

Research Article | Araştırma Makalesi

The Effects of Hate Speech on Social Media: The Case of Syrian Refugees in Türkiye

Sosyal Medyada Nefret Söylemlerinin Etkileri: Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mülteciler Örneği

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Abstract

Making hate speech on social media has started to reach great dimensions with the increase in internet usage and therefore social media users. Especially in recent years, the use of social media in a bureaucratic dimension has integrated the concept of social media diplomacy into our lives. Syrian refugees, who have been on Turkish territory for more than 10 years and most of them are still under temporary protection, have made Türkiye the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world. After the civil war that started in their country, millions of Syrians came to Türkiye and settled in Türkiye. The population is constantly increasing with new births and there is an intense Syrian population presence, especially in some cities and regions. Therefore, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses have started to increase in Türkiye, and social media has become an important channel for the dissemination of these discourses and the organization of these ideas. This study, in a descriptive way, defines hate speech and offers such discourse examples while explaining how Syrian immigrants, as the majority immigrant group, are subjected to hate speech on social media.

Keywords: Discourse, Hate Speech, Refugees, Social Media, Syrians, Türkiye.

Öz

Sosyal medya üzerinden nefret söylemlerinde bulunmak, internet kullanımının ve dolayısıyla sosyal medya kullanıcılarının artmasıyla büyük boyutlara ulaşmaya başlamıştır. Özellikle son yıllarda bürokratik boyutta sosyal medya kullanımı bir anlamda sosyal medya diplomasisi kavramını da hayatlarımıza entegre etmiş durumdadır. 10 yılı aşkın süredir Türkiye topraklarında bulunan ve halen çoğu geçici koruma statüsünde bulunan Suriyeli mülteciler, Türkiye'yi en fazla göçmen barındıran ülke konumuna getirmiştir. Ülkelerinde başlayan iç savaş sonrası Türkiye'ye gelen Suriyelilerin birçoğu Türkiye'ye yerleşmiştir. Nüfus yeni doğumlarla sürekli artmakta ve özellikle bazı şehir ve bölgelerde yoğun bir Suriyeli varlığı görülmektedir. Bu gelişmelerle birlikte, göçmen ve mülteci karşıtı söylemler Türkiye'de giderek artmaya başlamış, sosyal medya ise bu söylemlerin yayılması ve bu fikrin örgütlenmesi açısından önemli bir mecra haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, betimleyici bir şekilde, göçmenlerin çoğunluğunu oluşturan Suriyeli göçmenlerin sosyal medyada nefret söylemine nasıl maruz kaldığını açıklarken nefret söylemini tanımlamakta ve bu tür söylemlerle ilgili örnekler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söylem, Nefret Söylemi, Mülteciler, Sosyal Medya, Suriyeliler, Türkiye.



Introduction

Forced human mobility is one of the most important challenges that the world is experiencing recently. Since the end of the Cold War forced migrants including asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced people have increased dramatically. Millions of the aforementioned internally and internationally displaced people are considered 'refugees'. According to late-2021 data, 89.3 million people in the world are forcibly displaced. 53.2 million of these people are internally displaced people, 27.1 million are refugees, 4.6 million are asylum seekers, and 4.4 million are Venezuelans. These are the highest number ever recorded for forcibly displaced people. UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) states that the actual numbers are even higher since these official announced numbers are only the recorded data (*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022*). What led to a rapid increase in the numbers is the Venezuelans who have been experiencing economic and political depression in the last years. Another remarkable point is the surplus of children. Nearly half of the displaced people are children most of whom are obliged to live without their parents. 69% of the forcibly displaced originate from the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. Türkiye hosts the largest number of refugees with 3.8 million people, Colombia follows Türkiye with 1.8 million, Uganda with 1.5 million, Pakistan with 1.4 million, and Germany with 1.3 million. According to (Caballero, 2016: 1) behind every number is an individual, a family, a group and a community who face not only an uncertain future but also have to endure the physical and mental pain and suffering of being rendered homeless—either internally displaced or forced to flee to another country. (Castles, 2003: 14) on the other hand, clarifies that internally displaced people differ from refugees both in size (there are more internally displaced people than refugees) and protection. They do not have effective protection or international legal instrument. Refugees are defined and protected under international law 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as: “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (*What Is a Refugee, n.d.*).

Throughout the world, immigrants have always been exposed to discriminatory and marginalizing discourses. Undoubtedly, this situation is related both to what extent the country hosts these people (refugees, asylum seekers, regular or irregular migrants), as well as for how long and in what numbers. When we look at the example of Türkiye, it should be reminded that millions of people from Syria who are not granted immigrant or refugee status and who live under temporary protection are referred. As of 2022, Türkiye is the country hosting the highest number of refugees¹ in the world (*The Worlds Refugees in Numbers, n.d.*). It was assumed that the refugees who fled the civil war in their country starting in 2011, will return back when the war ends or when safe zones are established in their countries. For this reason, a necessary and sufficient integration and placement plan have not been made. At this point, security concerns for Turkish citizens and compliance problems began to be experienced. Besides, hate speech towards refugees in Türkiye has begun to increase, some of which are statements based on fake news.

Communication is one of the most important elements of social life. While we mostly talk about the means of communication such as television, telephone, newspaper, and magazine, it is possible to talk about the prevalence of internet use in terms of the mass and speed to which these communication tools can be reached. As a result of technological developments, many people around the world have computers and smartphones, social

media is a very up-to-date and active communication tool. Undoubtedly, although the use of social media provides fast and wide-ranging communication, it can also appear as a tool for hate speech and propaganda. Since writers and control mechanisms in traditional media tools are professional journalists, television programmers, and people who provide reliable sources to the user; there is a great difference in the learning and dissemination of news compared to today's social media understanding. Since the use of social media is anonymous, there is an environment where freedom and the spread of misinformation are appropriate. Unfortunately, the issues related to asylum seekers and refugees have had a significant impact on Türkiye since 2011 and the EU (European Union) since 2015 with the migration waves after the Syrian Civil War and the Arab Spring. In this sense, it is undeniable that Türkiye, which hosts many unregistered-irregular refugees, has security and economic concerns. However, what is dangerous is the undesirable consequences of the uncontrolled use of social media, which hosts hate speech against its purpose.

The study aims to explain the effects of hate speech on social media toward refugees in Türkiye, which has become a situation that needs to be discussed and explained when combined with security and economic concerns that are gaining more and more importance globally. The number of immigrants that Türkiye that hosting today is higher than in any other country in the world, and the way immigrants migrate and settle in Türkiye is different from other examples. At this point, it is important to realize that these vulnerable people have been discriminated against and exposed to othering throughout history and globally in every period of history. In this sense, it is important to look at it from the perspective of both the host country's citizens and the refugees.

In this study, while the effects of hate speech on social media will be discussed over refugees in Türkiye, beforehand, what is meant by hate speech and the concept will be drawn. Besides, the arrival and settlement processes of Syrian migrants in Türkiye and how and at what points this migration movement differs from other migration movements in the world will be tried to explain. In the following parts of the study, how hate speech toward Syrian refugees, especially by social media users, progresses in Türkiye will be discussed. The study, in a descriptive way, offers examples of social media discourses about Syrians in Türkiye. Moreover, some figures are presented about hate speech perceptions in the world. In the last section of the study, general evaluations and suggestions will be given.

1. Conceptual Framework of Hate Speech

Before examining hate speech on social media, it is important to draw the conceptual framework in terms of the meaning it is used in a global sense today. According to the Turkish Language Institution (TDK), hatred is expressed as a feeling of wanting someone's badness and unhappiness (*Turkish Language Institution, 2022*). When we use it as hate speech, this concept means expressing hate. According to (Yardım & Dalkılıç, 2018) one of the most important criticisms that can be made about hate speech is that there is no generally accepted definition. Since there is no common understanding of the definition and limits of the concept, it is possible to talk about the legitimization of hate speech. On the other hand, (van Dijk, 1984) argues that hate constitutes an important topic to be thought about in different ethnic groups, especially in multi-ethnic societies. When it comes to immigration, which has been a hot topic globally lately, the majority will argue about the status of newcomers. As a result, these dialogues lead to the informal distribution of beliefs and eventually to the spread of ethnic prejudices in society.

(Paula & Sergio, 2019) state the following reason for using social media as a tool in hate speech: On the one hand, with the anonymity provided by the internet and especially social networks, people are more likely to adopt aggressive behavior. On the other hand, people's desire to express their opinions online has increased, so hate speech has also found an opportunity to spread. Because this type of biased communication can be extremely harmful, and besides society, governments and social networking platforms have an important role to play in detection and prevention.

The United Nations (UN) states the following regarding hate speech, which it also includes in its strategy and action documents: Hate speech encourages violence and undermines social cohesion and tolerance. The destructive effect of hate is not new. Merely, its scale and effect are reunified by new communication technologies, to the point where hate speech and online hate speech have become one of the most commonly used methods to expand divisive oratory ideologies and threaten peace to a global extent (*Hate Speech Is Rising Around the World*, 2022). The UN has also officially announced that it will celebrate every 18 June as International Hate Speech Day, the first one in 2022, against hate speech.

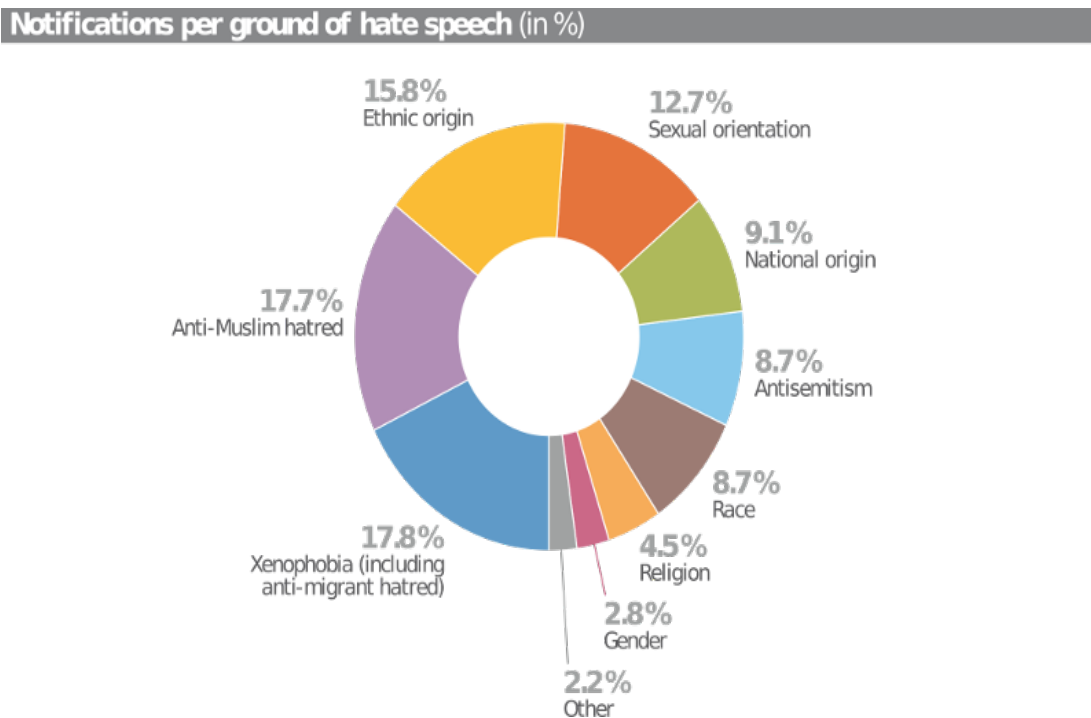


Figure 1. Notifications Per Ground of Hate Speech (*Hate Speech: What It Is and How to Contrast It*, 2019)

The table above shows notifications per ground of hate speech in percentages. As can be seen from the table, the most common reason for hate speech is xenophobia and anti-immigrants with 17.8%. Following this, the highest rate was 17.7% for Muslim hostility, while 15.8% was related to ethnicity. The next reason is related to sexual orientation with 12.7% and national origin with 9.1%. As can be seen from these data, immigrants are among the groups most affected by hate speech. Moreover, hate speech is oriented around anti-migrant, anti-Muslim, different ethnic origins, and different national origins. It can be concluded from the above figure that the one who is a migrant and lives with his/her own religion, ethnicity, and belief outside his/her country of origin is condemned to discrimination resulting from hate speech.

Köker & Doğanay (2010), argue that all racist and qualitative discourses can be evaluated under ethnic, foreign, and refugee-based hate speech. The concept of hate speech emerged primarily due to racist expressions and is still one of the most common areas of hate speech. The opposition between us and them is very important in the formation of racist discourses. Minorities, foreigners, and immigrants are seen as surplus in society. For this reason, people in this group are considered as people who should be fired and fought.

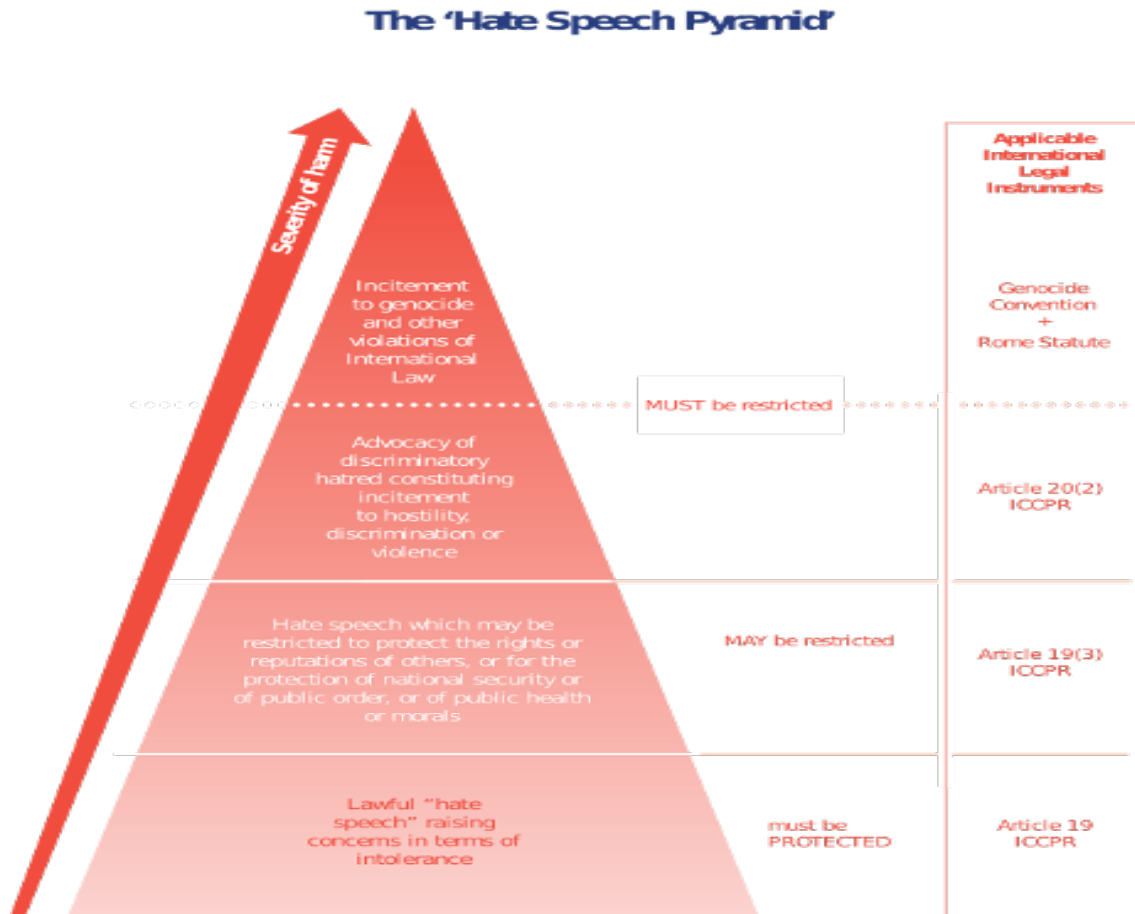


Figure 2. Hate Speech Explained (*Hate Speech Explained: A Summary, 2020*)

Hate Speech Pyramid expresses to what extent hate speech should be banned in the light of valid international legal documents. It can be seen from the figure that lawful hate speech raising concerns in terms of intolerance must be protected. Also, hate speech may be restricted to protect the rights or reputations of others may be restricted. Advocacy of discriminatory hatred constituting incitement to hostility or violence must be restricted. Lastly, incitement to genocide and other violations of international law must also be restricted. The severity of harm increases as the violation of the law increase.

1.1. Online Hate Speech

Since 2016, some of the biggest social media platforms (including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Microsoft) and the European Commission have agreed to a Code of Conduct, whereby the social media platforms promise to make every effort to remove hateful content that is defined as hate speech within 24 hours. The occurrence of hate speech has raised the question of the responsibility of social media platforms for facilitating the distribution of such speech. To reduce the quantity of speech that incites hatred and

violence, these efforts were increased in the fall of 2017. In the spring of 2018, the issue gained even more attention when Facebook and YouTube came under fire for failing to remove offensive content (Enarsson & Lindgren, 2019).

(Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) argue that the different sociopolitical dynamics underlying online hate speech debates are complex and at risk of being obliterated by more pervasive legal-normative understandings. (Vardal, 2015: 141) states the following about the prevalence of hate speech on social media and, in a sense, the difference in access and use compared to traditional media: Perhaps the most dangerous thing about hate speech produced and shared in the new media environment is the ordinary individual who does not have extreme views. It can be internalized without even being aware of it. As in almost every level of social life, the individual is made to feel compelled to marginalize the other to show his belonging to a group. After a while, posts containing hate speech gain a natural and acceptable appearance for social media users.

Differing from traditional media, social media offers a broader easier tool for making comments and expressing opinions. Online communication tools, therefore, are preferred particularly by the people who have extreme views, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hatred as well as hate towards different ethnic origins.

According to (Pohjonen, 2019: 3091) the challenges in determining what constitutes online hate speech also add to the problem. It is a more fundamental philosophical query than selecting the most appropriate conceptual framework or research methodology. Cultures won't be able to identify all forms of internet hate speech. According to academics, controversial notions like online hate speech may only have one clear interpretation, and approaches in research frameworks should be searched. As opposed to this for instance, (Brown, 2017: 564) believes that notions like hate speech should be used instead of orthodoxy. Through his theory, which deals with hypothetical conceptions, Wittgenstein's ideas of "family resemblance" were tackled. Even when employed in various contexts, they cannot have a single or universal meaning.

2. Evolution of Migrant and Refugee Perception in Türkiye

It is possible to state that before 2011- before the mass migration from Syria- Türkiye's perspective on refugees and migrants was not the same as it is today. The marginalizing tendencies that can be seen in every immigrant-hosting country were extremely limited. However, with the mass migration flow reaching unpredictable levels and, of course, with the effect of technological developments that have made people's access to the internet and social media widespread and facilitated, it has evolved into a different dimension. Before understanding the situation of Syrian refugees in Türkiye more closely, it is useful to underline their legal status.

Türkiye restricts the 1951 Refugee Convention's geographic scope and only applies to immigrants from other European nations. However, Türkiye passed a comprehensive law on foreigners and international protection in April 2013 that was influenced by the EU. This law establishes a clear legal framework for seeking asylum in Türkiye and reaffirms Türkiye's obligations to anyone who requires international protection, regardless of their country of origin. According to the UNHCR, this revision has made it possible for Turkish asylum law to clearly reflect the European *acquis* in the areas of asylum and migration. The General Directorate of Migration Management (DGMM), which oversees immigration and asylum and conducts the status determination process, was also established by

the law. When the DGMM took over full responsibilities for international protection toward the end of 2018, the UNHCR and its implementation partner, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), phased out the registration of international protection applicants. UNHCR is in contact with the authorities and has a Host Country Agreement with Türkiye that was signed in 2016 and entered into force on 1 July 2018 (*Introduction to the Asylum Context in Turkey, 2022*).

SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY YEARS (AS OF 15.09.2022)

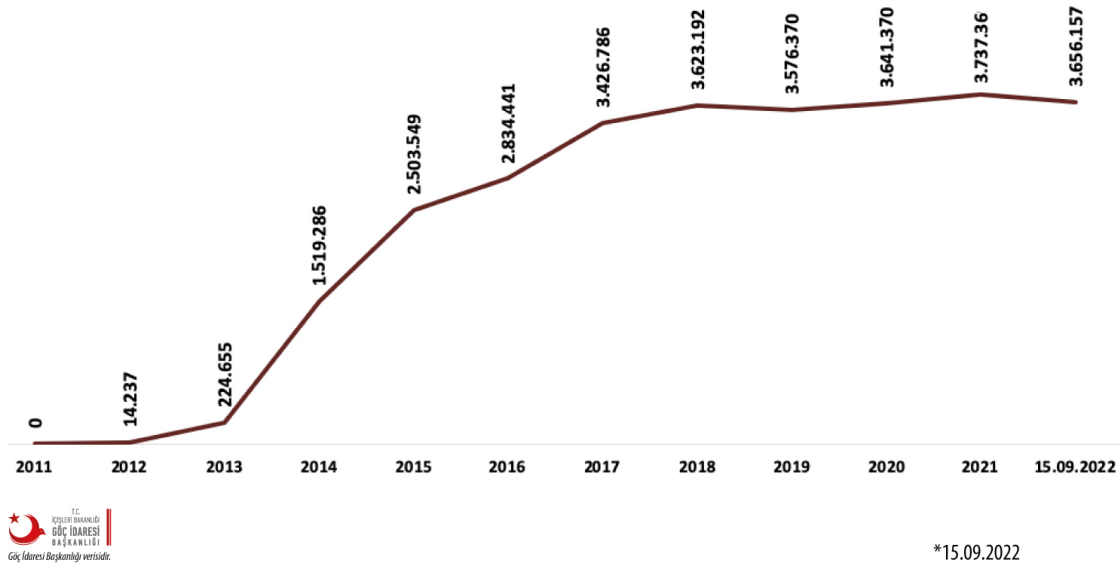


Figure 3. Syrian Under Temporary Protection by Years (Yıllara Göre Geçici Koruma Kapsamındaki Suriyeliler, 2022)

The fact that the Syrian immigrants have settled down and become a significant part of the population in some cities and regions, creates unrest and security concerns in society. According to current official figures, the highest number of Syrians with 462.897 in Türkiye live in Gaziantep. 433.124 Syrians live in Hatay, 430.003 in Şanlıurfa, 256.468 in Adana, and 242.935 in Mersin. As can be seen from the figures, there are Syrians in some cities in Türkiye that have the population of an average European city. Hundreds of thousands of people who have not been integrated as a normal outcome of the process and do not have the necessary and sufficient planning for their integration yet are only registered and official figures. Migrant workers, who are seen as a source of cheap labor in these regions and preferred by many employers, for this reason, can also be seen as the source of economic crisis or economic problems. According to (Köker, 2022)

There is a serious economic crisis in the world. While a network that devalues and destroys our lives, such as inflation, has quickly entered the heart of our country, digging it like a wedge, forms of racism and similar hostility calling each other rapidly increase. Türkiye is in the midst of such a crisis. We discuss what the monthly inflation rate is. If Türkiye sees the way to escape from this crisis as sharpening hostility, this is already very pathetic.

Political discourses also closely affect negative discourses for immigrants on social media. With the effect of migration movements and the increase in the number of people living outside the borders of the country of origin in the world more than expected, world immigrants have started to find a place for themselves in the election campaigns of political parties. That, as can be seen from the European example, far-right parties

have secured a significant number of seats in the parliament only with their opposition to immigration. In this regard, it is possible to cite the anti-immigrant far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which was founded in 2013 in Germany as an example. It would be appropriate to state that the political power gained by such an extreme right-wing party in such a short time is thought-provoking and worrying.

During the Turkish state's assault on Northern Syria, the refugee figure is depicted as a coward, "dangerous outsider," "invader," and "marauding migrant," which serves a territorial mindset fueled by armed conflict. As a result, the refugee figure is viewed as a Janus-faced threat that delineates the identity and way of life of an imagined nation as well as its internal and external borders (Ozduzen et al., 2021, p. 3350).

Continuing from the Turkish example, according to (Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021) the discourse on Syrian refugees in Türkiye has been shaped by different political actors according to their ideological and political agendas and tactics. Like it is happening all over the World, the Syrian refugee problem has become a controversial and hot debate during the election periods. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in Türkiye on 24 June 2018, and local elections were held on 31 March 2019. Elections for Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality have repeated on 23 June 2019 because of the cancellation. During the election campaign, the Syrian refugee issue dominated the discourse of the politicians, and many of the campaign messages were planned to address the concerns of Turkish citizens about refugees. Also, unverified information about the Syrians in Türkiye is spreading in both traditional and social media during this period. It can be suggested that especially fake and propaganda content and images are used by some during election periods.

2.1. Social Media Law in Türkiye

Social media usage in Türkiye had some limitations beforehand. In contrast to the EU, which leaves the speech-freedom mostly to individuals; in Türkiye, it is the government that says the last word about which websites are permitted and which are not. According to Yackley, with the social media law, the president could seal off, one of the last areas of the political debate, although the government had already made it risky by prosecuting individuals by their social media law. Moreover, more than 450.000 have been blocked. Its heavy-handed approach included a ban on Wikipedia until last year because of entries that were critical of Erdoğan's son-in-law, a former minister, and YouTube was regularly taken offline for political content (Yackley, 2021). Since social media has become one of the primary news resources for the Turkish public, there have been many groups formed like social media which are opposed to the government on Facebook or Twitter. Türkiye is one of the world's top requestors for content removal from the abovementioned social media networks. A ProPublica investigation revealed that Facebook has censored groups within Türkiye that the government dislikes in order to protect its Turkish business. Besides, in 2018, Türkiye noticed Facebook officials ban the pages of terrorist groups which seemed a controversial decision for Facebook officials at that time. Fear of losing millions of users in Türkiye, Facebook decided to geo-blocking the content of the terrorist group's page and they made a press statement that clarifies that they received a valid court order from the Turkish officials and this required them to strict access to certain content (Gillum & Elliott, 2021).

The Law No. 7253 on the Amendment of the Law on the "Regulation of Broadcasts Made on

the Internet and Combating Crimes Committed Through These Broadcasts,” also known as “Social Media Regulation” in the public eye, went into effect after being published in the Official Gazette on July 31, 2020, with the number 31202 (İnternet Ortamında Yapılan Yayınların Düzenlenmesi ve Bu Yayınlarla İşlenen Suçlarla Mücadele Edilmesi Hakkında Kanunda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun, 2020). One of the nations with the highest usage of social media is Türkiye, and social media platforms are popular with a sizable user base. It makes sense that in such a broad field, different stakeholders’ opinions of the legal requirements may differ. It is obvious that the regulation with the number 7253 was created with the best of intentions and that its goal is to fix the problems with the way the law with number 5651 was carried out. It cannot be stated, however, that the aforementioned worries of those who oppose the law are unfounded. In light of the state’s obligation to safeguard individuals’ rights, including their freedom of expression and information access, it is crucial that the conversation take place without any outside interference (Oymak, 2020).

New regulations are added to Social Media Law in Türkiye on 16th June 2022. According to new regulations:

- In the article regarding the assignment of Istanbul Criminal Courts of First Instance to submit a statement to the Press Announcement Agency for the issuance of periodicals and to stop the publication of the statement, the phrase “Istanbul”; was issued in order to spread the workload throughout the country.
- The one-week period has been changed to 24 hours in the article that internet news sites publish the disclaimers within one day at the latest, that the access to the broadcast is blocked, and that it stays for one week in case the decision to remove is implemented or is issued.
- While the definition of a free press card was “press card given to media members who are temporarily out of work”, the addition of “press card given to Turkish citizens doing freelance journalism abroad” was added.
- The phrase ‘presidential decision’, which states that ‘provided that they operate in the media field, and the executives of unions and associations and foundations determined by the president’s decision to operate in the public interest, has been removed.
- Among the conditions sought for foreign media members who can obtain a press card, the phrase “having a work permit in Türkiye” has been changed to “having a work permit in accordance with the International Labor Law No. 6735”.
- The provision that the decisions of the Press Card Commission will be implemented after they are approved by the president has been removed from the text (Sosyal Medyaya Sansür Yasasının İlk 15 Maddesi TBMM Adalet Komisyonu’nda Kabul Edildi, 2022).

The abovementioned regulations are controversial. According to lawyers and legal scholars, these new arrangements will be hard to implement. Legist Kerem Altıparmak argues that in his Twitter account:

I am not sure if it is fully understood what the new social media regulation brings. It might be good to explain with an example. When the law is passed, it may be a crime to say that inflation is 100%. Moreover, if you say this from your anonymous account, Twitter has to report your information to the Prosecutor’s Office. Let me give another example. You shared information from an anonymous account that law enforcement uses violence. If the prosecution decides this is fake news, it will tell Twitter’s national representative to report this person’s identity

information. If Twitter doesn't report, access to Twitter will be blocked (Altıparmak, 2022).

3. Examples of Hate Speech in Social Media and General Evaluations

According to (Taş & Taş, 2018), p. 203) it can be said that the social responsibility of the news media has become a much more critical expectation under these political conditions, where the anger politics of populism have paralyzed the claims of factual reality and rationality. When the blurring of the border between the real and the unreal goes beyond political discourses and infiltrates all kinds of channels where social communication takes place, citizens are left alone in their efforts to form rational opinions about what is happening. The fact that fake news produced by professional news organizations is rapidly circulating in digital networks and that user-derived content has become an internal component of the new media ecology makes the reliability problem of the news more complex.

Today, Twitter is one of the most important and widespread networks in the use of social media. It is possible to come across negative discourses about refugees in Türkiye almost every day through the medium. Based on the effect of political discourses on the public, politicians especially need to pay attention to what they share on social media. It is observed that the negative discourses of politicians towards refugees on social media occur in the form of attributing the negative developments already experienced throughout the country to refugees. As (Batur, 2021) mentions in his study about Twitter posts of some Turkish politicians for refugees in Türkiye. These politicians state that the economic problems in Türkiye and the unrest due to security concerns arise because of refugees. Moreover, social media users are warned about the various threats they face, with allegations of physical violence perpetrated by refugees against Turkish citizens. In this respect, besides these politicians, the statements made by the Hatay Metropolitan Municipality Mayor about the demographic structure and population of Hatay were talked about a lot. Stating that 3 out of 4 newborns in Hatay are Syrian, the Mayor also used the following expressions:

Hatay's population is 1 million 670 thousand. According to official data, there are around 500,000 Syrians. But the unofficial number is over 800,000. About one out of every two people is Syrian. 75% of births in Hatay are made by Syrian women. 3 out of 4 newborns are Syrian. The psychology of war has corrupted the hormones. There are Syrian women who gave birth in 11 months and gave birth to 6 children in 6 years. Most of them have 3-4 wives and they all have many children. The demographic structure is developing against us. After 12 years, none of us would like the mayor to be Syrian (*Hatay Elden Gidiyor Yeni Doğan 4 Çocuktan 3'ü Suriyeli*, 2022)

These statements were denied by the Hatay Governor's Office and the Metropolitan Mayor was accused of provoking the public with negative and false statements. It is necessary to state that such discourses and expressions create an atmosphere of unrest and chaos in society in the long run. Uncontrolled migration is undoubtedly a global problem, and it is essential to combat it. However, it is obvious that extreme racist and right-wing rhetoric does not serve as a conciliatory solution to the problem.

(Taşdelen, 2020, s. 572), on the other hand, her study analyzing hatred tweets about Syrian immigrants in Türkiye concludes with the following findings: Among the analyzed tweets, the fertility attributed to Syrian women evokes uncontrolled bodies mating at an inappropriate time, challenging the claims of civilization/western. Therefore, in the discourses, the needs of refugee women are ignored, and they try to make them feel the double disadvantage of being both a woman and a refugee. Based on the research findings,

it is seen that Twitter can be used to create an identity and community about events that take place outside of social media, and the discourses examined on Twitter have a marginalizing, provocative, and even insulting background. Most anti-refugee tweets legitimize the idea that immigration is a danger and/or crime. and the discrimination applied to those who have had to leave their homeland is reasonable, even necessary. As a result, in their online discourses, an attempt is made to create a perception of refugees as “those who deserve to be left out” within the settled structure.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Forced migration and thereby forcibly displaced migrants/asylum seekers/refugees in the world have reached the highest numbers recorded after the Second World War. Currently, 89.3 million people are forcibly displaced today. 69% of these people have only 5 countries of origin (Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar). While 53.2 of these people were internally displaced, 27.1 million people are in refugee status and 4.6 million people are in asylum status. Around 10 million refugees live in only 5 countries (Türkiye, Colombia, Uganda, Pakistan, and Germany).

Communication is one of the indispensable elements of global life. With technological developments, communication opportunities are increasing day by day and it is possible to reach more listeners and readers faster. In addition to the use of traditional media, the use of social media has been increasing all over the world in recent years. Uncontrolled, anonymous, and without filtering, all social media users can express their ideas quickly, like a messenger. A disadvantage of these technological developments is that thoughts containing negative and even hateful elements reach many users quickly through social media.

In this study, the spread of hate speech on social media has been examined through Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Syrians under temporary protection came to Türkiye with mass influxes after the civil war in Syria in 2011 and today only registered a population of 4 million, although they do not legally have refugee status in Türkiye, are called refugees in everyday language. All over the world and in every period, immigrants are exposed to marginalization and separatist discourses. In Türkiye, it has become one of the indispensable elements of hate speech with the effect of increasing population and creating economic and security concerns among the local population in some regions where they are concentrated. In this case, political discourses also have a great impact.

In fact, it is known that many heads of state and politicians actively use this social media, not only in Türkiye but also around the world, especially since the example of Twitter will be used in social media channels. Especially during election periods, the statements that they will send refugees to their homes with extreme racist and right-wing rhetoric against voters are used by some politicians, and the decision-making orientation of readers and listeners of social media can be affected in this way. However, the concept of ‘hate speech, which has no generally accepted definition, is legitimized. The spread of hate speech on social media, with the ease provided by uncontrolled and anonymous use, contributes to fake news, and this causes society to be further divided and dragged into an atmosphere of unrest.

Unlike the traditional media, in the social media channels, the use of which has increased rapidly in recent years, unprofessional and unproven journalism is presented as well as accurate and proven news. It is possible to say that a lot of negative perceptions have

been created about Syrian refugees, especially with the effect of the 2023 election period approaching in Türkiye. Türkiye's social media law was somehow controversial even before the Syrian refugee problem. In Türkiye, social media networks have become the primary news resource lately unlike it was before. Such that, Türkiye is one of the world's most requested censors from social media networks like Twitter and Facebook. These companies have been censoring some anti-government groups to protect their businesses with the Turkish government.

The new social media law which has enacted on the 16th of June, a very new, and has also some debatable points. Legislators argue that this new social media law is hard to implement. So much so; that someone will be counted as guilty even if s/he makes a comment about the government's policies- which government does not approve of and even though it provides no harmful, hateful, or wrong information. In this sense, the hardest part of the social media law seems to make it difficult the differentiate between censorship and blocking hate speeches. In order to avoid the negative consequences of online hate speech about Syrian refugees in Türkiye, internet users should be educated about new media usage. Accordingly, peaceful content about internet usage can be popularized. After all, content can be produced for Turkish citizens about more peaceful treatment towards these people who are under temporary protection status in Türkiye. Last but not least, all new media platforms should take hate speech seriously from the very beginning. They should take measures against such speech to provide internet users with the necessary training to observe individual rights and to ensure social peace.

Notlar

1 Although they are called 'refugees' in the daily use; Syrian people in Türkiye legally have not a refugee status legally and they are under 'temporary protection'. In this sense, the term 'refugee' is used in a sociological rather than a legal context in this study.

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Sosyal Medyada Nefret Söylemlerinin Etkileri: Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mülteciler Örneği

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Zorunlu göç ve sonrasında dünyada yaşanan göçmen/ sığınmacı/ mülteci hareketliliği günümüzde 2. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında kaydedilen en yüksek rakamlara ulaşmıştır. Hali hazırda günümüzde 89.3 milyon insan zorunlu olarak yerlerinden edilmiştir. Bu insanlardan %69'u sadece 5 ülke kökenidir (Suriye, Venezuela, Afganistan, Güney Sudan, Myanmar). Bu kişilerden 53.2 milyon kişi ülke içinden yerlerinden edilmişken, 27.1 milyon kişi mülteci statüsünde, 4.6 milyon kişi ise sığınmacı statüsündedir. 10 milyon civarında mülteci sadece 5 ülkede yaşamaktadır (Türkiye, Kolombiya, Uganda, Pakistan ve Almanya). Sayılar bu şekildeyken, mülteci sığınmacı ve zorla yerlerinden edilen kişiler ev sahibi ülkelerde bazı ayrımcılık ve dışlama içeren davranışlara ve nefret söylemlerine maruz kalmaktadır. Bu davranışlar sözlü ve fiziki olabileceği gibi, teknolojinin günümüzde vazgeçilmez bir unsuru olan internet yoluyla çevrim içi de olabilmektedir. Nefret söylemi, kısaca nefretin ifade edilmesi şeklinde tanımlanabilir. Günümüz teknolojisi ve sosyal medya kullanımının fazlasıyla artması ve yaygınlaşmasının da etkisiyle artık 'çevrim içi nefret söylemi' ifadesi hayatlarımıza girmiş durumdadır. Tüm dünyada nefret söylemleri ve dışlanmanın hedefinde en çok bulunan insan gruplarından birisi olarak göçmenler, sığınmacılar ve mülteciler buldukları ülkelerde özellikle sosyal medya üzerinden bu söylemlere maruz kalmaktadırlar. Yerel halkın güvenlik, ekonomik ve milliyetçilik kavramlarına dayanarak yaptığı bu söylemler; korunmaya muhtaç bu insanların güvenliklerini tehdit etmekle birlikte birçok yanlış ve abartı haberi de beraberinde getirmektedir.

Modern yaşamın temel bileşenlerinden biri iletişimdir. Teknolojik gelişmelerin bir sonucu olarak, iletişim seçenekleri her geçen gün artmakta ve artık daha fazla okuyucuya ve dinleyiciye daha hızlı ulaşmak mümkün olmaktadır. Geleneksel medyayı kullanmanın yanı sıra, sosyal medyanın son yıllarda dünya çapında popülerliği arttırmıştır. Tüm sosyal medya kullanıcıları, tıpkı bir haberci gibi, herhangi bir kısıtlama, anonimlik veya tarama olmaksızın fikirlerini hızlı bir şekilde paylaşma olanağına sahiptir. Bu teknolojik gelişmeler, düşmanca ve hoş olmayan görüşlerin sosyal medya aracılığıyla çok sayıda kullanıcı arasında hızla yayılmasını kolaylaştırma dezavantajına sahiptir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteciler arasında sosyal medyada nefret söyleminin nasıl yayıldığını incelemiştir. Türkiye'de hukuki olarak mülteci statüsüne sahip olmasalar da, 2011'deki Suriye iç savaşı sırasında çok sayıda Türkiye'ye gelen ve bugün itibarıyla 4 milyonluk bir nüfusa sahip olan geçici koruma altındaki Suriyeliler, günlük dilde mülteci olarak anılmaktadırlar. Türkiye'de ise bu kişiler artan nüfusun, bazı bölgelerde ekonomik sıkıntıların ve yerel halkın güvenliği ile ilgili endişelerin kaynağı haline gelmiştir. Sosyal medya üzerinden yanlış, abartı ve halkı kaygılandırmaya yönelik çıkan bazı söylemler hem yerli halk hem de geçici koruma statüsündeki bu kişiler için olumsuzluklar yaratmaktadır. Bu kaygı halinde siyasi söylemlerin de önemli bir rolü vardır. Hatay örneğinden yola çıkılacak olursa Belediye Başkanı'nın Hatay'da her 2 kişiden 1'inin Suriyeli olması ve doğum hızı göz önüne alındığında kısa süre sonra Hatay'da Suriyeli nüfusunun Türk nüfusundan fazla olacağına dair örnek çarpıcıdır. Öyle ki, bu örnek sadece bu bölgede

yaşayan insanları karşı karşıya getirmek ve toplumda huzursuzluk yaratmamakta, aynı zamanda söylemlerin abartılıp katlanarak olumsuz ve hızlı bir şekilde yayılmasına sebep olmaktadır. Bu noktada siyasetçi veya vatandaşlara düşen, kaygılarında haklı bile olsalar da söylemlerinde dikkatli bir üslup ve dil seçmeleridir.

Nitekim özellikle Twitter örneğiyle sosyal medya sadece Türkiye’de değil tüm dünyada birçok devlet başkanının ve politikacı tarafından aktif olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bazı politikacılar özellikle seçim dönemlerinde seçmenlere karşı aşırı ırkçı ve sağcı söylemler kullanmakta ve sosyal medya okuyucu ve dinleyicilerinin karar verme yönelimleri bu şekilde etkilenebilmektedir. Ancak yaygın olarak kabul edilen bir tanımlı olmayan “nefret söylemi” kavramı meşrulaştırılmıştır. Nefret söyleminin sosyal medyada kontrolsüz ve isimsiz kullanımla kolaylaşması, yalan haberlerin yapılmasına katkı sağlamakta ve bu da toplumun bölünmesine neden olmaktadır.

Geleneksel medyadan farklı olarak, son yıllarda kullanımı hızla artan sosyal medya kanallarında, profesyonel olmayan ve kanıtlanmamış habercilik, doğru ve kanıtlanmış haberlerin yanı sıra sunulmaktadır. Özellikle Türkiye’de 2023 seçim dönemi yaklaştıkça Suriyeli mültecilere yönelik birçok olumsuz algının arttığını söylemek mümkündür. Suriye mülteci krizinden önce bile, Türkiye’nin sosyal medya yasası biraz tartışmalı halde olduğu bilinmektedir. Sosyal medya ağları, geçmişten farklı olarak, Türkiye’de son zamanlarda birincil haber kaynağı haline gelmiştir. Sonuç olarak Türkiye, Twitter ve Facebook gibi sosyal medya platformlarından dünyada en çok sansür talep eden ülkelerden biridir. Bu şirketler Türk hükümetiyle olan ilişkilerini korumak için bazı hükümet karşıtı grupları sansürlemektedirler.

Türkiye’de 16 Haziran 2022’de yürürlüğe giren yeni sosyal medya yasasının ise tartışmalı yönleri bulunmaktadır. Bazı hukukçular, bu yeni sosyal medya yasasının uygulanmasının zor olduğunu savunmaktadırlar. O kadar ki; bir kişi, hükümetin onaylamadığı ve zararlı, nefret dolu veya yanlış bilgi vermediği halde hükümetin politikaları hakkında yorum yapsa bile suçlu sayılacaktır. Bu anlamda, sosyal medya yasasının en zor kısmı, sansür ile nefret söylemlerinin engellenmesi arasındaki farkı ayırt etmeyi zorlaştıracak gibi görünmesidir. Sosyal medya üzerinden yapılan nefret söylemlerinin engellenmesi için yapılabilecekler arasında barışçıl içeriklerin yüklenip ve bunun kullanıcılar arasında yaygınlaştırılması sayılabilir. Ayrıca, nefret söylemlerinin en başından ciddiye alınıp kontrol altında tutulmaya çalışılması insan haklarının korunması, sosyal barış ve uyum açısından gerekli ve önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söylem, Nefret Söylemi, Mülteciler, Sosyal Medya, Suriyeliler, Türkiye.

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