys the following information about Hunat Hatun: Her generosity can be seen in the good deeds and charities she performed, which are still evident in various places in Anatolia. The residents of Kayseri unanimously agree on her greatness (Çayırdağ, 2022, p. 158). In the inscriptions of the structures from the Seljuk period, there is a special reference to Mahperi Hatun. Among these attributes are references to her kindness, generosity, purity, justice, and modesty (Demir, 2020, p. 301). Behind the achievements of Alâeddin Keykubad, her sacrifice is also noted (Oral, 2014, p. 9). The fact that she commissioned many religious buildings in Seljuk territory (Bıçak, 2007, p. 125), and even building one was only a dream for most people (Çelik, 2018), is sufficient to understand the true nature of Hunat Hatun's personality (Çayırdağ, 2022, p. 135). The most beautiful evidence of her respect and appreciation is the still-standing Hunat Complex in Kayseri city center (Oral, 2014, p. 1). After all the research, it can be concluded that Hunat Hatun was not heavily involved in palace affairs, turned to good deeds after becoming Muslim, achieved spiritual maturity through her acquaintance with the Sufi Turesan Veli, and ultimately reached high spiritual levels through the influence of Sufism.

In the series, Mahperi Hatun is portrayed quite differently from the qualities described. In episode 109, one of the women defending Ertuğrul Bey says to Hunat Hatun, "I see that everyone in this palace, including you, bows before rank and position." In response, Hunat Hatun says, "Do you even know who you're talking to? Shameless, get out of my palace quickly, or I'll hang you on the gallows with Ertuğrul." Later, when she requests permission to visit Ertuğrul Bey in the dungeon, she says to her mother and husband, "I don't even allow a traitor to meet with his mother and wife, let alone give you a plate of food and a glass of water" (2014, min. 99, sec. 14). Portrayed with a very stern and unforgiving profile, Hunat Hatun is described by other characters in the series as "her heart has turned to stone, she doesn't understand the people's plight." Similarly, in episode 107 of the series, Mahperi Hatun, while talking to Halime Sultan, uses threatening sentences and displays entirely negative facial expressions with her gestures and expressions (Günay, 2014, min. 64, sec. 40). In the scenes where she appears in the series, Hunat Hatun is associated with negative actions, characterized as ruthless and cruel, and depicted with a dark, gloomy atmosphere and emphasized background music, creating an image of a villainous and sinister personality. In episode 106, she displays a negative attitude towards the Margrave Ertuğrul Bey with scenes that could serve as examples of power struggles for the throne (Günay, 2014, min. 61, sec. 6). In episode 107, while talking on the palace balcony in a Altun Aba, she is portrayed as a plotting, ruthless woman who does not like Turks and who is shocked and saddened when the Sultan declares that he will put her son, Kılıçarslan, on the throne (Günay, 2014, min. 41, sec. 22). In the scenes in episode 108, she prepares a death decree in her tent (Günay, 2014, min. 21, sec. 2). In episode 110, she sends a peace letter to the Bilecik Governor and makes efforts to prevent the capture of Söğüt, positioning herself against the future Ottoman State (Günay, 2014, min. 47, sec. 48). In episode 113, when she learns that Emir Sadettin has escaped from his palace room, she uses offensive phrases like "inferior scoundrel." (Günay, 2014, min. 52, sec. 7). In the series, when interpreting the 'meaning expression,' the portrayed Mahperi Hatun is idealized as a negative character, one who tries every way to put her son Gıyasettin on the throne instead of her other son Kılıçarslan, even willing to kill people and poison her husband, making her a villainous character. The negative characteristics of the 'narrator' in the series serve the negative discourse being conveyed. In the scenes in the series, Mahperi Hatun, with a worried, angry, and anxious demeanor, is shown to be a Valide Sultan who engages in palace intrigues not for the sake of the state, but only for the future of her son. The character's wickedness is reflected on her face and surroundings with various images, and the rooms are shown dark. This approach to the discourse in the script also makes the discourse negative. These

thoughts, which were initially presented from the first scene, were supported in various forms such as sound, music, costume, and camera angles. For example, the portrayal of Mahperi Hatun as a proud and arrogant person, a characteristic 'narrator' feature, is achieved through the actor's performance. The character's negativity is reflected on her face and surroundings with low light and close-up shots. The costumes chosen, the actor's voice tone, and the details of the decor are also in line with this. The scenes added to the series for action purposes are not limited to a single episode but continue in many episodes. After achieving her goal, the fact that her son, whom she put on the throne, became an unsuccessful sultan is also attributed to Hunat Hatun. In conclusion, in the narrative method used in the film, which serves as the 'narrator' in the film, the features of 'meaning expression' and 'narrator' are integrated as mechanisms in conveying the negative discourse.

Conclusion

In the examined series, Tapduk Emre and Imam Ghazali have been portrayed on the screen almost as if they were in real life, with their exemplary lives presented to viewers with minimal intervention in historical sources during the scriptwriting process. This is considered a positive development for contemporary audiences and holds the potential to elevate historical and religious productions even further.

The scenes depicting Tapduk Emre and Imam Ghazali on television serve as valuable resources for those interested in Sufism. The Sufi history, usually learned from books, has been conveyed to people through screens. Their lives, words, and teachings have contributed to the world of Sufism in a visual format through the examined series. In the digital age, acquiring knowledge is no longer limited to written works; cinema films and series in the religious context can be seen as visual representations of written texts. Furthermore, due to the high viewership of the examined series, it can be argued that the power of screens has surpassed that of books. *Diriliş Ertuğrul* TV Series, which is at the top of the rating lists in 40 countries where it is broadcast, is followed by an audience of over one billion worldwide (TRT Haber, 2017). *Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu* series broke the rating record in 3 different categories "EU/All People/20+ABC1" (TIAK, 2020). The ratings of *Aşkın Yolculuğu Yunus Emre* series were measured as Total: 2.20, Ab: 3.76, ABC1: 3.30 on January 19, 2016 (Diziler, 2016). The stories of Tapduk Emre and Imam Ghazali have been faithfully adapted, staying true to their origins. The narratives are constructed based on reality, and modern filming techniques have been employed to create these scenes. The music, settings, and decors have been carefully selected to align with the "meaning expression" and the "narrator." Particularly, the shortcomings in costumes, decors, and settings that were present in religious films produced in the 1990s have been successfully addressed in these productions. In conclusion, the "*Yunus Emre: Aşkın Yolculuğu*" series can be regarded as a visual book that presents the Sufi teachings of Tapduk Emre, while the "*Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu*" series can be seen as the concrete embodiment of Imam Ghazali.

However, the situation is different for the third character examined, Mahperi Hunat Hatun. In the film, the course of the story has incorporated this character with a negative "narrator" image. Mahperi Hatun, who, like Hayme Ana or Halime Hatun portrayed in the series, was expected to be depicted as an honest, loyal, and modest character, has been portrayed as a sinful and guilty character, loaded with sins, through the power of screens. It is possible to present Hunat Hatun without making her an accomplice in the dirty games around the palace. Unfortunately, in the process of scripting the series, Hunat Hatun was placed among the antagonistic characters and portrayed differently from her historical reality.

In historical series, great care must be taken in portraying the speech and actions of real characters. Words that a historical character did not actually speak and behaviors that they did not or could not perform should not be included in scenes. The life experiences of historical characters should not be distorted (Öztaş, 2007, p. 106). Portrayed historical figures have sometimes caused

problems in terms of objectivity, leading to discussions. Film producers often claim that they do not compromise on objectivity and that they conduct research and study historical sources while consulting experts in the field. They even explicitly state these elements at the beginning of their films. However, when some series or films are carefully examined, it becomes clear that the situation is not as claimed (Öztaş, 2007, p. 107). In the scope of this study, Hunat Hatun, who was a sincere Muslim, was portrayed on screens in a wrong way. Her great contributions to the Islamic world and modern Türkiye, in line with the geography of Islam during her time, were not accurately represented. During the research process, it was evident that the character portrayed in the series is entirely different from the historical figure who commissioned caravanserais, mosques, tombs, hammams, and complexes, many of which are still standing and actively used today. It is impossible to ignore these religious and historical works.

As the famous Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan said, "Those who want to know me should look at my works" (Kırık, 2022), Hunat Hatun should also be represented in the most beautiful and accurate way through the works she commissioned during her lifetime, which she dedicated to the Turkish and Islamic world. The Hunat Mosque hosts hundreds of people who come to pray every day, at all times of the week. The nearby madrasa, which is right next to her tomb, is now actively used for art workshops, religious counseling services, ghazal workshops, ceramic workshops, illumination and rosary workshops, Neyzen Hüsnü, calligraphy, leather art, spray airbrush workshops, and various other social activities. In conclusion, Hunat Hatun is a respected and honorable figure in history who has left numerous works. From an Islamic perspective, she holds great value. However, presenting her on screen solely as a character who engages in complex palace affairs and political actions, rather than as the person who made significant contributions to society and humanity, is considered a negative aspect of historical drama films.

The accusation that she killed her husband for the sake of her son's future is one of the gravest allegations a person can face. Speculating about historical gaps and trying to elevate certain characters while demeaning others are negative developments in the field of historical and religious drama series. The idea that Hunat Hatun constructed religious buildings to seek forgiveness and make amends at the end of her life is only based on historians' assumptions. There is no concrete evidence to prove this, just as it is essential to thoroughly analyze the beneficial works she left behind.

A person who only lives for themselves and their ambitions cannot be expected to leave behind such remarkable works. These works not only preserve the legacy of the person who created them but also serve humanity. Despite the internal struggles of her time and Mongol invasions, she managed to create these magnificent works (Korkmaz, 2020, p. 153), which she gifted to the world, even centuries later. The absence of a door opening to the outside at her tomb and the fact that access is only possible through two rooms inside the madrasa are clear indications of her intention to avoid status, prestige, and ostentation. Evaluating religious and Sufi characters without examining their works, relying solely on written sources, can lead to various misconceptions. In conclusion, it is expected that films about other famous Sufis who left their mark on Anatolia will be produced, as well. While it remains uncertain which mystics lives will be depicted on screen in the future, it is expected that there will be further satisfying developments in this regard.

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Tarihi-Mistik Karakterlerin Sinematografik Sunumu Üzerine Bir Deęerlendirme

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Geniřletilmiş Özet

Son dönemde çekim teknolojilerinin geliřmesi, televizyona raębetin artması ve dizi film sektörünün popülerlik kazanması gibi nedenlerle tarihi ve dini karakterler televizyon ekranlarında da yer almıř, daha önce olmadığı kadar izleyici ve takipçi potansiyeline sahip olmuřtur. Modern imkânlar ile din büyüklerinin hayat hikâyelerine yer veren televizyon dizileri büyük bir başarı yakalamıř, bu şahsiyetlerin manevi öğretilerini görselleřtirmek ve diziler aracılıęıyla bunu insanlara aktarmak fevkalade önem kazanmıřtır. Bu sebeple birden çok dini karakterin hayatına televizyon dizilerinde yer verilmiř, satır aralarında okunan bu karakterler böylelikle ekranda canlılık ve somutluk kazanmıřtır. Buradan hareketle çalıřma dini veya tasavvufi kiřiliklerin kitaplardan ekranlara aktarılmasını konu edinmektedir. İmam Gazâlî, Tapduk Emre ve Mahperi Hunat Hatun'un örneklem olarak seçildięi çalıřmada bu karakterlerin ekranda nasıl gösterildięi arařtırılmaktadır. İslami veya mistik karakterlerin dini bir çerçeve içerisinde sunulması gerektięine iřaret eden çalıřma bu noktada kimi yerde kaynaklarla ekranda anlatılan olayları karşılařtırmaktadır. Arařtırma, sorunsal gereęi anlatı analizi ile dini deęerler perspektiften yürütölmüřtür. Anlatı analizi, insan deneyimlerinin hikâyelerinde belirlenir. Arařtırmacılara, insanların hikâyeleri aracılıęıyla tasvir edilen dünyayı deneyimleme biçimlerini arařtırabilecekleri zengin bir çerçeve sunar. İnsan hikâyelerinin içsel yapılarını ve bileřenlerini arařtırmada etkili bir yöntem olan anlatı analizi üç tip nesneyi ele alıp incelemektedir; anlatılan olayların doęası, kiřilerin olayları kavrayıřı ve olayların anlaşılmasına iliřkin söylemler. Nitekim anlatıcılar bir hikâye anlattıklarında, bu deneyime 'anlatı biçimi' vererek konuyu anlamlandırmakta ve bu deneyimde konuyu anlamlandırmak için araçlar kullanmaktadırlar. Anlatıcılar başkalarına anlam ifade etmek için bu anlatı araçlarını kullanmaktadırlar. Buradan hareketle bu çalıřmada arařtırma nesnesi, anlatı aracı olarak nitelendirilen filmlerdir. 'Anlam ifadesi' tarihi öneme sahip olan mistik karakterler iken, 'anlatıcı' ise ekranda gösterilen karakterlerin özellikleridir. Bu özellikler çalıřmada diyalog, insani iliřkiler, ıřık, ses, kamera açıları, senaryo, konu akıřı, müzik, kostüm ve dekor bağlamında incelenmektedir. Böylelikle ekranda karakteri inřa eden yapılar çözümlenmektedir.

Arařtırmaya konu olan Gazâlî, bid'atçilere karşı kalpleri řüpheden arındırmak amacıyla her beldede ilimle meřgul olan birilerinin bulunmasını gerekli gören ve kelâm tarihine metodolojik yenilikler getiren tarihi bir kiřiliktir. Tarihin tartıřmasız en etkili düşünürlerinden birisi olmuř ve onun yazıları, Batı'da çok fazla akademik ilgi görmüřtür. Birden çok farklı yönüyle ekranlara getirilen Gazâlî'nin incelenmesinin yanı sıra, Yunus Emre gibi tarihi bir halk kahramanının çok ta tanınmayan üstadı Tapduk Emre'nin ekranlarda karşıımıza çıkarılan profili deęerlendirilmiř, son olarak Selçuklu devletinin en güçlü sultanlarından I. Alaeddin Keykubad'ın eři, aynı zamanda II. Gıyaseddin

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Keyhüsrev'in annesi ve tarihteki en önemli kadınlardan birisi olan Mahperi Hunat Hatun'un ekranlarda nasıl gösterildiği araştırılmıştır.

Çalışma sonucunda, incelenen karakterlerin çoğunlukla başarılı bir şekilde ekranlara aktarıldığı, bazen de gösterilen ile karakterin gerçekte uyuşmadığı tespit edilmiştir. İncelenen dizilerde Tapduk Emre ve İmam Gazâlî, sinema olanaklarıyla neredeyse gerçek hayatta oldukları gibi ekranlara aktarılmış, senaryo sürecinde tarihi kaynaklara çokta müdahale edilmeden örnek hayatları izleyicilerin istifadelerine sunulmuştur. Bu durum günümüz seyircisi için olumlu olarak değerlendirilmekle birlikte tarihi-dini yapımları daha da üst seviyelere taşıyacak gelişmelerdir. Televizyonda canlandırılan Tapduk Emre ve İmam Gazâlî sahneleri tasavvufa ilgi duyan kimseler için birer kaynak niteliğindedir. Kitaplardan okunan tasavvuf tarihi, ekranlar aracılığıyla insanlara ulaştırılmıştır. Yaşantıları, sözleri ve öğretileri incelenen dizilerde görsel formda tasavvuf dünyasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bulduğumuz elektronik çağda bilgiye ulaşmak için artık tek kaynak yazılı eserler değildir. Dini bağlamda sinema filmleri veya diziler yazılı eserlerin bir nevi görselleştirilmiş biçimidir. Hatta incelenen dizilere seyircilerin yoğun ilgisi sonucunda ekranların gücünün kitaplardan daha fazla olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Tapduk Emre ve İmam Gazâlî sahnelerinde olaylar örgüsü konunun aslına sadık kalarak kurgulanmıştır. Anlatı gerçeklik üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Modern çekim teknikleriyle oluşturulan bu sahnelerde, müzik uyumu yakalanmış, mekânlar ve dekorlar 'anlam ifadesi' ve 'anlatıcı'ya son derece uygun olarak seçilmiştir. Özellikle kostüm, dekor ve mekân konusunda 90'lı yıllarda çekilen dini içerikli filmlerdeki eksiklikler bu yapımlarda başarılı bir şekilde tamamlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak 'Yunus Emre Aşkın Yolculuğu' dizisi Tapduk Emre'nin tasavvufi öğretilerinin yer aldığı görsel bir kitap olarak, 'Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu' dizisi de İmam Gazâlî'nin ete kemiğe bürünmüş somut bedeni olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Fakat incelenen üçüncü karakter Mahperi Hunat Hatun'da durum böyle değildir. Filmdeki hikâyenin akışı içerisinde bu karakter olumsuz bir 'anlatıcı' imajıyla aktarılmıştır. Mahperi Hatun tıpkı dizide canlandırılan Hayme Ana veya Halime Hatun gibi dürüst, sadakatli ve iffetli bir karakter olarak gösterilmesi beklenirken ekranların gücüyle 'anlam ifadesi' inşasıyla günah yüklü kötü bir karakter olarak milyonlara gösterilmiştir. Hunat Hatun'un saray dolayında yaşanan kirlî oyunların işbirlikçisi olmadan da gösterilmesi mümkündür. Dizinin senaryolaştırma sürecinde Hunat Hatun, kötü karakterler arasına yerleştirilerek gerçekte olduğundan farklı biri olarak gösterilmiştir. Çalışma kapsamında incelenen, yaşadığı çağdaki İslam coğrafyasına ve günümüz Türkiye'sine çok büyük katkıları olan yüce şahsiyet Hunat Hatun, gerçek hayatında olduğu gibi tanıtılmamıştır. Araştırma sürecinde incelenen kervansaray, cami, türbe, hamam ve külliyesi yaptıran kişi ile dizide gösterilen karakter tamamen birbirine zıttır. Günümüzde hala ayakta duran ve aktif olarak kullanılan bu kadar dini/tarihi eseri görmezden gelmek mümkün değildir. Hunat Hatun'u en güzel ve en doğru anlatacak mekanizma, O'nun hayattayken yaptırdığı, Türk ve İslam dünyasına armağan ettiği eserleridir. Hunat camii haftanın her günü binlerce kişiye namaz kılmak için ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Kabrinin hemen yanı başında duran medrese, günümüzde aktif olarak sanat evi, dini danışmanlık bürosu, gazel atölyesi, çini atölyesi, tezhib ve tespih atölyesi, neyzen hüsnü hat ve ebru atölyesi, resim, kaligrafi deri sanatı, sprej air brush atölyeleri ve daha birçok sosyal faaliyette kullanılmaktadır. Sonuç olarak Hunat Hatun tarihte sayısız eserleriyle iz bırakmış saygıya değer manevi bir kişiliktir. İslam dini açısından değeri haiz olan bir hanımefendinin ekranlarda sadece karmaşık saray işleri ve politik eylemlerin peşinde koşan bir karakter olarak sunulması, tarihi dizi filmlerin olumsuz özelliği olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Oğlunun geleceği için eşini öldürdüğü iddiası bir insanın uğrayacağı en ağır ithamlardan biridir. Tarihi boşlukları tahmini fikirlerle yürütmek, bunu yaparken de bazı karakterleri yüceltmek bazılarını ise alçaltmak tarihi/dini konulu dizi film sektörü adına olumsuz gelişmelerdir. Hunat Hatun'un türlü entrika ve iktidar hırsıyla geçen ömrünün sonunda pişman olup kendini affettirmek amacıyla dini yapılar inşa ettirdiği düşüncesi de sadece tarihçilerin tahmin yürütmelerinden ibarettir. Bunu ispat edebilecek herhangi bir somut kanıt olmadığı gibi, Hunat Hatun'un geride bıraktığı hayırlı eserleri çok iyi bir şekilde analiz etmek gerekmektedir.

Sadece kendisi ve hırsları için yaşayan birinin geride böylesine eserler bırakmayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu eserler hem yapanı hem de yaptıranı yaşatmaktadır. Geçmiş ile gelecek arasında iletişim kuran bu eserlerin birçoğu günümüzde kullanılmaktadır. Hunat Hatun elindeki servetini ve gücünü halkı için, insanlık için kullanmıştır. Yaşadığı dönemdeki iç mücadeleler ve Moğol istilalarına rağmen bu şahane eserleri meydana getirmiş, yüzyıllar sonrasına, tüm insanlığa hediye olarak bırakmıştır. Defnedildiği yerde dışarıya açılan bir türbe kapısının olmaması, kabrinin olduğu yere ancak medrese içindeki iki odadan girilebilmesi onun mevki, makam ve gösterişten uzak durmak istediğinin bariz göstergeleridir. Dini/tasavvufi karakterlerin eserleri incelenmeden sadece yazılı kaynaklardan ilham alarak fikirler yürütmek yukarıda açıklandığı üzere birtakım yanlışlara sebep olabilmektedir. Son söz olarak Anadolu sahasına nüfuz eden diğer ünlü mutasavvıfların filmleri çekilmeyi beklemektedir.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

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Semih Kaplanoğlu Sinemasında Görüntü Yönetimi ve Görsel Dilin Araladığı Anlam Katmanları*

Hasan Ramazan YILMAZ**

Öz

Düşünsel ve estetik yapıları itibarıyla değerli bulunan filmler incelendiğinde görüntü yönetiminin özel bir yere sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Film sanatının önemli bileşenlerinden olan sinematografi farklı düşünsel ve estetik yaklaşımlara dayanan filmlerin birbirlerinden ayrıştıkları ve kendi özgün tarzlarını oluşturdukları noktalardan biridir. Görüntü yönetimiyle özgün bir tarz oluşturmayı başaran yönetmenlerden biri de Semih Kaplanoğlu'dur. Kaplanoğlu'nun insanı bu dünyadaki bağlarından koparmadan, manevi tecrübeleriyle kadraja aldığı görüntüye hikâyeden bağımsızlaşan otonom bir yapı kazandırmakta oldukları görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, Kaplanoğlu sinemasında sinematografik uygulamaların nasıl bir üslup oluşturduğunu ve görüntü yönetiminin filmlerde kurulan düşünsel ve manevi yapının oluşumundaki rolünü tespit etmektedir. Yumurta, Süt, Bal ve Buğday filmlerinde beliren temel anlam ve değerler bağlamında seçilen sahne ve sekanslara ait çekimler kare kare analiz yöntemiyle çözümlenmektedir. Yumurta'da kompozisyonları kadraj dışına açıp, kadrajdaki negatif alanı kadraj dışındaki ruhsal alana bağlayan, Süt'te karakterin ruhsal durumunu kompozisyonun iki ucu arasındaki sınırı geçip geçmeme yönündeki tercihte saklayan, Bal'da düşük ışıklı kompozisyonlarda karakterin ruhsal gerilimini ortaya koyan Kaplanoğlu, Buğday'da ise manevi olanı renklerden arındırılmış bir hayal düzleminde suretlendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Semih Kaplanoğlu, Sinematografi, Görüntü Yönetimi, Görsel Dil, Maneviyat, Zaman

Cinematography in Semih Kaplanoglu Cinema and the Layers of Meaning Revealed by Visual Language

Abstract

When we analyse films that are valuable in terms of their intellectual and aesthetic structures, it is seen that directing of photography has a special place. Cinematography is one of the points where films based on different intellectual and aesthetic approaches differ from each other and create their own unique style. Semih Kaplanoğlu is one of the directors who succeeded in creating a unique style with cinematography. Kaplanoğlu frames the human being with his/her spiritual experiences without detaching him/her from his/her ties in this world. This study analyses how cinematographic practices form the style of Kaplanoğlu's cinema and determines the role of directing of photography in the formation of the intellectual and spiritual structure established in the films. In the context of the key meanings and values in the films Egg, Milk, Honey and Grain, the shots of the selected scenes and sequences are analysed with close analysis method. In Egg, Kaplanoğlu connects the negative space in the frame to the spiritual space outside the frame, he hides the spiritual state of the character in Milk in the choice of whether or not to cross the border between the two ends of the composition, he reveals the spiritual tension of the character in the compositions where the light decreases in Honey, and in Grain, he embodies the spiritual in a dream plane purified from colours.

Keywords: Semih Kaplanoğlu, Cinematography, Directing of Photography, Visual Language, Spirituality, Time

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Giriş

Semih Kaplanoğlu, görüntüyü zamana ve manevi deneyime açan, görselliği ve göstermeyi değil zamana kesintisiz bir varlık alanı sunabilmeyi önceleyen bir sinema anlayışının izini sürmektedir. Kaplanoğlu'nun sinema anlayışındaki en önemli referanslardan biri olan Andrei Tarkovsky, filmin kayda aldığı maddi gerçekliği dolaysız bir şekilde aktarma karakterine ve hayatın kesintiye uğramadan zaman içinde tecrübe edilebilen yalınlığına odaklanmaktadır. Klasik anlatı sinemasında, yalınlığın ortadan kaldırılarak temsilin ve hareketin işlerlik kazandırılmasında önemli bir araç olan sinematografi, Semih Kaplanoğlu filmlerinde saf görsel ve işitsel durumlar ortaya çıkarmakta ve film sanatını zamana ve ruhsal tecrübeye açan en önemli paydaşlardan biri olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Bir filmde görsel kimliğin inşasını sağlayan görüntü yönetimindeki teknik uygulamalar, sinemada anlatı yapısı ve anlam üretimi kapsamında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Görüntü yönetimindeki ilerlemelerin incelenmesi sinemada anlatı geleneklerinin gelişimi ve dönüşümünü anlamak için de rehber niteliğindedir. Kaplanoğlu filmlerindeki görüntü yönetimi uygulamaları analiz edildiğinde ise sinematografik üslubun izleyiciyi karakterlerin ruh haline şahit kılan fonksiyonlar icra ettiği anlaşılmaktadır. Makalede Semih Kaplanoğlu sinemasında görüntü yönetimi uygulamalarının nasıl bir sinematografik üslup ortaya çıkardığı ve bu üslubun Kaplanoğlu filmlerinde kurulan düşünsel ve ruhsal katmanların oluşumunu nasıl etkilediği sorularına yanıt aranmaktadır.

Sinematografi terimi Yunanca'da "hareketle yazı yazmak" anlamına gelmektedir. Yani sinematografinin anlam dairesi hareketli görüntülerin kaydedilmesiyle sınırlı değildir. "Sinematografi fikirleri, kelimeleri, eylemleri, duygusal alt metinleri, tonları ve tüm diğer sözlü olmayan iletişim biçimlerini alarak onları görsel kavramlar diline tercüme eder" (Brown, 2021, s. 2). Sinematografi bütün teknik unsurlarıyla filmin hikâye, oyunculuk gibi parçaları üzerine bu görsel dil ile yazılan anlamları inşa etmektedir. Burada sinematografinin iki ana yönü kendini göstermektedir. İlki filme alma işleminin gerçekleşmesini sağlayan ekipmanların yer aldığı pratik yöndür. Çalışmamız açısından daha önemli ikinci yön ise sinematografik araç ve uygulamaların etik ve estetik yaklaşımlara bağlı olarak görsel hikâye anlatımını mümkün kılmasıdır.

Bir filmin izleyici ile kurduğu bütün iletişim ve ürettiği anlamlar, ortaya çıkan görsel dünya ile söz konusu olur. Hikâyeye ve karakterlere uygun bir görsel dünyanın inşa edilmesinde ise sinematografi devreye girmektedir. Çerçeve/kompozisyon, ışık, renk, doku, lens, hareket, kurucu çekim ve POV (bakış açısı çekimi) gibi farklı paydaşları bir arada buluşturarak film sanatı için en temel uygulama alanı olan sinematografi, film karesinde ortaya çıkan kompozisyon, bu kompozisyonun aydınlatılması, kameranın ve hareketlerinin yönetimi ile film stoğunun negatif edilmesi gibi parçaları kendi çatısı altında birleştirir.

Tematik olarak insanın manevi deneyimlerine ve ruhsal huzuru bulmasına geniş yer ayıran Kaplanoğlu'nun sinematografik üslubu filmlerin anlam dünyasına ciddi katkılar sunmaktadır. Çalışmada, Kaplanoğlu sinemasında sinematografik uygulamaların anlatı yapısı ve anlam üretimine nasıl katıldığı incelenmiş ve üretilen anlamların, karakterlerin eylem ve diyalogları üzerinden değil sinematografi ile kurulan saf görsel, işitsel yapılarla oluşturulduğu saptanmıştır.

Semih Kaplanoğlu, görüntüye otonom bir yapı kazandırmakta olan sinema anlayışını Türk sinemasında hayata geçiren yönetmenler arasında yer almaktadır. Kaplanoğlu, zamanı ve hareketi kesintiye uğratmadan vermeyi tercih ederken, kesintiye uğramayan hareket görünür gerçeklik düzlemindeki maddi halini aşarak zihinsel ve ruhsal bir varlık kazanmaktadır. Karakterin ruhsal kurtuluş ve aşkınlık düzlemi arayışında oldukları Kaplanoğlu sineması, maddi gerçekliğin dolaysız hali üzerinden ruhsal anlam katmanına ilerlemektedir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi, Kapsam ve Sınırlılıkları

Semih Kaplanoğlu filmlerinde görüntü yönetimi alanındaki uygulamalar anlam bütünlüğünün oluşmasını sağlayan estetik faktörler olarak ifade edilebilir. Filmlerde işlenen konular ve neticesinde gözlenen insana, doğaya ve varlığa yönelik keşifler; hikâyelerdeki olay düzeyini önceleyen edebi bir dille değil, imgeleri sinematografik perspektiften müşahedeye açan görsel bir dille anlatılmaktadır.

Çalışmada Kaplanoğlu sinemasında görüntü yönetiminin analizi için başvurulan kare kare analiz yöntemiyle, sahneler içinden seçilen kareler dondurularak sinematografi, anlatı yapısı ve filmde üretilen anlamlar arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Yöntem konusunda sinema tarihi profesörü John Belton'un (2016) çalışması takip edilmiştir. Akademide film çözümlemesi için takip edilen farklı eleştirel metodolojilerin neticede filme dair bir üst-metin ortaya çıkardığını belirten Belton, çözümlemenin filmi hangi açıdan ele aldığına bakılmaksızın bir film hakkında düşünmek için en verimli yöntemin kare kare analiz (close analysis) olduğunu vurgular. İncelediği sahnelerin, kaç farklı çekimden oluştuğunu, seçilen çekimlerin nasıl karelerle açılıp kapandığını inceleyen Belton, analizlerinde kamera açıları ve hareketleri, çekim boyutları, oyuncu performansları ve kompozisyonları değerlendirmektedir.

Film çalışmaları alanındaki bir diğer önemli isim Victor F. Perkins *Film as Film Understanding and Judging Movies* adlı kitabında kare kare analizin işlevini şöyle açıklamaktadır: "Sözlü özet ya da belli görsel kodlarla sunulan kısımların ötesine geçerek bütün anlamların tam olarak idrak edilebilmesi için bir çekimin, sekansın ve filmin tüm yönlerine dikkat edilmesi gerekmektedir" (Perkins, 1972, s. 171). Perkins, anlamın çekimi oluşturan öğelerin bütünlüğü sağlanmadan da oluşabileceğini ancak film biçimindeki öneminin ortaya çıkabilmesi için çekimin parçaları arasındaki uyumun bir zorunluluk olduğunu vurgular (Perkins, 1972, s. 171) Kare kare analiz metodunun bir başka odak noktası olan ses ise sinema kuramcılarında Béla Balázs tarafından vurgulanmıştır. İnsanın içinde bulunduğu akustik çevrenin ve doğadaki gizli fısıltıların, insan konuşmasının çok ötesinde bir dille konuştuğunu belirten Balázs, sesin insanın duygu ve düşüncelerini etkilemekte olduğunu ve odağı bir anda denizin homurtusundan şehrin gürültüsüne çevirebileceğini ifade eder (Balázs, 1952, s. 197). Bu yüzden bir filmin akustığı ekrana düşen görüntülere nazaran insanla çok daha doğrudan konuşur (Balázs, 1952, s. 198).

Araştırmanın kapsamı belirlenirken Semih Kaplanoğlu'nun klasik anlatı ilkelerini uygulayarak çektiği Herkes Kendi Evinde (Kaplanoğlu, 2001) filmi ile Kaplanoğlu'nun "manevi gerçekçilik" sinema anlayışının henüz oluşmadığı bir dönemde çektiği Meleğin Düşüşü (Kaplanoğlu, 2005) filmleri çalışmanın dışında tutulmuştur. Kaplanoğlu'nun ilk uzun metraj filmi Herkes Kendi Evinde, Aristocu mimesis anlayışını merkeze almakta ve karakterini idealize eden bir yapı kurmaktadır. Meleğin Düşüşü filmi Kaplanoğlu'nun dünya görüşü, sanat ve sinema anlayışının kendini bulmaya çalıştığı dönemini yansıması bakımından önemlidir. Kaplanoğlu, bu filmle gündelik hayattaki manevi boyutlara yönelmeye başlamıştır. Kendi çizgisini bulmaya çabaladığı bir dönemde gerçekleştirdiği bir yapıt olan Meleğin Düşüşü filmi, Kaplanoğlu'nun manevi gerçekçilik anlayışının ipuçlarını vermektedir. Bağlılık Üçlemesi'nin ilk filmi Bağlılık Aslı (Kaplanoğlu, 2019) ve ikinci filmi Bağlılık Hasan (Kaplanoğlu, 2021) ise üçlemede ortaya çıkacak ortak sinematografik yapının tümünün; yapımı devam eden üçüncü film henüz izleyici ile buluşmadığı için görülemeyecek olması sebebiyle kapsam dışında tutulmuştur. Kaplanoğlu'nun sinema anlayışında olgunlaşma durakları olarak görülen ve aynı film dilinin inşasında önemli yapıtlar olarak değerlendirilen Yusuf Üçlemesi'nin başlangıç filminden itibaren çekmiş olduğu dört film; Yumurta (Kaplanoğlu, 2007), Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009), Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) ve Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) çözümleme kısmına dahil edilmiştir.

Kaplanoğlu'nun Düşünsel ve Estetik Kaynakları

Semih Kaplanoğlu gençlik yıllarında Fransız sinemasını, ve Alman sinemasını tanıdığı, yoğun bir şekilde film izlediği 5-6 yıllık bir dönem geçirmiştir. Babasının 1958-63 yıllarında, tam da Yeni Dalga akımının ortaya çıktığı yıllarda Fransa'da bulunmuş ve Paris'in birçok noktasında sokaklarda kurulu setleri gözlemlemiş olması ve bu gözlemlerini Semih Kaplanoğlu'na aktarması Kaplanoğlu'nun Avrupa sinemasını genç yaşlarda tanıyabilmesinin önemli etkenlerinden birisidir. Yine bu bağlamda; İzmir'deki Fransız ve Alman kültür dernekleri 70'lerin sonlarından 80'lerin ortalarına kadar Jean Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Jean Vigo, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Robert Bresson, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders ve Rainer Werner Fassbinder gibi çok önemli yönetmenlerin filmlerini yoğun bir şekilde izlemiştir.

Avrupa sinemasıyla olan bu yakınlığına ek olarak, Rum, Yahudi ve İtalyan komşularıyla birlikte yetiştiği kozmopolit toplum da Kaplanoğlu'nun çocukluk ve gençlik yıllarında kişiliğini etkileyen önemli unsurlar arasında yer almıştır. Kaplanoğlu'nun zihin dünyasının ve hayal gücünün gelişimine katkı sağlayan kişilerden biri babaannesidir. Onunla birlikte yaptığı seyahatler, gittiği beldeler, gördüğü farklı yaşam alanları ve mimari yapılar Kaplanoğlu'nun estetik görüşünü daha küçük yaşta zenginleştirirken, İslam düşünce ve sanat anlayışının izlerini taşıyan Mesnevi'den dinlediği hikâyeler hayal dünyasını genişletmiş, insanın ruhsal varlığı ve metafiziğe dair ilk tecrübelerini de bu seyahatlerde elde etmiştir. Semih Kaplanoğlu çocukluk yıllarını anlatırken mucizeler, evliyalar ve hikâyelerin gündelik hayatın parçaları olduğunu ifade etmektedir (Şirin, 2010, s. 26).

Kaplanoğlu'nun düşünce dünyasına ve sanat anlayışına katkısı olan isimlerden bir diğeri ressam Erol Akyavaş'tır. Eserlerinde Hristiyanlık, Musevilik ve özellikle de İslamiyet'e dair sembol ve yazıları kullanan Akyavaş, görünür gerçekliğin ardındaki görünmeyen, aşkın unsurlara odaklandığını, bu nedenle de resimlerinde hep bir batını yön olduğunu ifade etmektedir (Akkurt, 2013, s. 66). Özellikle sinema birikimini oluştururken Batı dünyasının üst düzey yönetmenlerinden beslenmiş olan Kaplanoğlu, yönetmenlik kariyerine başlamadan önce tanıştığı ressam Erol Akyavaş ile birlikte doğu dünyasının varlık ve sanat anlayışı ile irtibat kurmaya başlamıştır. İlahi olan ve duyu ötesi varlıkların hakikati üzerine kurulu inanç sistemlerine dair bir kavrayış geliştiren Kaplanoğlu, İslamiyet, Hristiyanlık, Budizm, Taoizm gibi inanışlarda fizik ve metafizik olanın ilişkisini görerek sinemayı ve sanatı daha farklı düzlemleriyle okumaya başlamıştır.

İlk uzun metraj filmini çekmeden önce televizyon, dizi ve reklamcılık sektörlerini tanıyan ve buralarda yaptığı işlerle hem geçimini sağlayıp hem de sinema filmi için bir sermaye oluşturmaya çalışan Kaplanoğlu, bu yıllarda içinde bulunduğu mesleki sistemin kendisine sunduğu materyalist bakış açısıyla dünyayı, insanları, içinde bulunduğu şehir ve kültürü okumakta, yorumlamakta kısır bir alana, oryantalist bir bakış açısına sıkıştığını ifade etmektedir. Bu sıkışmışlık nedeniyle sinema alanında istediği derinleşmeyi yakalayamayan Semih Kaplanoğlu için Batı'nın entelektüel ve sanatsal birikimi önemli olmakla birlikte Türkiye'nin bulunduğu coğrafyada Batı'nın irrasyonel olarak karşıladığı inanç, sanat, ilim ve kültür gibi unsurların bileşiminden oluşan geleneğin sahiplenilmesi sanatsal üretim açısından çok daha kritik olmuştur. İkinci uzun metraj filmi Meleğin Düşüşü'nü çektiği dönemde filmin ana karakterini fiziksel ve ruhsal bir bütün olarak ortaya çıkarmak için psikolojinin ve pozitif bilimlerin yeterli gelmediğini anladığını belirten Kaplanoğlu, hayatındaki ve sinema anlayışındaki seyri şu şekilde açıklamaktadır:

Maneviyatı gündelik hayata dahil etme sürecine girmiştik. Bir geçiş dönemindeydim... Kafamda giderek netleşen bir şey var, o da sinemanın manevi bir alan olduğu. Bunu sadece İslami bir bakışla ya da herhangi bir tek tanrılı bakışla söylemiyorum, inanca çok daha genel bir perspektiften bakarak sinema yapmaktan söz ediyorum (aktaran Şirin, 2010, s. 93).

Burada Kaplanoğlu'nun sinemaya, Türkiye'de 1970'lerden itibaren örnekleri görülen İslami değerlerin temsil edildiği bir anlayışla yaklaşmadığı vurgulanmalıdır. Kaplanoğlu filmlerinin Türk Sinema tarihinde İslami mücadele perspektifinden ortaya konan sinema tecrübesinin bir devamı

niteline olmadığı ve Müslümanların sahip olabileceği ruhsallığa dair bir çağrı ve arayış söz konusuysen, bunun herhangi bir güncel dini meselenin üzerine gidilmeden yapıldığının altı çizilmelidir. Kaplanoğlu'nun Yusuf Üçlemesi'nde kendini gösteren "manevi gerçekçilik" vizyonunda, filmlerinde ruhsallığı keşfe çıkan Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman ve özellikle de Andrei Tarkovsky gibi Auteur yönetmenlerin büyük bir etkisi gözlenmektedir (Suner, 2014, s. 48).

Maneviyat, Kaplanoğlu'nun ifade ettiği noktadan tanımlanmak istendiğinde Carlos M. Del Rio ve Lyle J. White'in çizmiş oldukları kavramsal çerçeve hatırlanabilir (2016). Maneviyat, insanın hayatı anlamlandırıp hayata yönelik bir tutum geliştirirken ve diğer insanlarla ilişki kurarken aynı zamanda aşkın olanla bütünleşme arayışı içerisinde olmasıdır. Rio ve White, insan maneviyatının özünün Tanrı ile bütünleşme arayışı olduğunu söylerken, "maneviyatın dindarlıkla eşanlamı olmadığı" da altını çizerler. Dindarlık, kişinin mensup olduğu dinin inanç ve uygulamalarına olan bağlılığı şeklinde tanımlanırken, kişinin maneviyatı farklı inanç sistemlerine mensup olmasına bağlı olarak değişebilecek bir durum olarak değerlendirilmemektedir. Aynı şekilde maneviyatın hedefindeki Tanrı'nın varlığı da "belirli bir inanç sistemiyle sınırlandırılmaz. Bu yüzden Tanrı Yahudi, Hıristiyan, Müslüman, Budist değildir ya da herhangi bir tür dinle sınırlı değildir; Tanrı hakikati ve erdemi bulmak isteyen herkes için mevcuttur. Hakikat ve erdem insan maneviyatının gerçek hedefleridir" (Del Rio & White, 2016, s. 94). Del Rio ve White'a (2016) göre, maneviyat insanın ek bir irade göstermeden doğal olarak sahip olduğu bir özellik iken, dindarlık insanın tercihi neticesinde ortaya çıkan bir durumdur (s. 96).

Semih Kaplanoğlu'nun sinemasını tarif etmek için kullandığı "manevi gerçekçilik" ifadesi, Rio ve White'ın tanımına uygun olarak bir tarafıyla Tanrı'ya, diğer tarafıyla ise hayata dönüktür. Kaplanoğlu manevi gerçekçilik yaklaşımını, "sadece gerçekçiliğe ya da sadece metafiziğe yaslanmak hakikati tam olarak çevrelemeyebilir. Biri katı bir natüralizme, diğeri gerçeklikten kopuk fantaziye kayabilir. Bu iki ucu birleştiren şey, gerçekliğin içindeki maneviyatı ve maneviyatın içindeki gerçekliği içermeli... Ben o dengeyi arıyorum" (aktaran Şirin, 2010, s. 185) şeklinde açıklamaktadır. Söz konusu denge Kaplanoğlu'nun sinema anlayışının önemli kaynaklarından biri olan Tarkovsky'nin filmlerinde görülebilmektedir. Tarkovsky'e göre böyle bir dengenin kurulması çok kolay değildir. Saf belge düzeyindeki tespitlere ve dönem koşullarını resmetmeye dayanan bir film gerçeklikten uzak olabileceği gibi (Tarkovski, 1992, s. 8), gerçek dışı ya da fantastik olana yaslanan filmlerin de maneviyatla hiçbir alakası olmayabilir.

Kaplanoğlu sanatın, görüntünün ötesinde görüneni, başka bir ifadeyle görünür gerçeklikteki görünmeyeni anlatma biçimi olduğu kanaatindedir. Bunu açıklarken, genel olarak modern sanatın, özelde de kübizmin kurucu isimlerinden Paul Cézanne'ı ele almaktadır. Cézanne'ın, farklı defalar çizdiği Sainte-victoire Dağının Bellevue'den Görünüşü adlı resimlerle dağın fiziksek varlığının ardındaki metafizik özünden bahsettiğini belirtmektedir.

Yaptığı resimlerde görüntülerden öte varlığın veçhelerini gördüğünü söyler... Aslında Cézanne görünenin ardında olanı, eşyanın, vücudun ardındaki varlığın tezahürlerini, formlarını hissetmektedir. Ancak Cézanne gibi bir sanatçı bu durumu araf dediğimiz berzah dediğimiz bir bağlamda görüyor, hissediyor veya aktarmaya çalışıyor. Böylece bir dağı defalarca pek çok noktadan ve günün, mevsimlerin değişik vakitlerinde resmederek o dağın, kütlenin değişmeyen özünü bize aktarmak istiyor... (Çiçek ve Gülşen, 2018, s. 34).

Cézanne bulunduğu noktayı değiştirerek manzaranın gerçekliğini en iyi şekilde yansıtabilecek bakış açısını ararken, aslında böyle bir noktanın bulunmadığı sonucuna varmıştır (Balci, 2019, s. 68). Sainte-victoire dağını düşünsel ve tinsel bir anlayışla tasvir ederken, sanat eserinde doğaya biçim verenin tin olduğunu söylemektedir. Doğa, sanatsal imge aracılığıyla insan tininde gerçeklik kazanan bir dünya haline gelmektedir (Boztunali ve Başbuğ, 2017, s. 154).

Yumurta: Karakteri Mekanla Anlamlandırma

Yumurta filmi tek başına okunduğunda kentli Yusuf'un yıllar sonra annesinin ölümü nedeniyle yolunun taşraya düşmesiyle hafızasında geçmişin izlerinin yeniden canlanması olarak değerlendirilebilir. Yusuf'un karşılaştığı engeller ve istenmedik olaylardan dolayı kente dönmesi bir türlü mümkün olmaz. Taşrada geçirdiği istenmedik zamanlar karşısındaki dingin tavırları ve hafızasındaki izleri takip ettiği bir tür ruhsal yolculuğa dönüşür ve Yusuf'un aslında kentteki zamana değil taşradaki zamana ait olduğunun işaretleri ortaya çıkar. Bu işaretler özellikle Süt ve Bal filmleriyle irtibatlı olarak düşünüldüğünde, Yumurta'nın başında annenin ölümüyle birlikte Yusuf'un taşraya dönmek zorunda kalmasını onu, dünyadayken bağını koparmış olduğu annesine, küçük yaşta kaybettiği babasına, terk ettiği değerlere, geleneğe ve kendine doğru ruhsal bir yolculuğa çıkardığı görülmektedir.

Semih Kaplanoğlu Yumurta'yı klasik anlatıya has bir sinematografi ile kayda almış olsaydı, Yusuf'un başına gelenlerin aşkın bir boyut kazanması pek tabii mümkün olmayabilirdi. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Yumurta'ya ve Semih Kaplanoğlu sinemasına kimliğini kazandıran, Kaplanoğlu'nun karakterlerine yönelik düşünsel ve ruhsal tasarımlarının somutlaşmasını sağlayan en büyük etkenlerden birinin uygulanan sinematografik yaklaşım olduğu görülmektedir.

Yumurta, Yusuf'un yolculuğunun önsözü mahiyetinde bir prolog ile açılır. İlk karede ortaya çıkan kompozisyon çerçeveyi yatay ekseninde hava ve toprak arasında ikiye bölmektedir. Kadrajda bir insan olduğu neredeyse anlaşılacak kadar uzak bir noktada olan anne, kamera yönüne yürüdükçe belirginleşir. Anneyi dört bir taraftan saran tabiat, geniş bir negatif alana yayılarak kompozisyonu çok merkezli hale getirmektedir. Ekstra uzak plan denilebilecek bir kadrajda yürümeye başlayan anne, göğüs plan mesafesine geldiğinde yürümeye ara verir. Hem karakterin hem de izleyicinin zamanı tecrübe etmesine fırsat veren bu uzun çekim ve geniş negatif alan çerçeve dışı unsurların da anlama dahil olmasını sağlar. Negatif alan dahilindeki en dikkat çekici öğe kuşkusuz toprağın hemen üstünden başlayıp tüm havayı kaplayan sis tabakasıdır. Kompozisyonun büyük bir kısmını kaplayan, arkasında gerçekte ne olduğunu belirsizleştiren bu sis tabakası, kadraj dışı alanın varlığını ve görüntünün görünmeyen aşkın bir alanla olan bağını ortaya koymaktadır. Annenin etrafa bakındıktan sonra kadrajın sağ tarafından çerçeveyi terk ederek yürümeye devam emesi ve sis tabakasının içinde tümüyle gözden kayboluncaya kadar planın devam etmesi, annenin ölümüyle birlikte düşünüldüğünde kompozisyonun negatif alan üzerinden irtibat kurduğu aşkınlık düzlemi daha da anlaşılır hale gelmektedir.

Yusuf annesinin ölüm haberini aldıktan sonra Tire'ye gider. Eve girdikten bir süre sonra annesinin cenazesinin bulunduğu odaya girer. Yusuf'un geçmiş yıllarda annesiyle arasına koyduğu mesafeden kaynaklanan bir çekingenliği bulunmaktadır. Sahnenin bu kısmı toplam iki plandan oluşur. İlk planın başında anne yatağına yatırılmış ve üzeri örtülmüş şekilde görülmektedir. Kadraj dışından gelen kapı gıcirtısı duyulur ve Yusuf odaya girer. Kadrajda yatakta yatan annenin görüntüsü akarken Yusuf kameraya oldukça yakın bir noktada bulunan sandalyeye oturarak kompozisyonun ön planında konumlanır (Resim 1.). Ancak bu değişikliğin hemen ardından çerçevenin Yusuf'un yakın plan çekimine dönüşmesine izin verilmez. Bulduğu nokta kadrajda net alan dışında olduğundan, Yusuf'un başını çevirip annesine bakamayışı ve bunun yerine başını hafifçe öne doğru eğdiği anlarda yüz ifadesinin görülmesi mümkün olmaz. Kaplanoğlu, Yusuf'un tereddüdünün görsel yansımalarını ilk etapta seyirciye aktarmak istemez. Bu müdahale Yusuf'un durumuna bir düşünce imgesi özelliği katar. Annesine değil de etrafa bakmaya, odadaki şeyleri incelemeye başladığında netlik Yusuf'a geçer. Netlik, Yusuf başı öne eğik olduğu anlarda değil başını kamera yönüne doğru çevirmekte olduğu bir sırada, hareketiyle eş zamanlı olarak Yusuf'a kaydırılır. Motive edilmemiş bir optik kaydırma yerine karakter hareketine bağlı bir kaydırma yapılmıştır. Bu tercih optik kaydırmanın doğrudan izleyicinin bakışına yönelik bir müdahale olmasını engellemiştir. Netlik değişimin ardından çerçeve Yusuf'un yakın planı haline gelmiştir. Çekimin geri kalan kısmında, etrafa bakan Yusuf'un gözleri belli belirsiz yaşarmaktadır. Bir sonraki plana kesildiğinde Yusuf artık başını çevirip annesine

bakmaktadır. Ancak yine de annesinin yüzünü açıp onu son bir kez görmeye cesaret edemez. Semih Kaplanoğlu Yusuf'u, görünür gerçeklik düzleminde annesini son bir kez görmek yerine onun taşradaki yolculuğunu zorlaştırarak annesiyle aşkınlık düzleminde daha kuvvetli bir bağ kurmaya sevk etmektedir.

Resim 1. Net alanın dışında kalan duygular



Kaynak: (Kaplanoğlu, 2007) (Zaman Kodu: 00:09:01)

Prologda pan hareketi ile ikiye bölünen çekimde annenin tabiattan gelip yine tabiatın içinde kayboluncaya kadar yürümesi, öldüğü bilinen anne için nasıl metafizik bir yolculuk anlamı taşımakta ise Kaplanoğlu benzer bir yöntemi bu kez Yusuf'un kendi özüne yolculuk mahiyetindeki ilk rüya sahnesi öncesinde kullanmaktadır. Her ikisine de aşkınlık boyutunu kazandıran en önemli unsur mekan olmuştur.

Bu kısımda Yusuf yeşilliklerin üzerinde çam ormanına doğru yürümektedir. Kaplanoğlu'nun kompozisyon tercihi, plana mekan üzerinden anlam katarak mekanı ana unsur, Yusuf'u ise mekandan beslenen bir pozisyonda konumlandırmaktadır. Annesini defnettikten sonra ormana doğru bakarak, kasabaya ya da İstanbul'a dönmek yerine ormanlık alana gider. Uzak planlı uzun çekimde Yusuf'un ormana doğru yürüyüşü rüya planı için bir konsantrasyon oluşturmaktadır. Yusuf ışığın kesintiye uğramadan düştüğü bir alana ulaşmıştır (Resim 2.). Yüksek doğal ışığın farklı renkteki herhangi bir nesneye çarpmadan zemindeki yeşillikleri ve çam ağaçlarını aydınlatması yeşil rengin doygunluğunu arttırmıştır. Satürasyonla gelen saf yeşil renk üçüncü görsel katman olarak kesintisiz bir zamana kapı aralamaktadır.

Resim 2. Karaktere mekan üzerinden anlam kazandırmak



Kaynak: Yumurta (Kaplanoğlu, 2007) (Zaman Kodu: 00:13:10)

Yusuf'un ormana girmesinin ardından gelen rüya kısmı iki plandan oluşmaktadır. Kaplanoğlu bu planları gerçek hayattan ayırmayı hedefleyen gerçek dışı bir sinematografik yaklaşım içine girmez. Yusuf'un avucunda bir bıldırcın yumurtası tuttuğu ilk plandaki kompozisyon belirgin bir şekilde ön plan ve arka plan olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır (Resim 3.). Ormana yürüyüş planlarında hem düşünsel hem de sinematografik açılardan büyük bir etkiye sahip olan mekan rüya planında da aynı derecede önemlidir. Burada, arka planı boydan boya kaplayan ağaçlara ait fiziksel verilere ihtiyaç olmadığı için orman net alanın dışında flu bir katman olarak tutulmaktadır.

Resim 3. Hayattan tümüyle koparılmayan rüya katmanı



Kaynak: Yumurta (Zaman Kodu: 00:13:25)

İlk planda Yusuf'un avucunu açıp içindeki bıldırcın yumurtasını yukarı aşağı oynatmaya başlaması sonrası yumurta Yusuf'un elinden çıkar. İkinci planda ise alt açıdan yumurtanın yere çarpıp kırıldığı görülür. Alt açı düşme durumunun net bir şekilde tecrübe edilmesini sağlamaktadır. Yusuf'un rüyasına bir bütün olarak bakıldığında bunun manevi bir yolculuktan çok kendi iç dünyasına ve geçmişine dönük bir yolculuk olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Yusuf'un rüyalardan mutlu uyanmadığını söyleyen Kaplanoğlu, Yusuf'un rüyalarda geçmişle karşılaşmaktan duyduğu sıkışmışlık haline işaret eder. "Yusuf'un rüyaları, kendini kuyuda gördüğü rüya veya yumurtalı rüya, bunlar hep şimdiki hayatına dair rüyalar gibi geliyor bana. Kaçırılmış fırsatlar; elinde tutamadığı, hakim olamadığı ve bir türlü içinden çıkamadığı bir hayat" (aktaran Şirin, 2010, s. 130).

İstanbul'a dönmek üzere yola çıktıktan kısa süre sonra yol kenarında duran ve düşünceli bir şekilde başını direksiyona yaslayan Yusuf, bir sonraki çekimde tabiatın içinde yumurta rüyası öncesinde ormana doğru yaptığı yürüyüşe benzer bir planda yürümektedir. Güneşin batışını ve koyun sürüsünün ilerleyişini izlerken birden bir kangal köpeğinin üzerine atlamasıyla yere düşer. Yusuf'un karşılaştığı aksiliklerin bu sonucunda köpek Yusuf'a zarar vermese de hırlamalarıyla Yusuf'un bulunduğu yerden ayrılmasına bir türlü müsaade etmez. Gece yarısına kadar karanlığın içinde esir olan Yusuf vicdanıyla ve ruhsal varlığıyla engelsiz bir şekilde karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Buradaki ilk planda sahnenin temel aydınlatma motivasyonu olan dolunay, tümüyle görülmesini engelleyen bulutlarla birlikte verilmektedir. Karanlığın içinde kalmış olan Yusuf ve köpeğin üzerindeki düşük anahtar ışığının motivasyonu ay ışığıdır (Resim 4.). Planlar genişten dar doğru ilerledikçe Yusuf da köpeğin verdiği gerilimden uzaklaşır ve yeniden vicdanındaki acı ile baş başa kalır. Daha fazla kendini tutamaz ve köpeğin karşısında ağlamaya başlar. Çekim süreleri, kesmeler ve aydınlatma sinematografik anlamda saf görsel durumun oluşmasına imkan vermektedir.

Resim 4. Kararan fizik alemde gelen manevi arınma



Kaynak: Yumurta (Kaplanoğlu, 2007) (Zaman Kodu: 01:25:55)

Filmin Yusuf'un yaşadığı bu manevi arınma ile sonuçlanması da belli ölçülerde dramatik bir son olarak değerlendirilebilirdi. Ancak film burada sona ermemektedir. Sonraki sahnede Yusuf tekrar Tire'deki evde görüldüğünde annesiyle arasındaki manevi uzaklığın tümüyle kapandığı anlaşılmaktadır. Yusuf'un ailesine, hafızasına ve geleneğine dönüşünün metaforu olan yumurta Ayla tarafından Yusuf'un avucuna bırakılır. Ancak bu kez yere düşüp kırılmaz.

Süt: Dolaysız İmgeler Şiiri

Süt'ün üçleme içerisindeki yeri bir şair olarak Yusuf'un gençliği, yalnızlığı ve annesiyle olan bağının kopmasına odaklanmak olmuştur. Taşranın zamanı ve mekanı Yusuf'a duyarlılık katan, yalnızlığını ve şahitliğini pekiştiren unsurlardır. Yusuf'un yalnızlığı ve şairliği kendisine, annesine, tabiata ve varlığa dönük bir şahitliktir aynı zamanda. Yusuf taşranın geleneksel kalıplarından taşın ama aynı zamanda modern olmak gibi kaygılar da taşımayan bir karaktere sahiptir. Taşrada yalnızlık ve şiir ile geçen bir gençlik, Süt'ü üçleme içerisinde Kaplanoğlu'nun kendi hayatından en çok beslendiği film yapmaktadır.

Süt, Yumurta gibi bir prolog bölümü ile başlamaktadır. Filmin iki buçuk dakikaya yakın süren ilk planında herhangi bir kamera hareketi eklenmeyerek sabit bir çerçeve kullanılmıştır (Resim 5.). Bir meyve bahçesinde geçen sahnede kompozisyonun ön planında masada oturan yaşlı bir adam elindeki küçük kağıda yazılar yazmaktadır. Yaşlı adam yazmaya devam ederken iki erkek ve bir kadın arka plandan kompozisyona dahil olurlar. Aralarında bir konuşma olmaz ancak yaşlı adamın işaretiyle gruptaki iki erkek harekete geçer ve bir ağacın önüne çalı çırpı yığarlar. Bu sırada ayakta duran kadının duruşundan bir sıkıntısı olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. İki dakikalık bir sürenin ardından masadaki adam yerinden kalkıp diğerlerine doğru yürür. Kadının yanına uğrayıp sonra getirdikleri çalı çırpı ile uğraşan diğer iki kişinin yanına gider.

Resim 5. Sabit kadraj, kesintisiz zaman



Kaynak: Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009) (Zaman Kodu: 00:01:02)

Kaplanoğlu peşinde olduğu, hareketi kesintiye uğratmayan sonsuz şimdiki zaman algısına hem çekim süresi ile hem de diğer sinematografik tercihleriyle ulaşmaya çalışmaktadır. Kompozisyonda yer alan karakterler, objeler, aydınlatma ve mizansenin sadeliği ve doğallığı; çekimle ilgili açı, ölçek, yükseklik gibi unsurlardaki sadelik ve doğallık, sinematografik araçların dramatik işlevlerinin azaltılarak kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Süt'ün bu ilk kompozisyonunda öğelerin niceliği itibarıyla bir fakirlik ve eksiltme içine girilmektedir. Ayrıca alan derinliğiyle oluşan bu geniş çerçevede ön ve arka planların aktif olarak kullanılmasıyla çok merkezli bir kompozisyon oluşmaktadır.

Kaplanoğlu, üçlemenin özellikle Süt bölümünde Yusuf'un şairliğinin dışında filmi imgesel anlamda da şiirsel bir temel üzerinde kurmak istemektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında prolog kısmının büyük bir önem taşıdığı görülmektedir. Sinematografi, ritim, oyunculuk anlayışı, mekanın anlatıya katılımı, sesli ifadeyi insana kapatıp yalnızca doğaya açarak sesi ve sessizliği beraber kullanma tercihi ile şiirin dil öncesi haline uygun düşmektedir. Prolog, filmde ikinci bir defa daha görülmeyen kadın karakteriyle, süt ve yılanın hem metaforik hem de dolaysız bir imge olarak filme giriş yapmasıyla, biçimsel unsurların minimum düzeyde tutulmasıyla dilden uzaklaşıp hale yaklaşarak film içinde oldukça önemli bir yer edinmiştir. Süt, filmin ilerleyen kısımlarında daha açık bir şekilde görüldüğü gibi Yusuf ve annesini bir arada tutan temel uğraş iken, yılan ise Yusuf'u bu bağı koparacak bir düşünce içine sokmaktadır. Prolog kısmında yaşanan olay metaforik bir bağlamda değerlendirilebilecek olsa da Kaplanoğlu Tire'de sıklıkla yaşanan bir olaya yer verdiğini söylemektedir. Toprak işlerinde çalışan insanların yorgun düşmelerinin ardından su kenarında dinlenirken içine girdikleri savunmasız halden yararlanan yılanların insanların ağızlarından içeri girdiğini aktaran Kaplanoğlu, bu yılanları çıkarmak için uygulanan yöntemlerden birinin insanları ayaklarından asılarak kaynamakta olan sütün üzerinde sarkıtılmaları olduğunu belirtmektedir (Şirin, 2010, s. 158).

Prologdan hemen sonra gelen sahnede Yusuf'un görmeye, keşfe olan ilgisi ile akranlarından farklılığı ve iletişimsizliği izlenmektedir. Yusuf ve arkadaşları Roma döneminden kalma antik bir kent olan Alliano'i'ye giderler. Arkadaşlardan bazıları arabada kalırken Yusuf ve bir kız arkadaşı antik kentin içine doğru yürüdüktan sonra bir duvara yaslanıp dururlar. Birbirlerine ve etrafa bakınırlar. İki arkadaş, Yusuf'un sıklıkla yaşadığı susmak, durmak, düşünmek, bir şey yapmamak hali içindedirler. Bu halin genç kızın karakteriyle tamamen uyumlu olmadığı da anlaşılmaktadır. Genç kız telefonla konuşmak için ayrıldığında Yusuf antik kente yönelir. Yürümeye başlar, Alliano'i'deki bir su havuzunun yanına gider. Arkadaşının kendisini aramaya başladığını fark edince ona görünmemeyi ve uzakta kalmayı tercih eder (Resim 6.). Derinlemesine bir düzlemde ikiye bölünen kompozisyonun iki uzak ucunda konumlanan Yusuf ve genç kızın arasındaki mesafe ve sınırlar bir düşünce imgesi halini almaktadır.

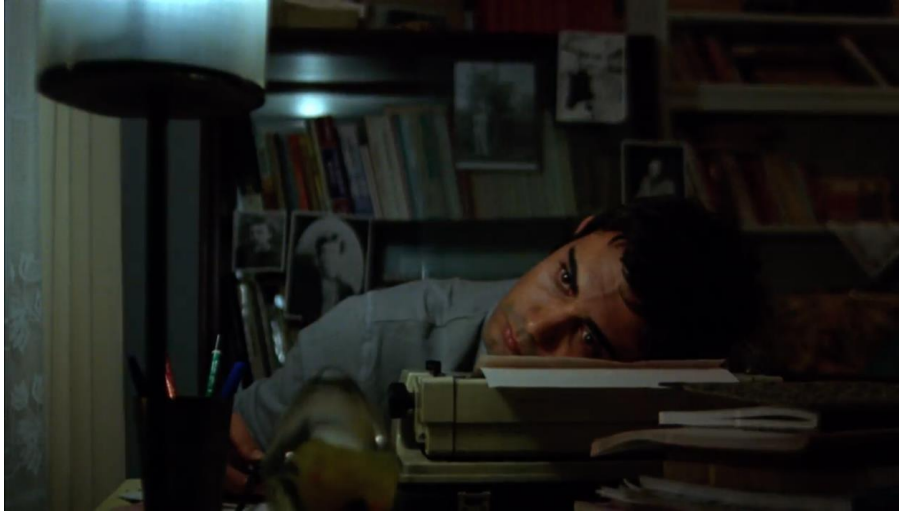
Resim 6. Yusuf'un uzamsal ve ruhsal sınırları



Kaynak: Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009) (Zaman Kodu: 00:11:15)

Yumurta'da Yusuf'un cenaze için Tire'ye gittikten sonra yaşadığı sıkışmışlık ve annesini hatırlamaktan duyduğu rahatsızlık, Süt'te ve Bal'da Yusuf ve annesi arasında ortaya çıkan mesafenin sonuçlarıdır. Süt'te Yusuf ve annesinin arasındaki farklılık ve uzaklık Zehra'nın henüz daha evlenme yönünde bir karar almasından önce de oldukça belirgindir. Geçimlerini sütçülük yaparak sağlayan anne ve oğlu, yemek saatlerinin dışında sadece işleriyle ilgilendikleri anlarda bir araya gelmektedirler. Annenin rasyonel kişiliği karşısında Yusuf'un annesiyle uyuşmayan rahat tavırları filmin farklı noktalarında kendini gösterir.

Resim 7. Yusuf ve ilham kaynakları



Kaynak: Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009) (Zaman Kodu: 00:18:25)

Yusuf ve annesinin arasındaki soğukluk ve mesafe Yusuf'un pencereden düşen ışığın loş bir şekilde aydınlattığı odasında kafasını daktilosunun üzerine yaslayıp düşündüğü sahnede net bir şekilde görülmektedir. Masa lambası kapalı iken Yusuf'un yüzündeki hiçbir detay tam olarak görülemez. Yalnızca göz bebekleri seçilmektedir. Aynı şekilde arka plandaki fotoğraflarda kimlerin olduğuna dair de hiçbir şey anlaşılmamaktadır. Ardından düşünceli haliyle masa lambasını açıp kapatmaya başlar. Kitaplığı, kitaplığına yapıştırdığı Arthur Rimbaud, Fyodor Dostoyevski ve Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar'ın siyah beyaz fotoğrafları ve masası kesik kesik görünmeye başlar. Yusuf'un lambayı açtığı her defasında hem kendi yüzü hem de arkadaki fotoğraflar belirlemektedir (Resim 7.). Masa lambasının açılıp kapandığı her seferde Yusuf'un düşünce ve ruh dünyasının fotoğrafını çeken bir flaş patlamaktadır. Yusuf en sonunda ışığı açık bırakır. Birkaç saniye daha gözlerini aynı noktadan ayırmadan bakmaya devam eder, şiiri satırlara dökülmeye hazır olduğunda ise doğrulup daktilonun tuşlarına basmaya başlar.

Yusuf yazmaya başladıktan sonra çekim anneye döner. Kamera Yusuf'un bulunduğu noktadan Zehra'ya bakmaktadır (Resim 8.). Ancak Yusuf daha birkaç saniye önce aradığı ilhamı bulup yazmaya başladığı için bu planın bir bakış açısı çekimi olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu Yusuf'a ait bir bakış açısı çekimi olmadığından bu çekimde Zehra'ya ait bir kompozisyon tasarımı istenip istenmediği ya da bu çekimin neden Zehra'nın odasında olmadığı sorulabilir. Bu soruların ardından söz konusu olanın Zehra'ya ait bir plan da olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Kameranın Yusuf'un durduğu yerden evin diğer ucundaki odasında bulunan anneye çevrilmesi iki oda ve iki insan arasındaki mesafeyi gözle görülür kılmak içindir. Anne gece olduğunda yapılması gereken en normal şeylerden birini yapmaktadır. Yatağını hazırlarken aynaya yansıyan yüzündeki ifadesizlik de kendini belli etmektedir. Aradaki fiziksel mesafeye rağmen Yusuf'un odasından çıkan daktilo sesleri Zehra'nın odasına ulaşmaktadır. Anne Yusuf'un varlığından habersizmiş gibi bir yüz ifadesiyle odasının kapısını da kapatarak oğlu ile arasındaki mesafeyi pekiştirmektedir.

Resim 8. Zehra'ya Yusuf'un durduğu yerden bakmak

Kaynak: Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009) (Zaman Kodu: 00:18:56)

Yumurta'da Yusuf'un annesini kaybetmiş olmasına rağmen zihinsel ve ruhsal olarak annesiyle arasındaki mesafenin kapanmasına bir türlü müsaade etmemesi Süt filminde arka arkaya gelen bu iki sahne ile daha da açıklık kazanmaktadır. Yusuf ancak Tire'deki yolculuğunun başına gelen aksiliklerle uzamasıyla ve ayrı geçirdikleri yıllarda annesinin kendisine olan bakışındaki değişiklikleri tesadüfen öğrenmesiyle ruhsal bir kırılma yaşamıştır. Yusuf adına Ayla'ya hediye vermesi ve en çok da Yusuf'un şiir kitabını gençlik arkadaşlarına yine onun adına hediye ettiğini öğrenmesi Yusuf'un annesiyle arasına çektiği gönül sınırlarını gevşetmiştir. Oysa Yusuf'un ve Zehra'nın şiire verdikleri anlamların taban tabana zıt olduğu Süt'te ortaya çıkmaktadır:

Yusuf, çocukluğundan beri sahip olduğu farklılığını, yalnızlığı ve suskunluğu yeğleyişini, şiirle ifade ederek manevi bir aşkınlık alanı yaratmaya çabılıyor kendisine. Anne ise, şiiri son derece dünyevi bir şey olarak algılıyor. Yusuf'un şiirini okuduğunda tanıdık bir kızın suretini görüyor orada yalnızca (Suner, 2012, s. 66).

Bu durum Zehra'nın, Süt'teki rasyonel tutumlarıyla oğlu ile arasına koyduğu zihinsel sınırları Yusuf'tan ayrıldıktan sonra kaldırdığının işaretlerini vermektedir.

Yusuf'un şair kişiliğinin sebep olduğu yalnızlığı ve insanlara uzaklığı, kız arkadaşı ve annesi ile olan sahnelerin ön plan-arka plan ayrımının bulunduğu derin kompozisyonlarında ön planda yer alan duvarların ötesine geçmeyerek var olan fiziksel ve düşünsel mesafeyi korumasıyla somutlaşmıştı. Bu iki kompozisyonun, Yusuf'un evlerine yılan girdiği akşamın ertesi gününde Kemal amca'yı getirmek için gittiği ovada ortaya çıkan kompozisyonla karşılaştırılarak incelenmesi Yusuf'un düşünce ve ruh dünyasını inşa etmekte kullanılan farklı sinematografik tercihlerin daha net olarak altını çizmektedir.

Resim 9. Kompozisyonda ortadan kalkan sınırlar



Kaynak: Süt (Kaplanoğlu, 2009) (Zaman Kodu: 00:32:07)

Yusuf'un Kemal amcaya gittiği sahne ekstra uzak plan bir çekimle başlar. Kamera ovanın yüksek bir noktasından oldukça geniş bir coğrafyaya bakarken Yusuf'un motoruyla uzaklardan bu yüksek noktaya doğru ivme kazanarak ilerlediği görülmektedir. Belli bir yerden sonra motoruyla daha fazla ilerleyemeyip yürümeye başlar. Bir sonraki planda ortaya çıkan kompozisyon oldukça dikkat çekicidir. Ovanın en yüksek noktasının bulunduğu arka planda Kemal amca bir silüet formunda alt açılı bir çekimde görülürken ona gökyüzü, bulutlar ve bir ağaç eşlik etmektedir. Yusuf yürüyerek kadraja girmesiyle birlikte bu kompozisyonda da ön plandaki yerini almıştır (Resim 9.). Kaplanoğlu düşünce imgesini kadrajın içiyle sınırlı tutmayıp kadraj dışına da açmaktadır. Yusuf annesinin bulunduğu kompozisyonda tümüyle kadraj dışında kalmıştı. Bu kompozisyonda ise kadraj dışından gelerek kompozisyona dahil olmuştur. Diğer iki kompozisyonla karşılaştırıldığında burada kendini gösteren en kritik ayrım ön planda, Yusuf ile diğer kişinin arasında uzanan bir duvarın yahut sınırın olmamasıdır. Yusuf'un mizansenin bir ucunda sınırlı kalmasını sağlayacak, onu diğer uçtaki kişiden saklayabilecek herhangi bir unsur bulunmamaktadır. Böyle olunca Yusuf da amacına uygun bir şekilde yürüyüşüne devam ederek diğer uçta konumlanan Kemal amcanın yanına ulaşır.

Yusuf yukarıya doğru yürüdüğü sırada Kemal amcanın bir silüet olarak kompozisyonda yer alması onun varlığının fiziksel görünüşünün ötesinde manevi bir anlam taşıdığına ipuçlarını vermektedir. Aynı şekilde Kemal amcanın alt açılı olarak verilmesi, gökyüzü ve bulutlarla aynı düzlemde bulunması ile Yusuf'un ona doğru yürüdükçe yükselmesi de Kemal amcanın aşkın yönünü vurgulamaktadır. Yusuf yaklaştığı sırada Kemal amca yere yatar. Arkasından Yusuf'un da toprağa uzanması, annenin oğlunu toprağa bakıp durmakla eleştirmesine yönelik hem görünür gerçeklik düzleminde hem de aşkınlık düzlemlerinde verilmiş bir karşılık olarak okunabilir.

Bal: Daralan Kadraj, Azalan Işık, Artan Ruhsal Gerilim

Bal tematik anlamda bakıldığında Yusuf'un babası ile olan bağının nasıl oluştuğunu, ne derece kuvvetli olduğunu ve babasını kaybettikten sonraki hayatının nasıl bir seyir izleyeceğinin işaretlerini veren bir dram olarak değerlendirilebilir. Yusuf'un Yumurta ve Süt filmlerindeki karakterini şekillendiren sessizliği, şairliği, rüyaları ve epilepsi hastalığının tohumlarının atıldığı Bal, sondan başa doğru işleyen anlatımın baştan sonra doğru da algılanabilmesini sağlayan bir son film olmuştur. Böylelikle, Yusuf'un çocukluk yıllarında babasıyla ve tabiatla olan derin ilişkisinin şekillendirdiği ve gençlikten yetişkinliğe uzanan dönemde üzeri örtülen ruhsallığına, annesinin ölümü sonrası iradesi dışında başına gelen aksiliklerle geri dönmesi doğrultusunda bir bütüne ulaşılmaktadır.

Bal'da, üçlemenin diğer filmlerinde olduğu gibi klasik gerçekçi anlamda bir hikaye üretimi ve anlatımı hedeflenmemektedir. Bu bakımdan babanın ölümü gibi klasik anlatıda dramatik bir zirve noktası oluşturmaya en müsait durumlar dahi olay odaklı olmaktan tümüyle uzak bir şekilde zamanı içselleştirip çocuğun doğadaki tecrübe alanını ve aşkınlıkla irtibatını genişletmektedir. Diğer taraftan zıtlıklar üzerinden işleyen bir hikayenin bulunmadığı da görülmektedir. Yusuf'un babasına olan yakınlığı, annesinden uzaklaşması olarak yorumlanabilecek olsa da çocuk ve annesi arasında bir zıtlama kurgulanmadığı açıktır. Çocuğun annesi ve babası arasındaki farklılıkları algılayabilmesindeki doğallığın yanı sıra, hem annesinin takibinden memnun olmadığı durumlar hem de annesiyle yakınlaştığı durumlar anne-çocuk ilişkisinin doğal seyrinde gelişebilecek türdendir. Genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde ise filmde düğüm ve çözüm gibi seyircide özdeşleşme oluşturacak ve ardından katharsise yol açacak bir anlatı mantığının bulunmadığı ifade edilmelidir. Yusuf'un yaşadığı çoğu şey somut bir nedensellik bağı taşımadan onun varlığı tanınmasını ve kendi varoluşunda karşılaştığı zorluklarla yüzleşmesini ortaya koymaktadır.

Yusuf'un mekanla olan teması, filmde sinematografik açıdan üzerinde en çok estetik çaba gösterilen alandır. Kimi zaman yakın, kimi zaman uzak plan çekimler, sabit kameraya ek olarak çeşitli kamera hareketleri ve karakter takibi, kompozisyon tasarımı, net alanın etkisi ve yoğun kontrastlı aydınlatma anlayışı incelendiğinde Bal'da görüntü yönetiminin üçlemenin önceki filmlerinden belli noktalarda farklılaştığı anlaşılmaktadır. Yumurta ve Süt'te Tarkovsky'nin görsel dili bir referans noktası olarak göze çarparken Bal'da ise buna ek olarak Rönesans sonrası Batı resminin izleri bulunmaktadır.

Resim 10. Kesintisiz zamanın varlık alanı olarak sabit kadrajlar



Kaynak: Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:01:29)

Bal filminin açılışı yine bir prolog bölümü ve üçleme için karakteristik hale gelen bir açılış planı ile olur. Yakup'un ormanda kovan yerleştirecek ağaç araması önceki iki filmin açılışındaki gibi hareket ve zamanın kesintiye uğratılmadan tecrübe edildiği bir plandır (Resim 10.). Bu uzak plan sabit çekimde Yakup kompozisyona en uzak noktada kadraj dışından dahil olur ve ön plana kadar katırıyla birlikte yürüyüşünü sürdürür. Bu plan, Yumurta'nın açılışında Zehra'nın sislerin içinden çıkıp oldukça uzun bir mesafe yürüyerek kompozisyonun ön planına ulaştığı plan ile ortak bir düşünce ve estetik perspektif taşımaktadır. Kaplanoğlu, yürüyüşü bir karakterin kişiliğini ortaya koyan, onu tanıtan bir eylem olarak kullanmaktadır. Bu yüzden Yusuf'un kişiliğine derin etkileri olan bu iki kişiyi, izleyicinin de hiçbir aceleye mahal vermeden yoğunlaşabileceği yürüyüş planlarıyla tanıtmaktadır. Yakup'un yürüdüğü plan, filmin görsel kimliğinde önemli bir yer tutan aydınlatma yaklaşımının sunduğu yoğun kontrastlı kompozisyonlar için de bir giriş mahiyetinde okunabilir.

Yusuf üçlemesinin önceki filmlerinde olduğu gibi Bal'ın prolog kısmında da sinematografideki istikrarı destekleyen öğelerden birinin sesler olduğu söylenebilir. Klasik anlatı sinemasında izleyicinin duygusal durumunu manipüle eden bir doku olarak kullanılabilen sesler, zaman-imge boyutu ile öne çıkan filmlerde maddenin saf ve dolaysız durumunun anlaşılmasını sağlayan bir unsur olarak önem kazanmaktadır. Kaplanoğlu sinematografiyi teknik bir unsur olarak görüp görüntü yönetmenini bu noktadaki asıl sorumlu kişi olarak tayin etmediği gibi filmlerindeki ses tasarımı ve miksaj gibi süreçleri de ses sanatçılarına ve teknisyenlerine devretmeyip tüm detaylarında bizzat yer almaktadır. Bal filminde ortaya çıkan saf sessel imgeler değerlendirildiğinde, Kaplanoğlu'nun sadece prodüksiyon sırasında değil post-prodüksiyon aşamasında da sesle ilgili çalışmalara büyük özen gösterdiği anlaşılmaktadır. Filmin prolog kısmındaki ormanda yürüyüş ve kuş cıvıltıları gibi seslerin filmin zaman ve mekanı ile olan uyumu oldukça dikkat çekicidir.

Prologda dikkat çekici olan bir diğer husus geniş açılı çekimlere orta ve yakın plan çekimlerin eklenmiş olmasıdır. Kovanlarını ağaçlara yerleştiren bir balcı için normal bir durum olan ağaca tırmanma eylemi, sahnede organın takılı olduğu dalın kırılmasıyla birlikte açık bir dramatik gerilim içermeye başlar. Yakup, dalın tümüyle kopmaması sebebiyle belli bir yükseklikte asılı kalır. Bu noktada çekim açısı ve ölçekleri bir değişime uğrar. Alt ve üst açılı planlar, daha kısa süreli çekimler ve sıklaşan kesmeler art arda gelir. Çekim ölçeklerinin orta ve yakın planlarla olayı takip etmesi ise seyircinin katılımını duygusal bir gerilim noktasına evriltme potansiyeline sahiptir. Sahnenin kazandığı sinematografik ritim, filmde dönem dönem karşılaşılabilecek bir tercih olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Resim 11. Uzak ve genel plan çekimlerden orta ve yakın planlara



Kaynak: Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:06:17)

Bu ritmin bir diğer parçası olan kamera hareketi gerektiren mizansenler de Bal'ın sinematografisinde öne çıkan özellikleri arasındadır. Açılış jeneriğinin ardından gelen sahne Yakup'un atmacası Camgöz ile açılır. Bir süre sonra Yusuf kadraj dışından girerek Camgöz'ün karşısında durur ve ona bakmaya başlar (Resim 11.). Ardından arka planda yatan babasına bakar. Flu bir alanda bırakılan Yakup, Yusuf'un ona doğru dönmesinin ardından da flu tutulur. Karakterin bakışının yöneldiği alanın seyirci için de görünür kılınması yönündeki konvansiyonel uygulamanın kullanılmaması, Kaplanoğlu'nun gösterme eyleminden çok düşünme ve tecrübe etme eylemlerini öncelemesinin bir sonucudur. Yusuf geriye dönüp duvarda asılı olan takvime doğru yürüdüğünde onu takip eden pan hareketi başlar. Bu planda çekim ölçeği, alan derinliği, aydınlatma ve pozlamanın sınırlandırılmasına karşılık kamera hareketi görsel dile eklenmeye başlanmıştır. Bu durum Kaplanoğlu'nun bütünü gören kompozisyonlarının, parçalara odaklanan ve karakteri takip eden çekimlerle destekleneceğine de işaret etmektedir.

Sonraki çekimde uzun bir genel plan gelir. Üçleme boyunca öyküyü bir amaç haline getirmeyen, filmi ontolojik bir alan olarak kullanarak saf görsel ve sessel durumlara ruhsal durumları ekleyen Kaplanoğlu, Yusuf'un Yakup'a rüyasını anlattığı bu planda sembolik bir anlatıya yönelerek şiirin dil öncesi yapısından uzaklaşmaktadır. Yusuf ve Yakup isimlerine ek olarak çocuğun anlattığı rüyanın doğrudan Yusuf Peygamber kıssasına gönderme yapmasıyla dil alegorik bir araç olarak kullanılmış, ruhsallığın dolaysız tecrübesi yerine sembolik bir temsile ulaşılmıştır. Bu ve benzeri sembolik sahneler, temsili bir metafizik arka plan üreterek filmin estetik ve etik değerini düşürmesi bağlamında eleştirilmektedir (Şentürk, 2013, s. 171)

Resim 12. Kompozisyonun katmanları arasındaki mesafe ve Yusuf'un yalnızlığı



Kaynak: Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:13:03)

Yusuf'un Yumurta'da ve özellikle de Süt'te belirgin bir sinematografik üslupla işlenen insanlarla arasına koyduğu mesafe ve yalnızlığın bir benzeri Bal filminin henüz başlarındaki sınıf sahnesinin teneffüs planında görülmektedir. Yusuf'un pencereden dışarıya bakarak bahçede oynayan arkadaşlarını izlediği çekimde yine ön plan ve arka plan ayırımına dayanan bir kompozisyon tasarımı bulunmaktadır (Resim 12.). Ön planda konumlanan Yusuf, sınıf ve bahçeyi ayıran pencerenin sınıfa bakan tarafındadır. Yusuf'un aşmaya yanaşmadığı bu mesafe içerisinde diğer insanlarla arasında uzanan hat bu kez bir penceredir. Arka planı oluşturan bahçede ise Yusuf'un sınıf arkadaşları oynamaktadır. Bu kompozisyonda dar bir çerçevede diğer çocukların birlikteliği ve Yusuf'un onlarla arasındaki mesafeye yer verilirken, takip eden geniş açılı planda Yusuf'un sınıf içindeki yalnızlığı resmedilmiştir. Aynı çekimde bahçedeki çocukların sınıfa gelmesi ve dersin başlaması sonrasında Yusuf okumayı başarıp kırmızı kurdelesini alabilmek için parmak kaldırır. Buradan itibaren sahnede yeni bir odak noktası oluşmaktadır. Yusuf'un kendi istediği sayfa yerine öğretmenin söylediği sayfayı açmaktaki tereddüdü, kekelemesi ve okuyamaması, teneffüs saatinde arkadaşlarıyla arasına koyduğu mesafeyle birlikte düşünüldüğünde, Yusuf'un sessizliğinin, kelimelerden, dilden ve toplumsallıktan uzaklığı oranında doğayı deneyimleme ve hal diline yakınlığının anlaşılmasında önemli bir eşiktir.

Genelden özele inen biçimsel tarz bu defa kamera kaydırma hareketi ile tekrar eder. Burada klasik anlatı sinemasında görülmeye alışık olunduğu şekilde dramatik beklentileri karşılayacak hızlı bir kaydırma ya da genel plandan Yusuf'un yakın plan bir çekimine kesilmesi gibi seçeneklere gidilmemesi önemlidir. Zira bu tür kesmeler ve hızlı kaydırmalar zamanın bütünlüğünü bozmanın dışında izleyicinin düşünsel konsantrasyonunu da manipüle edebilmektedir. Kaydırma hareketi böyle bir sonuca ulaşmadan izleyiciyi daha konsantre bir şekilde merkezdeki karaktere yönlendirmektedir. Kamera hareketi sonunda bir yakın plana dönüşen, arkadaşları tümüyle kadraj

dışında bırakılacak bir çerçeveye ulaşılmasa da çocuğun kompozisyonda daha merkezi hale gelerek odak noktasında daha kuvvetli bir yer tutması sağlanmıştır.

Belirgin bir olay örgüsünün oluşmadığı filmde mekanları da öykü bağlamında anlamlandırmak mümkün değildir. Mekanı öne çıkaran, zamana alan açan, karakteri mekan ile bütünleştiren sinematografi anlayışı, Bal'da önceki filmlerden daha kuvvetli sonuçlar vermiştir. Yusuf'u yetiştiren, ruhsallığa açan, tabiatı tanımaya ve baba mesleğini öğrenmeye götüren yaptığı yolculuklardır. Babasıyla birlikte kovanları değiştirmeye giden Yusuf, bu yolculuklarda balcılığın en önemli unsurlarından olan çiçekleri yakından tanımaktadır. Babasından miras kalan epilepsi nöbetleriyle de bu şekilde tanışır. Kısa diyaloglara rağmen Yusuf'un öğrenecekleri babanın anlatımıyla değil sessizliğin hakim olduğu bir deneyimlemeyle gerçekleşir. Sabit kamera ve hareketli kamera çekimleri beraber kullanılır. Yusuf ve Yakup tekli planlarda verilmez, çoğunlukla ekstra uzak, uzak ve boy plan çekimlerle, nadiren de orta ve dar açılı çekimlerle baba ve oğul mekanla olan bağları koparılmadan çerçevelenmektedir (Resim 13.). Tabiatın öne çıktığı bu kompozisyonlarda, Süt ve Yumurta'daki örneklerin aksine yatay ve dikey eksenler keskin bir şekilde öne çıkmaz. Hem iç hem de dış mekan, diyalog ve müzikten arınmış doğal sesleri ve sessizliğiyle Yusuf'un yolculuklarını, keşiflerini ve kaçışlarını zamana, düşünceye ve ruhsal tecrübeye açan bir aşkınlık zemini oluşturmaktadır.

Resim 13. Kompozisyonun daimî bileşeni tabiat



Kaynak: (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:22:04)

Kadrajı bir eylem alanı misyonu yüklemeyen Kaplanoğlu bu sebeple kadrajın içi kadar dışını da anlatının bir parçası haline getirmektedir. Klasik anlatının merkezi perspektif mantığı ile şekillenen kompozisyon anlayışında karakterler kadraj içindeki odak noktalarına itina ile yerleştirilirken Kaplanoğlu aynı Bresson'un yaptığı gibi karakterlerini kadraj dışında bırakabilmektedir. Yusuf'un babasıyla çıktığı bal yolculuğunda, Jeanne d'Arc'ın Yargılanması (Bresson, 1962) filminde Jeanne d'Arc'ın kadraj dışından gelerek kompozisyona dahil olması ve ardından hareketini devam ettirerek kadraj dışına çıkmasında olduğu gibi Yusuf ve Yakup da kadraj dışından gelmekte ve sonra yine kadrajı terk etmektedirler. Hareketi ve zamanı kesintiye uğratmamak bir yana, Kaplanoğlu bu mizansenlerde karakterler ve objeler kadar anlatıyı kadrajın içinden ve dışından gelen seslere de açarak Bresson'un söylediği gibi kulak ve gözü birlikte beslemeye çalışmakta, kulağın göze ve böylelikle saf sessel imgenin sinematografiye kazandıracaklarını mümkün olan en üst seviyeye çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir.

Kaplanoğlu'nun göstermeyi öncellemediği planlar, temel maksadın karakter ve eylemleri fiziksel varlıklarıyla göstermek ve hareketi takip etmekten çok düşünmek ve tecrübe etmek olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Flu bir çerçeveye açılan sınıf sahnesi bu bağlamda okunabilir (Resim 14.). Kadrajın ortasında enine uzanan beyaz ışık kompozisyonu domine etmektedir. Işığın altından

gelen kişi de hiçbir detay verilmeden flu zeminde bırakılmıştır. Herhangi bir net alanın bulunmadığı kompozisyonun bağlamı tahtadaki problemleri çözmek isteyen bir çocuğun havaya kaldırdığı parmağının net bir şekilde belirmesiyle anlaşılmaktadır. Kaplanoğlu gerek kadraj dışında bırakarak gerekse de flu kompozisyonlar kullanarak, karakter ve öğeleri göstermeme yolunu zaman zaman kullanmakta ve göstermek yerine düşünmenin, hayal etmenin, zamanı tecrübe etmenin peşinden gitmektedir.

Resim 14. Manevi tecrübenin net alanın dışında var olma becerisi



Kaynak: Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:40:16)

Yakup'un yeni kovanlar yerleştirmek için birkaç günlüğüne evden ayrılmasıyla Yusuf'un rüyalarına net olarak ilk adım atılır. Zehra'nın Yakup'a önceki sahnede söylediği, Yusuf'un sessizliğine bir deva olması düşüncesiyle Niyazi hocaya götürme teklifini Yakup yeni kovanlar için Kara Uçurum'a gidecek olması sebebiyle kabul edememiştir. Ancak Yusuf rüyasının başında kendini yaşlı bir adamın önünde oturmuş olarak görür. Adam sağ elini Yusuf'un başına koymuş ve Kur'an-ı Kerim'den Nas Suresi'ni okumaktadır. Ardından oturduğu yerden kalkan Yusuf odadan çıkmak üzere kamera yönüne yürümeye başlar. Kompozisyonu tümünü kaplayan doğal aydınlatma ile odanın genel planını veren çekim, Yusuf'un kameranın yanına ulaşıp durduğu son noktada Yusuf'un baş plan çekimine dönüşür (Resim 15.) ve aydınlatmanın tümüyle değiştiği yeni bir kompozisyon ortaya çıkar.

Resim 15. Rüya katmanının gerçekçi ve stilistik aydınlatma biçimleri



Kaynak: Bal (Kaplanoğlu, 2010) (Zaman Kodu: 00:48:09)

Bu yeni kompozisyonda geniş alan derinliği kaybolmuştur ve net alan Yusuf'un bulunduğu ön plan ile sınırlandırılarak oda ve yaşlı adam sahnenin dışında bırakılır. Bu ikinci kompozisyonda kadraj içi öğelerin değişimine aydınlatmadaki dramatik değişim de eşlik etmektedir. Yusuf yan profilden bakan baş çekimde tam bir siluet formunda tutulmaktadır. Yürümeye başladığında kaydırma hareketi ile takip edilir ve arka plandaki oda tümüyle kaybolup karanlık bir koridor alanına girer. Odanın kadrajdan çıkmasıyla çekimin işitsel planı da değişikliğe uğramaktadır. Odadaki ocakta yanan ateşin sesi kesilir. Siluet formuna ek olarak duyulan rüzgar çanı sesiyle rüya düzlemi daha belirgin bir hale getirilmiştir. Yusuf koridorun sonuna geldiğinde artık kendi evindedir ve içerde kimse olmadığını görmesiyle birlikte karşı açığa kesilerek Yusuf'un yüz ifadesi göğüs plan çekimde verilir. Siluet formu yerini düşük anahtar ışıklı bir aydınlatmaya bırakır. Ancak içeride kimsenin olmaması sebebiyle geriye dönüp arka odaya yürüdüğü sırada yüksek kontrastlı ve siluete varan biçimler tekrar etmektedir. Kaydırma hareketi bu çekimde de Yusuf'un evin içinde odalar arasında yaptığı yürüyüşte boy plandan baş plana kadar farklı ölçeklerde Yusuf'u takip etmeye devam eder. En son mutfaktan gelen sesleri duyup geri dönüğünde az önce boş olan masada bu defa anne ve babasının kahvaltı yaptıklarını görüp yanlarına oturur ve babasına günaydın demesiyle birlikte uyanır.

Kamera hareketleri rüya sahnesini ortaya çıkaran belirleyici sinematografik unsurların başında gelmektedir. Yusuf'un sessizliği yerini bir arayışa bırakmaktadır. Kaydırma hareketi Yusuf'un rüyasında başından sonuna kadar üç farklı aşamayı birleştirmektedir. Kötülüklerden muhafaza olma duası olarak okunan Nas Suresi ile başlayan ilk aşamanın peşinden Yusuf'un görünen ve görünmeyen düzlemlerdeki arayışı gelmektedir. Son olarak Yusuf uzayan bu arayışın ardından babasını bulur. Yusuf Peygamber kıssasındaki belli noktalara yönelik sembolik bağlantılar taşıyor olsa da nihayetinde dolaysız bir zaman imgesi söz konusudur. Kaplanoğlu, zaman imgesinin ruhsal bir temaşa olarak tecrübe edilmesinde genel itibarıyla kameranın varlığını hissettirmeme yönünde bir yaklaşım sergilemektedir. Bu sebeple önceki Yumurta ve Süt'te çoğunlukla sabit planları tercih etmiştir. Ancak Bal'ın rüya sahnesinde ve belli yerlerinde bu yaklaşımın dışına çıkılarak hem daha dar kadrajlara hem de hareketli kamera çekimlerine yer vererek yine benzer sonuçlar almıştır.

Buğday: Kaplanoğlu Sinematografisinin Eksiltme Tavrı

Bilinmeyen bir yer ve zamanda geçen Buğday (2017) filminde, küresel şirketlerin kontrolünde olan dünya üzerinde insanların yaşamlarını nispeten sağlıklı olarak sürdürebildikleri sınırlı sayıdaki şehirlerden biri tasvir edilmektedir. Şirket yöneticilerinin, bilim adamlarının ve seçkin grupların dışında yalnızca genetik uyumluluğu bilimsel olarak kanıtlanabilen göçmenlerin kabul edilmekte olduğu bu şehir, bir manyetik sınır vasıtasıyla etrafındaki Tampon Bölge, Ölü Topraklar ve Terk Edilmiş Doğa'dan ayrılmaktadır. Gıda ihtiyacının şirket tarafından üretilen tohumlardan elde edilen besinlerle karşılandığı şehirde hem tarım alanlarında hem de tohumlarda nedeni bilinmeyen genetik sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır. Filmin ana karakteri olan şirketin bilim adamlarından Erol Erin, sorunun çözülmesi için araştırmalar yapan ekipte yer almaktadır. Yaşanan tohum kriziyle ilgili olarak eski bir bilim adamı Cemil Akman'ın yıllar önce hazırladığı tezden haberdar olur ve şehri terk edip Ölü Topraklar'a giden Akman'a ulaşabilmek için kaçak olarak manyetik alanı geçer. Erol ve Cemil'in karşılaşmalarının ardından Cemil'in tezindeki ve karakterindeki metafizik unsurlar Erol için daha önemli hale gelir. Cemil Erol'a şehre geri dönmesini telkin edip kendisiyle yolculuk yapmaya dayamayacağını söyler. Ancak Erol, Cemil'in yolculuğuna katılmaya ısrar eder. Böylece iki karakter Kur'an-ı Kerim'deki Hz. Musa ve Hızır kıssasını yaşamaya başlar.

Kaplanoğlu, Meleğin Düşüşü'nden itibaren sinemada net bir şekilde uygulamaya çalıştığı "maneviyatı gündelik hayata dahil etme" yaklaşımını Yusuf Üçlemesi sonrasında daha farklı bir düzeyde sürdürmeye çalışmıştır. Bal filminin ardından dünyanın farklı yerlerinde birkaç yıl devam eden gözlem ve incelemelerin neticesinde Buğday'ın prodüksiyon süreçlerine başlamıştır. Yönetmen bu gözlemler doğrultusunda filmde modernleşmenin dünyada ve dolayısıyla insanda ortaya çıkarttığı fiziksel ve biyolojik tahribata yer vermektedir. Filmde ana karakterin, insanlığın içine düştüğü biyolojik krizi aşma yönündeki arayışı ancak kendi iç dünyasında manevi huzura ve ruhsal

kurtuluşa ulaşmasıyla birlikte bir sonuca ulaşmaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Buğday filminin Kaplanoğlu'nun sinema yaklaşımı doğrultusunda tutarlı bir tematik yapıya sahip olduğu ifade edilebilir.

Modern insanın dünyaya yüklediği araçsal anlamın sona ermesi ve iletişimsel bir ilişki modelinin geliştirilmesinde maneviyata kalıcı bir yer ayıran Kaplanoğlu'nun maneviyatı Buğday'da yapısal olarak nasıl konumlandığına bakıldığında Yusuf Üçlemesi'nden farklı bir aşamaya geçtiği görülmektedir. Üçleme'de günlük hayatta karşılaşılabilecek bir konu dizini sunulurken, maddi gerçekliklerden aşkınlığa ve manevi tecrübeye uzanılmaktaydı. Buğday'da ise bir hayal düzleminde bulunan karakterler, genetik kriz karşısındaki çözüm arayışı sırasında net bir şekilde Hz. Musa ve Hızır kıssasını yaşamaktadırlar. Bu bakımdan Buğday'da söz konusu olan maddi olanın manevileştirilmesi değil, manevi olanın maddi bir surete büründürülmesidir. Kaplanoğlu, Kur'ân-ı Kerim'in Kehf Suresi'ndeki kıssada geçen olaylara herhangi bir dolaylama yapmadan doğrudan yer vererek, kıssada yaşanan aşkın durumları filmde epik bir dille kelimelere dökmek yerine hal diliyle tecrübe etmeye odaklanmıştır (Gülşen, 2021).

Anlatı yapısı itibarıyla bakıldığında, başlangıçla birlikte filmin hayal düzlemindeki evreninin klasik anlatıya yakın bir şekilde tanımlandığı söylenebilir. Günümüz dünyasında da yaşanan iklim değişiklikleri ve tabiatın farklı düzeylerde uğradığı tahribatın temelinde Batı uygarlığının ürettiği araçsal akıl ve moderniteden kaynaklı olması ve yine günümüz Batı dünyasının mülteciliğe karşı genel bir insani tavır göstermek yerine belli kriterlere göre az sayıda mülteciyi kabul etmesi düşünüldüğünde, bu durumlarla fütürist bir bağlamda örtüşmekte olan filmin evreninin mimesisçi klasik anlatıya uygun olarak tanıtılmış olması tutarlı bir tercih olarak değerlendirilebilir. Film evrenindeki krizle Batı dünyası arasındaki yapısal ilişkinin bir başka neticesi ise karakterlerin İngilizce konuşmasıdır. Modernitenin ve sonuçlarının çoğunlukla İngilizce konuşan ve düşünen zihinlerce üretilmiş olması filmdeki İngilizce tercihini açıklamaktadır. Anlatı yapısına geri dönecek olursa, açılış sekansından itibaren mekanın ve hikayenin eylemler eşliğinde tanıtıldığı klasik anlatıyla uyumlu işleyiş, Erol'un iç dünyası filmin merkezine doğru çekildikçe ortadan kalkar. Ana karakter Erol'un, maddi bir kurtuluş arayışı olarak yorumlanabilecek yolculuğunun başlamasıyla birlikte bir kahraman profiline dönüşmemesi, ısrar ederek Cemil'le yolculuğa çıkmasına rağmen çatışma ve özdeşleşme üretmek yerine kendi özünü, zaaflarını ve varlığın özünü keşfe yönelmesi filmin klasik dramatik yapının dışında ilerlemesini sağlamaktadır.

Filmin açılış sahnesinde sınır bölgesinde sıkışmış, şehre kabul edilmeyi bekleyen çocuklar simetrik kompozisyonlarla verilmektedir. Yusuf Üçlemesi'nin açılış planlarında alışlageldiği üzere özünü korunmuş bir tabiat ve onun bir parçası halini almış bir insan portresiyle karşılaşılır. Tabiata sınırsızca açılan bir kompozisyon yerine Buğday'ın açılış planında yatay ve dikey çizgilerin arkasına sıkışmış gözetim altında tutulan bir insan kitlesi dar bir kompozisyonda verilmektedir. (Resim 16.). Burada Kaplanoğlu'nun tümüyle sabit kamera çekimi ya da minimum kamera hareketi ile gerçekleştirdiği açılış planlarından biri yoktur. Orta ölçekli bu çekimde kadrage girmesiyle odak noktasını oluşturan kadın yetkili, kaydırma ve pan hareketleriyle takip edilmektedir. Bu dar kompozisyonda çocuklardan oluşan grup bel planda, kadın görevli ise çocukları görme, bulma, denetleme yetkisini fiziksel olarak doğrulayan diz planda yer almaktadır. Kamera yüksekliğinin çocukların bakış açısında tutulması ile kadın yetkili nispeten alt açılı bir planda tutulmakta ve otoritesi öne çıkarılmaktadır.

Resim 16. Açılıştta eklenen kamera hareketi, daralan açık ve ölçekler



Kaynak: Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) (Zaman Kodu: 00:01:23)

Yusuf Üçlemesi'nde açılış planlarında mekanın ruhunu dikkat çekici bir şekilde açığa çıkaran en önemli öğelerden biri ses olmuştur. Kaplanoğlu doğal seslerin mekanı tanımlaması noktasındaki eğilimini Buğday'da da kuvvetli bir şekilde sürdürmektedir. Mekan Üçleme'nin tam tersi istikamette bir karakter taşısa da sesler mekanın nasıl bir şuurla tasarlanmış ve hangi fonksiyonlara sahip olduğunu ele vermektedir. Bir arada tutulan insan kitesinden çıkan uğultuya, yapılan anonsların, kalabalık içerisinde atılan adımların ve açılıp kitlenen kapıların seslerinin eklenmesiyle teknolojinin hüküm sürdüğü, çelik bloklarla örülmüş, modern mühendislikle tasarlanmış, insanı zorla ya da gönüllü olarak sarıp hapseden, tabiata dair hiçbir ibarenin bulunmadığı bir mekana ulaşılmıştır.

İç mekandan dış mekana geçildiğinde bir kız çocuğunun tampon bölgeden uzaklaşırken geri dönüp şehre doğru bakmasıyla başlayan uzun planda kamera hareketleri önemli bir anlatı aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır. Küçük kızın bel planından başlayan çekim ilerleyen saniyelerde mülteci kitlelerinin ilerleyişinin görüldüğü bir uzak plana dönüşür. Filmdeki evrenin tanıtılması ve öykünün kurulması planın devamında yine kamera hareketleri ile sürdürülür. Bir kişinin gruptan ayrılarak koşmaya başlamasıyla tampon bölgenin sınırının yalnızca askerlerin koruduğu tel örgülerden oluşmadığı, manyetik bir kalkanın oluşturduğu geçilmesi imkanı bir ölüm sınırının kilometrelerce uzandığı görülmektedir. Arkadaşları tarafından durdurulamayan bu kişi manyetik kalkana ulaşır ve yanarak can verir. Kaydırma hareketine devam eden kamera önce gruptan ayrılan kişiyi takip ederek manyetik alana sonra sınırın diğer tarafına doğru ilerleyerek şehrin tarım alanlarına ulaşır. Böylelikle aynı çekimde evrenin iki farklı bölgesi tanıtılmaktadır. Manyetik alanın geçilmesi sonrasında göz alabildiğine uzanan buğday tarlasının oluşturduğu kompozisyon saf görsel ve sessel bir durum olarak akmaya devam eder. Önce Prof. Erol Erin ve ardından ekibindeki diğer bilim insanlarının kompozisyona dahil olmalarıyla birlikte evrende bilim ve teknolojinin hüküm sürdüğü ikinci bölgeye geçilmiştir. Ancak uzayıp giden buğday başaklarının bolluk ve bereketi değil genetik kaos ve kısırlaşmayı temsil ettiği bir sonraki sahnede anlaşılmaktadır.

Bu uzun çekimin buğday tarlasına uzandığı son kısmında oldukça geniş bir coğrafyayı kapsayan uzak plan bir kompozisyona ulaşılsa da kaydırma hareketine devam edilerek buğday başaklarını yakın çekimde gören dar bir çerçeveye geçilir. Karakterlerini birçok defa kadraj dışı alandan yürüterek sabit kadrajlı kompozisyonlara dahil eden Kaplanoğlu burada yine aynı şeyi yapmakla birlikte, yürümekte olan Erol dar ölçekli kadrajın solundan, hareketli bir yakın planda başaklara dokunan sol eliyle kompozisyona giriş yapar (Resim 17.). Diğer taraftan bakıldığında, Yusuf Üçlemesi'nde film evrenini oluşturan tabiatı öncelikli olarak sabit uzak planlarla izleyicisine sunan Kaplanoğlu, karakterlerini de sabit çerçeveler içinde hareket ettirerek doğayla bütünleşmelerine zaman tanırken, Buğday'da tabiata açılan bu ilk planda yoğun olarak kamera hareketi kullanmakta, geniş planlar kadar dar planlara da yer vermekte ve ana karakterini kaydırma hareketi ile takip etmektedir. Bu planda hem karakterin hareketi ve hem de kamera hareketi kısa

aralar vererek çekim sonuna kadar devam etmekte ve perspektifi de çok merkezli hale getirmektedir.

Resim 17. Karakter-doğa bütünleşmesine katılan kamera hareketi



Kaynak: Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) (Zaman Kodu: 00:07:12)

Kaplanoğlu geniş ve uzak planlarda alan derinliğinden istifade ederek karakterlerin, farklı objelerin ve mekanın katılımı ile kompozisyonu ön, orta ve arka planlara ayırarak tasarlamaya devam etmektedir. Açılıştaki içinde bulunulan zaman ve mekanın ruhunu iç mekanda dar ölçekli bir planla daha çok karakterlerin kimliklerine dayanarak vermeye başlayan Kaplanoğlu, dış mekana geçildiğinde alışık olunan geniş ölçekli planlarıyla mekanın ikiye bölünen çatışmacı kimliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Hem iç hem de dış mekanda ana ekseni uzun çekimlerle ortaya çıkarırken bunlara kısa çekimler de eklenmektedir.

İkiye bölünmüş hayal evreninin, yaşamın devam ettiği ve otoriteye sahip olan parçasında önemli bir pozisyonda bulunan Erol'un içinde bulunduğu topluluğa bir tutku ile bağlı olmadığı ve kendisini burada tutan profesyonel bağların da zayıflamakta olduğu, filmin başlarında arka arkaya gelen toplantı, araba, sera ve tren sahnelerindeki kompozisyonlarda netlik kazanmaktadır. Erol, genetik krizin somut bir veri olarak ortaya çıktığı şirket toplantısında Cemil Akman'dan ve onun bilim ve teknolojinin otoritesine ters düşen tezinden haberdar olur. Görsel düzen içinde toplantıdaki diğer üyelerle arasındaki fiziksel mesafe, Erol'u masanın etrafındaki diğer üyelerden izole eden planlara imkan vermektedir. Toplantı başkanı konuyu Cemil Akman'a getirdiğinde Erol'un sağ tarafındaki boş sandalye ile kadraja alınmasıyla şirketle arasındaki düşünsel ve duygusal mesafenin imgesel karşılığı üretilir. Bu mesafe Akman'ın tezine içerdiği metafizik ve etik yaklaşım nedeniyle karşı çıkan kadın üyenin sözü almasıyla geçilen aç-karşı aç çekimleriyle daha da somutlaşırken, Erol'un Akman'a karşı oluşan ilgisi de açıklık kazanmaktadır. Erol bu sahneden itibaren Ölü Topraklar'a yapacağı yolculuk öncesinde hem kendi iç dünyasıyla hesaplaşmaya hem de Cemil Akman'ı bulma arayışlarına başlamaktadır.

Resim 18. Derinlemesine uzanan kompozisyonda yalnızlaşan karakter



Kaynak: Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) (Zaman Kodu: 00:14:23)

Toplantının son planında Cemil Akman'ın nerede olduğu yönündeki sorusunun cevapsız kalmasının ardından Erol'un üç farklı mekanda daha çevresiyle olan fiziksel ve düşünsel izolasyonuna şahit olunur. Bunlardan ilki arabada direksiyon başındaki düşünceli halini gösteren profil göğüs plandır. Refah ve otorite dünyasını temsil eden toplantı salonundaki çok sayıda pencereden düşen yoğun yumuşak ışıkla sağlanan düşük kontrastlı aydınlatmaya karşılık araba planındaki düşük anahtar ışıklı, yüksek kontrastlı aydınlatma Erol'un girdiği yol ayrımına ilişkin bir muhasebe içinde olduğunu ortaya koyar ve toplantı sahnesinin son planında şirketle arasına giren mesafeyi pekiştirir. Ardından gelen Sera sahnesinin açılışında Erol yine tek başındadır. Arabadaki dar ölçekli çekimin aksine Sera'da arka arkaya geniş ölçekli uzak çekimler gelir. Cemil Akman'dan haberi olup olmadığını sorduğu Sera'daki görevlinin verdiği çekingeng cevapların ardından Erol'un yanından uzaklaştığı plan (Resim 18.), Erol'un bu arayışının şehirde onu yalnızlaştırmakta olduğunu göstermesi bakımından önemlidir. Netlik kameraya arkası dönük olarak kadrajın ön planında yer alan Erol'da tutulurken, Erol'un düşünsel anlamda veda ettiği bu dünyaya ait mekan ve karakter net alanın dışında bırakılmıştır.

Cemil Akman'ı arayan Erol, Akman'ın adresine ulaşip evine gittiğinde şehri terk etmeden önce şehrin cansızlığının ve hissizliğinin dışına çıkar. Sarmaşıklarla kaplı bahçe kapısı, şehirdeki yatay ve dikey çizgilerin tümüyle dışında kalan evin girişindeki oval mimari ve her bir yanı kaplayan çiçekler, sarmaşıklar daha eve girmeden şaşırtmıştır Erol'u (Resim 19.). Aynı ruh hali evin içinde de kitaplık, tablolar, vazolar ve çeşitli bitkilerle devam etmektedir. Erol için söz konusu olan gizemli yapı, sahnenin aydınlatmasında masa lambaları ve pencerelerden vuran düşük yumuşak ışıkla, yüksek kontrastlı karanlık alanlar ve siluet formu ile karşılığını bulmaktadır. Cemil'i ararken kızı Tara'yı bulan Erol, içine girdiği arayış ve yolculuğun gayesini soran "nefes mi buğday mı?" sorusuna ilk olarak burada muhatap olur. Bir hayal düzleminde, bilinmeyen bir zaman ve mekan tasavvurunun içinde bulunan Erol'a 13. Yüzyıl Anadolu'sunda yaşayan Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli'nin Yunus Emre'ye sorduğu soruyu yönelten Tara, Kaplanoğlu'nun karakteri çıkardığı ruhsal yolculuğun filmin başından beri gelen en somut işaretini vermektedir. Tara, babasına ulaşmaya çalışan Erol'a "hayatta kalmayı başarabilmiş bir beden mi" yoksa "kurtuluşa ve huzura ermiş bir ruh mu" istediğini sormaktadır aslında. İçinde olduğu hayal düzleminin şartlarına uygun bir algı taşımakta olan Erol, soruya tereddütsüz bir şekilde "buğday" yanıtını verir. Soruyu doğru anlayan Erol, modern aklın insanlığın karşısına çıkardığı problemlerin çözülmesi için yine modern akıl tarafından kendine yüklenen sorumluluğun etkisiyle buğday cevabını vermiştir.

Resim 19. Erol için "Ölü Topraklar"a açılan ilk kapı



Kaynak: Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) (Zaman Kodu: 00:22:46)

Ev sahnesi Erol için yeni bir dünyaya hazırlık mahiyetinde olmasına karşın gözüyle gördüğünü kalbiyle tecrübe edecek bir yolculuğa hazır olmadığı için buğday cevabını vermiştir. Tara'nın sorusu ve Erol'un cevabı sahnenin özü niteliğinde olmasına karşın oldukça kısa bir sürede cereyan eder.

Erol Tara'dan ümidini kesip evden ayrılırken Tara “nefes mi buğday mı?” sorusunu sormuştur. Açık karşı açı çekimleriyle gerçekleşen bu kısımda, buğday cevabının aldığı hafif bir tebessümle önüne dönüp kendi işini yapmaya devam eden Tara, Erol'un ısrarına rağmen başka bir şey söylemez. Erol'un bel planda Tara'ya bakıp kaldığı çekimde içine girdiği bekleyiş ve gerginliğe imgesel düzlemle yavaş bir kaydırma hareketi ile tepki verilir. Kamera Erol'a doğru hafifçe yaklaşırken dramatik etkiyi arttıran en büyük unsur filmde nadiren yer verilen müzik olmuştur.

Erol şehri terk edip ailesini bulmak isteyen öğrencisi Andrei ile manyetik alanı yasa dışı bir şekilde geçer. Cemil ile karşılaşmalarının ardından Cemil şehre geri dönmelerini tavsiye eder. Ancak Erol Cemil'e katılmakta ısrar eder, Andrei ise ailesini bulmak için Erol'dan ayrılır. Sandal yolculuğu Erol ve Cemil'in, Hz. Musa ile Hızır'ın yolculuğunu tecrübe etmeye başladıkları noktadır. Erol'un “beni de yanınıza alın” talebine karşın Cemil'in “sen bu yolculuğa dayanamazsın” diyerek sandala binip ayrıldığı, Erol'un ise birkaç saniye içinde karar verdikten sonra suya girip yüzerek sandala çıktığı anlar Erol'un o vakte kadar karşılaştığı en ciddi kırılma anı olarak yorumlanabilir. Erol'un bu davranışı Cemil'in söylediğinin aksi yönünde olmasına rağmen filmde karakterler arasında bir çatışmanın ve mesafenin bulunmadığı bir kısım başlamıştır. Buradaki planlarda kameranın ne Erol'a ne de Cemil'e alışıldıktan daha fazla yaklaşması söz konusu değildir. Genel plan, boy ve bel planlardaki çekimlerle karakterleri içinde buldukları hayal dünyasının zaman ve mekanından ayırmamaya özen gösterilir. Sınırlı kamera hareketi ile özellikle Cemil sandalla karadan ayrılmaya başladığında anlatıya katkı verilmektedir.

Kaplanoğlu, çizdiği hayal dünyasının maddi düzleminde Erol ve Cemil'e açık bir şekilde Kehf Sûresi'ndeki kıssayı yaşatmaya devam eder. İkisinin yolculukları kıssaya maddi bir düzlem kazandırır ve ruhsal olanla maddi olan iç içe geçer. Erol'un kendisiyle yola devam etme talebine rıza göstermesi ise Cemil için önemli bir karar anıdır. Bu defa iç mekanda bulunan karakterler bel ve göğüs plan gibi daha dar kadrailarla çerçevenmektedirler. Cemil ilk olarak Erol'a şehre dönüşü için yolu tarif ederken plan Erol'da tutulur. Erol'un üzüntüsünü Cemil ile yolculuğa devam etme talebinde bulunması takip eder. Ancak Erol'un hissiyatı cepheden bir çekimle verilip görsel olarak tümüyle açık edilmez. Erol, Cemil'in amorsundan bir profil çekimde görülürken, Cemil'in konuştuğu anlarda da plan Erol'da tutulmuştur. Karşı açıya geçildiğinde ise Cemil daha geniş bir açıda yine profilden görülmektedir. Plan boyunca konuşmaz ancak Erol'un talebini kabul ettiğini belli ederek önüne bir çift çizme koyar.

Resim 20. Mekanı ve karakteri karanlıkla bırakarak anlama yoğunlaşmak



Kaynak: Buğday (Kaplanoğlu, 2017) (Zaman Kodu: 01:19:06)

Buğday'ın görsel kimliğini oluşturan tercihler arasında “göstermek” kadar “göstermemek” de “aydınlatmak” kadar “karanlıkta bırakmak” da önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Cemil ve Erol'un yolculuklarının başlamasının ardından gecelemek için çadırlarını kurdukları mekandaki dış-gece çekimi bu açıdan incelenmeye değerdir (Resim 20.). Kaplanoğlu'nun Bal'da olduğu gibi Buğday'da da yoğun bir şekilde kullandığı düşük anahtar ışıklı aydınlatma uygulamalarından biri olan bu

sahnede Erol ve Cemil insanlığın başından geçmekte olan zorlu imtihan karşısındaki tepkilerini ve yaklaşımlarını birbirlerine aktarmaktadırlar. Cemil ayrıca doğadaki varlıkların genetiğine müdahale edilerek insanın ruhsal yapısına da zarar verildiğini fakat insanın benliği sebebiyle bu durumun farkına varamadığını anlatır. Kaplanoğlu burada, modern aklın, bilim ve teknolojinin dünyaya yaşattığı tahribatın filmin ana eksenini oluşturmadığını ve ikincil bir öge olarak filmin aşkınlık düzlemine hizmet etmekte olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Dünyanın modern insanın tahribatından, insanın ise kendi benliğinden kurtulmaya olan ihtiyacı doğrultusunda kompozisyonda mekan da karakterler de büyük oranda karanlıkta bırakılmaktadır. Sahnedeki ikili plan, yerde oturan karakterleri yine profilden görüntülemekte ve ikilinin siluet formları arka plandaki gökyüzünün aydınlığıyla belirginlik kazanmaktadır. Yerde yanan ateşin verdiği düşük yoğunluklu yumuşak ışık karakterlerin yüzlerinde küçük bir kısmı pozlayabilmektedir. Mekana verilen “ölü topraklar” ismi de aynı şekilde bir karanlık içinde imgesel karşılığını bulmakta ve alan derinliği taşımayan düzleşmiş bir arka plana sıkıştırılmaktadır.

Sonuç

Sinematografik üslubu Yumurta, Süt, Bal ve Buğday filmlerinden seçilen sahnelerle çözümlenen Semih Kaplanoğlu sineması, görüntüye otonom bir yapı kazandıran bir sinema anlayışı sergilemektedir. Kaplanoğlu auteur bir yönetmen olarak, filmlerinde görsel kimliği oluşturmaya yönelik çalışmalarına görüntü yönetmenlerinden bağımsız olarak henüz senaryo aşamasında başlamaktadır. Kadrajı, açısı, ölçeği, kameranın sabit ya da hareketli kullanımı, kompozisyonu, aydınlatması ve diğer tüm öğeleriyle görüntü yönetimini filmin düşünsel ve ruhsal düzlemiyle bütünleşmeye sevk edecek bakış açısını, birlikte çıktıkları yolculukta görüntü yönetmenine aktarmaktadır. Görüntü yönetmeninin sinematografik uygulamaları bu bütünleşmeyi sağlayamadığında, Kaplanoğlu imgeyi peşinde olduğu anlama götürecek çözümleri arayıp bulmaktadır. Yönetmenliği öncesinde görüntü ekibinin kamera departmanında yer almış olan Kaplanoğlu, genellikle ilk görüntü yönetmenliği tecrübelerini yaşamakta olan isimlerle çalışarak filmlerine görüntü ekibi için bir okul işlevi de kazandırmıştır.

Kaplanoğlu, zamanı ve hareketi kesintiye uğratmadan vermeyi tercih ederken, kesintiye uğramayan hareket görünür gerçeklik düzlemindeki maddi halini aşarak ruhsal bir alana yönelmektedir. Kaplanoğlu, hareketi duysal sonuçlara odaklanan durumlardan uzaklaştırmaktadır. Tarkovsky gibi maddi gerçekliğin dolaysız hali üzerinden ruhsal anlam katmanına ulaşmanın peşinde olan Kaplanoğlu, izleyiciye kameranın ve kurgunun varlığını neredeyse hissettirmeyecek bir biçimsel istikamette olmuştur. Filmlerinde Tarkovsky’i çağrıştıran çok sayıda imgeye yer veren Kaplanoğlu’nun karakterleri, yine Tarkovsky filmlerinde, Bresson ve Dreyer filmlerinde olduğu gibi varoluşsal acılar çekmektedirler. Kaplanoğlu karakterinin arayışında oldukları ruhsal kurtuluş ve aşkın düzlemin, yine yukarıda sıralanan yönetmenlerde olduğu gibi net bir dindarlık formu taşımadığı görülmektedir.

Resimsel ilkeleri göz önüne bulunduran kompozisyonlara sıklıkla yer veren Kaplanoğlu, buralarda kimi zaman şiirsel, kimi zaman ruhsal irtibatlar kurmaktadır. Sinematografi, tüm filmlerde anlam katmanlarının oluşumunu doğrudan desteklerken, Yumurta ve Süt’ün ardından gelen Bal ve Buğday’da yeni uygulamalara yer verdiği görülmüştür. Yumurta ve Süt’te geniş ölçekli kompozisyonları, sabit ve uzun planlarla dolaysız bir zaman açan Kaplanoğlu, nadiren hareket ettirdiği kamerasını pan ve tilt gibi temel hareketlerle sınırlamıştır. Karakterin ruhsal durumunu mekânla birlikte anlamlandıran Kaplanoğlu, sabit kamera tercihinin de bir sonucu olarak karakterlerini kameranın gözetiminden çıkarmayı seçmiştir. Geniş kompozisyonların ön ve arka plan gibi farklı katmanlarında hareket eden karakterler sıklıkla kadraj dışına çıkarak kompozisyonu terk etmektedirler. Sabit kompozisyonlarda kadraj dışındaki karakterin kadrajın farklı noktalarından kompozisyona dahil olabilmesinin yanında, karakterin aynı çekimde yakın plandan uzak plana kadar çok farklı ölçeklerde izleyicinin karşısına çıkabilmesi kompozisyonlara tek bir merkezi perspektifin hâkim olmadığı göstermektedir. Her dört filmde de görülebilen çoklu perspektif anlayışı,

kompozisyonda sadece karakterin farklı düşünce imgelerine değil mekâna, tabiata, negatif alana ve kadraj dışına da alan açabilmektedir.

Bal ve Buğday'da ise alt ve üst açılı, orta ve yakın plan çekimlerin sayısının arttığı, uzun sabit ve sabit planlara daha çok kısa planın eklendiği, kesmelerin sıklaşarak hareketli kamera kullanımının anlatı için oldukça önemli bir hale geldiği görülmüştür. Karakter-mekân bütünlüşmesi ve karakterin ruhsal durumunu açığa çıkararak anlarda kaydırma hareketi ile karakter takip edilmektedir. Bal ve Buğday'da en çok dikkat çeken sinematografik yönelim düşük anahtar ışıklı, yüksek kontrastlı ve silüetleri sık kullanan kompozisyonların sayısının ve öneminin artmış olmasıdır. Yumurta ve Süt'ün görüntü yönetimindeki eksiltme tavrı kamera kullanımında kendini gösterirken, Bal ve Buğday'da ise aynı tavır aydınlatmada öne çıkmaktadır. İki film için de filmi taşıyan sahneler olarak değerlendirilebilecek, Bal'ın rüya sahnelerinde ve tümüyle bir hayal düzlemine dönüşen Buğday'da ise ana karakterin benliği anlama ve yüzleşme sahnelerinde aydınlatmaktan çok karanlıkta bırakmak üzerine kurulu bir görsel dil kullanılmıştır.

Netice itibariyle Semih Kaplanoğlu sinemada maddi olanın katı bir natüralizme, aşkın olanın ise bir fanteziye dönüşmesini engelleyecek bir denge arayışı içerisinde. Bu doğrultuda maddi olandaki manevi yönleri sezme ve manevi olana ise maddi bir suret kazandırma perspektifini Meleğin Düşüşü'nden sonra net bir şekilde taşımış ve sinematografik üslubunu da bizzat kendisi şekillendirerek bu perspektifin en büyük destekçisi haline getirmiştir. Sadelik ve eksiltmeyi görüntü yönetiminin temel ilkeleri olarak benimseyen Kaplanoğlu, sinematografik uygulamalarını bu ilkelere sadık kalarak, filmlerindeki anlam katmanları doğrultusunda şekillendirmektedir.

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Cinematography in Semih Kaplanoglu Cinema and the Layers of Meaning Revealed by Visual Language

Hasan Ramazan YILMAZ*

Extended Abstract

Semih Kaplanođlu pursues an understanding of cinema that opens the image to time and spiritual experience, that prioritizes not visuality and showing but the ability to offer time an uninterrupted space of existence. Andrei Tarkovsky, one of the most prominent references in Kaplanođlu's understanding of cinema, focuses on the film's character of directly conveying the material reality it records and the simplicity of life that can experienced over time without interruption. Although cinematography is a tool that raises the dramatic action in classical narrative cinema, in Semih Kaplanođlu films, it creates pure visual and audial situations. It considered as one of the most important stakeholders that opens the film art to time and spiritual experience.

Technical applications in cinematography enables the construction of visual identity in a film, and they have a crucial place within the scope of narrative structure and creation of meaning in cinema. When the image management practices in Kaplanođlu's films are analyzed, the functions of the cinematographic style that makes the audience witness the characters' spiritual moods can see. This research focuses on the cinematographic style that the directing of photography practices in Semih Kaplanođlu cinema reveal. Here, an answer sought to questions of how this style affects the formation of the intellectual and spiritual layers established in Kaplanođlu films.

Kaplanođlu's cinematographic style thematically devotes itself human spiritual experiences and finding spiritual peace and makes significant contributions to the meaning world of the films. This study examined how cinematographic practices participate in the narrative structure and creation of meaning in Kaplanođlu's cinema. It determined that the meanings produced are possible not through the actions and dialogues of the characters but through pure visual and audial situations established by cinematography.

Practices in the field of directing of photography in Semih Kaplanođlu's films can expressed as aesthetic factors that ensure the formation of the unity of meaning. The covered subjects and the discoveries about human beings, nature and existence observed as a result are told not with a literary language that prioritizes the level of events in the stories but with a visual language that opens the images of film art to observation from a cinematographic perspective. The relationship between cinematography and the meanings in the film examined by close analysis method.

While determining the scope of the research, Semih Kaplanođlu's film Herkes Kendi Evinde (2001), which shot by applying classical narrative principles, and the film Angel's Fall (2004), which

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shot in a period when Kaplanoğlu's understanding of "spiritual realism" cinema had not yet been formed, were excluded from this section. The first film of the Bağlılık Trilogy, Bağlılık Aslı (2019), and the second film Bağlılık Hasan (2021) excluded from the scope since not all of the common cinematographic structure that will emerge in the trilogy can be seen in these two films. The Yusuf Trilogy: Egg (2007), Süt (2008), and Honey (2010) that are considered the maturation point for Kaplanoğlu in his understanding of cinema and the subsequent Grain (2017) are considered works that build the same film language, included in the analysis.

When Kaplanoğlu's interest in spirituality is evaluated, it should be noted that he does not approach cinema with an understanding of representing Islamic values, examples of which have been seen in Türkiye since the 1970s. It should be underlined that Kaplanoğlu's films are not a continuation of the national cinema tradition in Türkiye and while there is a call and search for spirituality that Muslims can have, this is happening without addressing any current religious issues. In Kaplanoğlu's vision of "spiritual realism" that manifests itself in Yusuf Trilogy, it can be stated that auteur directors such as Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman and especially Andrei Tarkovsky, who explore spirituality in their films, have a great influence.

The expression "spiritual realism" used by Semih Kaplanoğlu to describe his cinema is directed towards God on one side and towards life on the other. Kaplanoğlu describes his spiritual realism approach as relying only on realism or only on metaphysics may not fully encircle the truth. One may slip into a rigid naturalism, the other into a fantasy detached from reality. What unites these two extremes must include spirituality within reality and reality within spirituality... We do not only live with reality; we also live behind the meaning, behind the visible. I am looking for that balance (as cited in Şirin, 2010, s. 185).

Kaplanoğlu, who opens the compositions out of the frame and connects the negative space in the frame to the spiritual space outside the frame in Egg, who hides the character's spiritual state in the choice of whether or not to cross the border between the two ends of the composition in Süt, who reveals the character's spiritual tension in the compositions where the light decreases, and the contrast increases in Bal, in Wheat, he embodies the spiritual in a dream plane purified from colours.

Kaplanoğlu, whose large-scale compositions in Egg and Milk open a direct time with still and long plans, restricts his camera, which he rarely moves, to basic movements such as pan and tilt. Making sense of the character's spiritual state together with the space, Kaplanoğlu chose to remove his characters from the surveillance of the camera as a result of his still camera preference. Characters moving in different layers of large compositions, such as foreground and background often leave the composition by going out of the frame. The character outside the frame in fixed compositions can be included in the composition from different points of the frame, as well as the character can appear before the viewer in many different scales from close-up to distant plan in the same shot shows that the compositions are not dominated by a single central perspective. The multiple perspective understanding, which can be seen in all four films, can open space not only for different thought images of the character in the composition, but also for space, nature, negative space and out of frame.

In Honey and Grain, the number of upper and lower angles, medium and close-up shots increased, more short plans were added to long, still plans, and the use of moving camera became very important for the narrative by increasing the frequency of cuts. The character is followed with panning movement in moments that reveal character-space integration and the character's spiritual state. The most striking cinematographic orientation in Honey and Grain is the increased number and importance of compositions with low key light, high contrast and frequent use of silhouettes. While the diminishing attitude in the directing of photography of Egg and Milk manifests itself in the use of the camera, in Honey and Grain the same attitude comes to the fore in lighting. In the dream sequences of Honey, and in the scenes of the main character's self-

understanding and confrontation in Grain, which can be considered as the scenes that carry these films, Kaplanoglu completely turns into a dream plane, a visual language based on darkening rather than illuminating.

As a result, Semih Kaplanoğlu is in search of a balance that will prevent the material turning into a rigid naturalism and the transcendental into a fantasy in cinema. In this direction, he clearly carried the perspective of sensing the spiritual aspects in the material and giving a material form to the spiritual after Angel's Fall, and shaped his cinematographic style himself, making him the biggest supporter of this perspective. Adopting simplicity and subtraction as the basic principles of image management, Kaplanoğlu shapes his cinematographic practices in line with the layers of meaning in his films by being faithful to these principles.

Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı/ Contribution of Authors

Arařtırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütölmüřtür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çıkar Çatıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalıřma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile çıkar çatıřması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

Bu makale bir benzerlik taramasından geçirilmiřtir ve dergi beklentilerini karřılamaktadır.

This article has undergone a plagiarism check and meets the expectations of the journal.

Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etiđi Beyanı / Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Bu çalıřmada "Yükseköđretim Kurumları Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etiđi Yönergesi" kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuřtur.

In this study, the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed.



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Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel Irkçılık Kıskaçında İslam

Abdulkadir GÖLCÜ*

Betül KARADENİZ DEMİRATA**

Kitabın Künyesi: Radyo Televizyon ve Üst Kurulu (RTÜK), (2023). Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel Irkçılık Kıskaçında İslam, Ankara: Afşar Medya, 1304 sayfa, ISBN: 978-605-66396-4-7

Tarihsel kökeni Vatikan merkezli kilise öğretisinin hâkim olduğu Orta Çağ Hristiyan kaynaklarına ve antik dönemlerden beri var olan Yahudi nasyonalizmine kadar uzanan İslam karşıtlığı, İslam dini ve Müslümanlar hakkında üretilen düşmanlık, kin ve korku gibi unsurlar ekseninde gelişim göstermiştir. Bu tarihsel 'düşmana' karşı üretilen problemleri bakış, zamanın döngüsellik içinde yeni 'kazanımları' da uhdesine katarak, modern dünya tasarımıyla birlikte İslamofobi kavramsallaştırmasının çatısı altında kendisini güncellemiştir. Bugün İslam dini ve Müslümanlara yönelik yapay bir korkuyu ve kalıplaşmış ön yargıları ifade eden İslamofobi; tarih boyunca farklı süreç ve formlarda işlerlik kazanmış, farklı sonuçlara neden olmuş, sosyal, siyasal ve kültürel alana doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak etki etmiştir. Bu etki genellikle olumsuz bağlamlarda gerçekleşmiş, zaman içerisinde toplumsal sınırları ya da bölgesel ayrışmaları da aşarak bir küresel fenomen ve tehdit algısına dönüşmüştür. Bu fenomenin ortaya çıkmasında Yahudi nasyonalizminin ve özellikle Orta Çağ Hristiyan öğretisinin geleneksel metinleri aracılığıyla toplumsal hafızada inşa ettiği stereotipler ve fantazmagoryalar gibi kalıplaşmış, problematik temsiller oldukça etkili olmuştur. Tarihsel süreçte farklı dinlerin merkezleri ve kurumları üzerinden sürekli gündemde tutulan ve üretilen İslam karşıtlığı, İslamofobi kavramıyla adeta kurumsal ve tarihsel bir kimlik de kazanmıştır.

Günümüz dünyasında farklı dinlere ait kurumsal yapıların uhdesinden küresel medya endüstrisinin çıktılarına transfer edilen İslamofobi üretimi, etnosentrik Batı düşüncesinin İslam dini algısı ve İslam'ı 'Öteki' pozisyonuna konumlandırışı; İslamofobiyi Batı kamuoylarında yaygınlaştırmış ve normalleştirmiştir. Bu noktada etnosentrik toplumların merkezi konumlarını güçlendirmeleri için de üretilen 'Öteki', hem Batı toplumlarına kendi toplumsal yapılarını konsolide etme imkanını sağlamakta hem de 'Öteki'nin varoluşsal olarak sorunsallaştırılmasını mümkün kılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda bugün dünya genelinde küresel medya endüstrisi ve ulusal bileşenleri tarafından İslam dini ve Müslümanlara karşı üretilen 'Öteki' imajı düzenli olarak tahkim edilmekte ve toplumsal yaşamda da bir 'realite' olarak sıradanlaştırılmaktadır. Özellikle İslam dini ve Müslümanlar bu bakış açısının bir sonucu olarak 'terör' ile özdeşleştirilerek küresel medya araçları üzerinden dünya kamuoylarına bir tehdit algısıyla sunulmaktadır.

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Bu duruma bir tepki olarak küresel ve ulusal medya algılarının toplumsal pratikleri şekillendirdiği günümüz dünyasında, İslamofobi sorunsalı ve gündelik hayatta sıradanlaştırılmak istenen İslamofobik tutumlarla mücadele etmek için bir dizi bağımsız çalışma; akademik, sosyo-kültürel ve politik düzeylerde gerçekleştirilmektedir. Bu çerçevede küresel düzeyde en kapsamlı etkinliklerden biri olan ‘Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel İrkçilik Kısacasında İslam’ teması ile 25-26 Mayıs 2021 tarihinde Ankara’da gerçekleştirilen ‘I. Uluslararası Medya ve İslamofobi Sempozyumu’, İslamofobi sorunsalını ve realitesini farklı bakış açılarıyla birlikte ele alması ve sorunsala ilişkin çeşitli çözüm önerileri sunması açısından önem arz etmektedir. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı, Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu (RTÜK), Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu (TRT), Erciyes Üniversitesi ve Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı (SETA) işbirliği ile düzenlenen sempozyumda sunulan bildiriler, İslamofobiye karşı mücadele kapsamında hem perspektif, hem stratejik yol haritası hem de akademik ve bilimsel kaynak oluşturmak amacıyla bir kitap olarak yayımlanmıştır.

İslamofobi ile mücadele sürecinde kamu otoritelerinin desteği, akademik kurumların katkıları, medya organlarının katılımı, sivil ve sosyal oluşumların da farkındalığı boyutlarını da bir araya getiren I. Uluslararası Medya ve İslamofobi Sempozyumu ve kitabı bütüncül bir mücadele pratiği olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Bu sistematik mücadele çabasının kolektif bir bilinç, bilimsel bir bakış açısı ve akademik bir zeminde yürütülmesi gerekliliği ve önemi; I. Uluslararası Medya ve İslamofobi Sempozyumu ve bu sempozyumun bir çıktısı olan “Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel İrkçilik Kısacasında İslam” kitabının da oldukça değerli bir çıktı olarak üretilmesini mümkün kılmıştır. Bu çabalar ve üretilen içerikler sayesinde küresel düzeyde uygulanan İslamofobik politikalar ve stratejilerin kavranması kolaylaşırken, farklı medya mecralarında üretilen İslamofobik içeriklerin de algılanması ve karşılaştırılması mümkün olmuştur. Özellikle İslamofobik politikalara karşı kolektif aklın ışığında karşı politikaları üretmek ve İslamofobi fenomeninin perde arkasını, realitesini görmek söz konusu olmuştur. Bu bağlamda alternatif bir politika üretme ve strateji geliştirme imkanı sunan sempozyum kitabı, İslamofobi realitesinin boyutlarını daha gerçekçi ve küresel bir bağlamda gözler önüne sermekte; dünya kamuoyunun farkındalığını arttıracak çalışmalara ilişkin de bir zemin oluşturmaktadır.

‘Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel İrkçilik Kısacasında İslam’ adıyla yayımlanan sempozyum kitabı, sempozyumda sunulan bildirilerin tam metinlerinden oluşmaktadır. Söz konusu bu kitapta, sempozyum onur konuşmasını yapan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın konuşması; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kültür ve Turizm Bakanı Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Prof. Dr. Ali Erbaş, Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanı Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Altun ve SETA Genel Koordinatörü Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran’ın açış konuşmaları; RTÜK Başkanı Ebubekir Şahin ve Erciyes Üniversitesi Rektörü Prof. Dr. Fatih Altun’un sunuş konuşmaları, Cumhurbaşkanlığı Özel Kalem Müdürü Doç. Dr. Hasan Doğa’nın ‘Bir Dezenformasyon Alanı Olarak İslamofobi’ başlıklı giriş yazısı ve farklı bilim dallarında çalışmalar yapan araştırmacıların İslamofobi ile ilgili yaptıkları çalışmalar yer almaktadır. Kitapta yer alan konuşmalar ve çalışmalar, İslamofobi ile ilgili birçok konuya odaklanmakla birlikte İslamofobiyi tarihsel, kuramsal ve pratik boyutlarıyla gözler önüne sererek tartışmaya açmaktadır. Bu anlamda kitap, İslamofobi ve İslam karşıtlığını farklı disiplinlerin bakış açılarıyla çok geniş bir perspektifte ele almaktadır.

2023 yılında Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu (RTÜK) tarafından yayımlanan bu kitapta İslamofobi ve İslam karşıtlığı temelinde yapılan akademik çalışmaları, sempozyum kapsamında belirlenen ‘Nefret Söylemi ve İslamofobi’, ‘Yalan Haber ve İslamofobi’ ve ‘Kültürel İrkçilik ve İslamofobi’ şeklindeki üç ana başlık temelinde ele almak mümkündür. Bu bağlamda kitap; Nefret Söylemi, Yalan Haber ve Kültürel İrkçilik konuları temelinde İslamofobiyi ayrıntılı bir şekilde irdeleyen çalışmaların anlatımı üzerine kuruludur. Yapılan değerlendirmenin sınırlılıkları göz önüne alındığında kitapta yer alan ve İslamofobiyi çok geniş bir zeminde ele alan bütün çalışmaları tek tek incelemek ve detaylandırmak oldukça güçtür. Bu sebeple sempozyum kapsamında belirlenen alt

başlıklar üzerinden İslamofobi ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalara yönelik genel bir değerlendirme yapmak daha uygun görünmektedir.

Nefret Söylemi ve İslamofobi başlığı altında yapılan çalışmaları sempozyum kapsamında belirlenen ‘Göç Olgusu, Mülteciler ve İslamofobik Algılar’, ‘Yeni Medyada Müslüman Karşısı Nefret Söylemi’, ‘İslamofobik Önyargılar ve Sosyo-Politik Bağlam’ ve ‘Ayrımcılık, Önyargı ve Nefret Suçları Bağlamında İslamofobi’ alt başlıkları şeklinde özetlemek mümkündür. Bu başlıklar temelinde yapılan çalışmalarda genel olarak İslam dinine ve Müslümanlara karşı sistematik bir şekilde yürütülen İslamofobik saldırılar nefret söylemi temelinde ele alınmakta, İslamofobik tutum ve davranışların inşa edilmesinde ve sistematik hale getirilmesinde söylemin gücü ortaya koyulmaktadır. Çalışmalarda İslam dinine ve Müslümanlara karşı hâkim bir ifade biçimine dönüşen nefret söylemi, somut örnekler üzerinden açığa çıkarılmakta olup İslamofobi ve nefret söylemiyle mücadele için çeşitli öneriler sunulmaktadır.

Yalan Haber ve İslamofobi başlığı altında yapılan çalışmaları; ‘Dini Bilgi ve Kavramların Manipülasyonu’, ‘Medya Örgütlenmeleri ve İslamofobi Endüstrisi’, ‘İslamofobi Karşısı Çabalar’, ‘Sinema ve İslamofobi’, ‘Medyada Müslüman Kimliğinin İnşası ve Stereotipler’ ve ‘Sosyal Medyada ve Dijital Oyunlarda İslamofobik Görünümler’ alt başlıkları şeklinde özetlemek mümkündür. Bu başlıklar temelinde yapılan çalışmalarda genel olarak medya endüstrisinin insanların zihninde İslamofobik algıyı nasıl inşa ettiği, inşa edilen algıyı nasıl güçlendirdiği ve yönlendirdiği üzerinde durulmaktadır. Çalışmalarda İslamofobik tutum ve davranışların yaygınlaştırılmasında medyanın rolüne odaklanılarak kitlelerin yalan haber ve dezenformasyon aracılığıyla nasıl manipüle edildiği ortaya koyulmaktadır. Ayrıca çalışmalarda, İslam dininin ve Müslümanların medyada doğru bir şekilde temsil edilebilmesi için önerilere yer verilmektedir.

Kültürel İrkçilik ve İslamofobi başlığı altında yapılan çalışmaları; ‘Batı Dışı Topumlarda İslamofobi’, ‘Oryantalizm/Self Oryantalizm ve İslamofobi’, ‘İslamofobi ve Kültürel İrkçilik Örnekleri’ ve ‘Asimilasyon, Çok Kültürlülük ve Müslüman Kimliği’ alt başlıkları şeklinde özetlemek mümkündür. Bu başlıklar temelinde yapılan çalışmalarda ırkçılığın tarihsel süreç içerisinde yaşadığı dönüşümün bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan kültürel ırkçılığa odaklanılmakta ve bu ırkçılık türünün İslam dinini ve Müslümanları hedef alan yönü üzerinde durulmaktadır. Çalışmalarda, İslam dini ve Müslümanları hedef alan söylem ve ayrımcılıklar kültürel ırkçılık bağlamında ele alınmakta olup İslamofobinin kültürel ırkçılığın en önemli bileşenlerden bir tanesi olduğu çeşitli örnekler üzerinden aktarılmaktadır.

Kitap, İslamofobiyi çok geniş bir bağlamda inceleyerek kavramın toplumsal yaşamdaki farklı boyutlarını açığa çıkarmakta, İslam dini ve Müslümanlara karşı düşmanlığın hangi konular temelinde şekillendiğini ve dünya genelinde nasıl yaygınlaştırıldığını gözler önüne sermektedir. Kitapta yer alan çalışmalar, İslam dinine ve Müslümanlara yönelik düşmanlığın küresel düzeyde görünür kılınmasında, konuya dair farkındalığın artırılmasında ve kamuoyunun bu sorunla yüzleşmesinde önemli bir rol üstlenmektedir. Bu anlamda kitap, İslamofobiyi farklı boyutlarıyla ele alarak ilgili literatürün zenginleştirilmesine ve İslamofobiyle ilgili birçok konunun gündeme getirilerek bütüncül bir bakış açısı ile ele alınmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Kitap, İslamofobinin dünya genelinde ulaştığı boyutların ortaya koyulması açısından büyük önem taşımakla birlikte İslamofobi ve İslam karşıtlığı ile ilgili ulusal ve uluslararası arenada mücadele stratejilerinin belirlenmesi ve çözüm önerilerinin ortaya koyulması açısından da herkesin yararlanabileceği önemli bir kaynak niteliği taşımaktadır.

Özetle ifade etmek gerekirse, Türkiye küresel düzeyde İslamofobi ile mücadelede öncü bir rol üstlenmektedir. Bu rolün getirdiği sorumluluk çerçevesinde ortaya çıkan çalışmalardan bir tanesi ‘İ. Uluslararası Medya ve İslamofobi Sempozyumu’ ve bu sempozyumun bir çıktısı olan ‘Yalan Haber, Nefret Söylemi ve Kültürel İrkçilik Kısacasında İslam’ adıyla yayımlanan sempozyum kitabıdır. Türkiye, bu ve bunun gibi çalışmalar ile İslamofobi ve İslam karşıtlığına karşı uluslararası alanda çok boyutlu çalışmalar sürdürmektedir. Nitekim Türkiye’nin, İslamofobi ile mücadele kapsamında yürüttüğü çalışmaların dünya kamuoylarına etkisi göz ardı edilemeyecek bir boyuta ulaşmıştır. Bu çabaların bir sonucu olarak Birleşmiş Milletler ilk kez ‘15 Mart Uluslararası İslamofobi ile Mücadele

Günü'nü 2022 yılında kutlamıştır. Buna ek olarak 12 Mart 2023 tarihinde BM tarafından yapılan açıklamada; Türkiye'nin yürüttüğü çalışmalar doğrultusunda İslamofobi teriminin, UNESCO'nun ayrımcılık ve ırkçılıkla ilgili karar tasarısında yer alacak olmasıdır. Bu gelişme, Türkiye'nin İslamofobiye karşı küresel düzeyde yürüttüğü farkındalık ve mücadele çalışmalarının somut bir göstergesi olması açısından önem arz etmektedir. Ayrıca Türkiye'nin İslamofobi ile mücadele kapsamında yürüttüğü çalışmaların, küresel düzeydeki politikalara etki edebilecek boyuta ulaştığının da bir diğer göstergesidir.

Islam in the Grip of Fake News, Hate Speech and Cultural Racism

Abdulkadir GÖLCÜ*

Betül KARADENİZ DEMİRATA**

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Islamophobia, whose historical origin dates to medieval Christian sources dominated by Vatican-based church teaching and Jewish nationalism that has existed since ancient times, has developed along the axis of elements such as hostility, hatred and fear generated about the Islamic religion and Muslims. The problematic view produced against this historical ‘enemy’ has updated itself under the umbrella of Islamophobia conceptualization along with the modern world design, adding new ‘achievements’ in the cyclical nature of time. Islamophobia, which expresses an artificial fear and stereotyped prejudices against the religion of Islam and Muslims today, has been functioning in different processes and forms throughout history, has caused different results, and has directly or indirectly affected the social, political, and cultural sphere. This effect has usually taken place in negative contexts, and over time, it has transcended social boundaries or regional divisions and turned into a global phenomenon and threat perception. Stereotyped, problematic representations such as stereotypes and phantasmagorias, which Jewish nationalism and especially medieval Christian teaching have built in social memory through traditional texts, have been highly influential in the emergence of this phenomenon. Islamophobia, which is constantly kept on the agenda and produced through the centres and institutions of different religions in the historical process, has almost gained an institutional and historical identity with the concept of Islamophobia.

In today’s world, the production of Islamophobia transferred from the institutional structures belonging to different religions to the outputs of the global media industry, the perception of the Islamic religion by ethnocentric Western thought and the positioning of Islam to the ‘Other’ position have spread and normalized Islamophobia in western public opinion. At this point, the ‘Other’, which is also produced for ethnocentric societies to strengthen their central positions, both provides western societies with the opportunity to consolidate their own social structures and makes it possible to existentially problematize the ‘Other’. In this context, the ‘Other’ image produced by the global media industry and its national components against the religion of Islam and Muslims around the world is regularly being arbitrated and is becoming commonplace as a ‘reality’ in social life. In particular, the religion of Islam and Muslims are identified

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with ‘terrorism’ because of this point of view and are presented to the world public opinion through global media tools with the perception of a threat.

As a reaction to this situation, in today’s world where global and national media perceptions shape social practices, several independent studies are being carried out at academic, socio-cultural and political levels to combat the problem of Islamophobia and Islamophobic attitudes that want to be normalized in everyday life. Within this framework, one of the most comprehensive events at the global level, which was held in Ankara on May 25-26, 2021 with the theme ‘Islam in the Grip of Fake News, Hate Speech and Cultural Racism’. I. International Media and Islamophobia Symposium is important in terms of addressing the problematic and reality of Islamophobia together with different perspectives and offering various solutions to the problem. The papers presented at the symposium organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Presidency of Communication, Radio and Television Supreme Council, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, Erciyes University and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research have been published as a book in order to create both a perspective, a strategic roadmap and an academic and scientific resource within the framework of the fight against Islamophobia.

I. International Media and Islamophobia Symposium and symposium book, which also brings together the support of public authorities, contributions of academic institutions, participation of media outlets, awareness of civil and social formations in the process of combating Islamophobia, should be evaluated as a holistic deconstruction practice. The necessity and importance of carrying out this systematic struggle effort based on a collective consciousness, a scientific point of view and an academic basis; I. International Media and Islamophobia Symposium and the symposium book “Islam in the Grip of Fake News, Hate Speech and Cultural Racism”, which is an output of this symposium, have also made it possible to produce a very valuable output. Thanks to these efforts and the content produced, it has become easier to understand Islamophobic policies and strategies implemented at the global level, while it has also been possible to perceive and compare Islamophobic content produced in different media outlets. In particular, it has been a matter of producing counter policies against Islamophobic policies in the light of collective reason and seeing the behind-the-scenes reality of the Islamophobia phenomenon. In this context, the symposium book, which offers the opportunity to produce an alternative policy and develop a strategy, reveals the dimensions of the reality of Islamophobia in a more realistic and global context; it also creates a basis for studies that will increase the awareness of the world public.

The symposium book, published under the title ‘Islam in the Grip of Fake News, Hate Speech and Cultural Racism’, consists of the full texts of the papers presented at the symposium. In this book, the speech of the President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who made the symposium honour speech; the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, the Head of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali Erbaş, Head of Presidential Communications Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Altun and Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research General Coordinator Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran’s opening speeches; Radio and Television Supreme Council President Ebubekir Şahin and Erciyes University Rector Prof. Dr. Presentation speeches of Fatih Altun, Director of the Presidential Special Staff Associated Prof. Dr. Hasan Doğan’s introductory article entitled ‘Islamophobia as a Field of Disinformation’ and the studies conducted by researchers working in different branches of science on Islamophobia are included. Although the speeches and studies included in the book focus on many issues related to Islamophobia, they open Islamophobia to discussion by exposing it with its historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions. In this sense, the book deals with Islamophobia and anti-Islamism from a very broad perspective with the perspectives of different disciplines.

In the symposium book, published by the Radio and Television Supreme Council in 2023, it is possible to consider academic studies based on Islamophobia and anti-Islamism based on three

main topics determined within the scope of the symposium: 'Hate Speech and Islamophobia', 'Fake News and Islamophobia' and 'Cultural Racism and Islamophobia'. In this context, the book is based on the narrative of studies that examine Islamophobia in detail based on Hate Speech, Fake News and Cultural Racism issues. Given the limitations of the evaluation, it is quite difficult to examine and detail all the studies included in the book that deal with Islamophobia on a very broad basis one by one. For this reason, it seems more appropriate to make a general assessment of the studies on Islamophobia through the subheadings determined within the scope of the symposium.

It is possible to summarize the studies conducted under the title of Hate Speech and Islamophobia in the form of the subheadings 'Migration Phenomenon, Refugees and Islamophobic Perceptions', 'Anti-Muslim Hate Speech in the New Media', 'Islamophobic Prejudices and Socio-Political Context' and 'Islamophobia in the Context of Discrimination, Prejudice and Hate Crimes' determined within the scope of the symposium. In the studies conducted based on these topics, Islamophobic attacks carried out systematically against the Islamic religion and Muslims in general are considered on the basis of hate speech, and the power of discourse in constructing and systematizing Islamophobic attitudes and behaviours are revealed. In the studies, hate speech, which has become a dominant form of expression against the Islamic religion and Muslims, is revealed through concrete examples and various proposals are presented to combat Islamophobia and hate speech.

It is possible to summarize the studies conducted under the heading of Fake News and Islamophobia as 'Manipulation of Religious Information and Concepts', 'Media Organizations and Islamophobia Industry', 'Anti-Islamophobia Efforts', 'Cinema and Islamophobia', 'Construction of Muslim Identity in the Media and Stereotypes' and 'Islamophobic Views on Social Media and Digital Games' subheadings. The studies conducted based on these titles generally focus on how the media industry builds an Islamophobic perception in people's minds, how it strengthens and directs the perception that is being built. The studies focus on the role of the media in spreading Islamophobic attitudes and behaviours and reveal how the masses are manipulated through fake news and disinformation. In addition, suggestions are included in the studies to ensure that the religion of Islam and Muslims are accurately represented in the media.

It is possible to summarize the studies conducted under the heading of Cultural Racism and Islamophobia as 'Islamophobia in Non-Western Societies', 'Orientalism/Self-Orientalism and Islamophobia', 'Examples of Islamophobia and Cultural Racism' and 'Assimilation, Multiculturalism and Muslim Identity' subheadings. The studies conducted on the basis of these topics focus on cultural racism, which has emerged as a result of the transformation experienced by racism in the historical process and focus on the aspect of this type of racism targeting the Islamic religion and Muslims. In the studies, discourses and discriminations targeting the religion of Islam and Muslims are considered in the context of cultural racism and Islamophobia is conveyed through various examples that cultural racism is one of the most important components.

By examining Islamophobia in a wide context, the book reveals the different dimensions of the concept in social life, reveals on which issues hostility towards the religion of Islam and Muslims is shaped and how it is spread around the world. The studies contained in the book play an important role in making the hostility towards religion of Islam and Muslims visible at a global level, raising awareness of the issue and confronting this problem by the public. In this sense, the book contributes to enriching the relevant literature by addressing Islamophobia in its different dimensions and to addressing many issues related to Islamophobia with a holistic perspective by bringing them to the agenda. Although the book is of great importance in terms of revealing the dimensions reached by Islamophobia worldwide, it is also an important resource that everyone can benefit from in terms of determining strategies to combat Islamophobia and anti-Islamism in the national and international arena and putting forward solution proposals.

To summarize, Turkey is assuming a leading role in the fight against Islamophobia at the global level. One of the works that emerged within the framework of the responsibility brought by

this role is the symposium book published under the title of ‘Islam in the Grip of Fake News, Hate Speech and Cultural Racism’ which is one of the most important outputs of I. International Media and Islamophobia Symposium. Turkey continues multidimensional studies against Islamophobia and Anti-Islamism in the international arena with these and similar studies. As a matter of fact, the impact of Turkey’s deconfliction efforts on the world public opinion has reached a level that cannot be ignored. As a result of these efforts, the United Nations celebrated the International Day Against Islamophobia on March 15 for the first time in 2022. October March 2023, the UN announced that the term Islamophobia will be included in UNESCO’s draft resolution on discrimination and racism in line with the studies carried out by Turkey. This development is important in terms of being a concrete indicator of Turkey’s awareness-raising and anti-Islamophobia efforts at the global level. It is also another indicator that the work carried out by Turkey within the scope of the fight against Islamophobia has reached a level that can affect policies at the global level.

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Yazarların çalışmadaki katkı oranları eşittir.

The authors' contribution rates in the study are equal.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

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