

SHELTERED BODIES:
INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES
IN TURKISH MEDIA

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Onur Mamak, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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Date 10.06.2019

ABSTRACT

Sheltered Bodies:

Investigating the Representations of Syrian Refugees in Turkish Media

This study investigates the representations of refugees from the Syrian Civil War in Turkish print media. It does so by quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing all of the refugee related news ran by five newspapers (*BirGün*, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Star*, and *Yeniçağ*) between April of 2014 and March of 2015. Through an in-depth analysis of the legal framework of asylum in Turkey and its political oppositions, these representational strategies are contextualized within the existing refugee regime and its critiques in order to distinguish the practical aims towards which these strategies were mobilized. While the refugees are often conceptualized as a coherent social category both by policy makers and researchers, newspapers consistently rely on already existing ethnoreligious identities in order to represent the refugees and differentiate between them. This thesis aims to uncover the implications of this reliance in both discursive and political contexts.

ÖZET

Saklanan Bedenler:

Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Türk Medyasındaki Temsillerini Araştırmak

Bu tez Suriye İç Savaşı'ndan kaçan sığınmacıların Türk yazılı basınındaki temsilleri incelemektedir. Bunu 2014 Nisan'ı ile 2015 Mart'ı arasında beş gazete (*BirGün*, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Star*, and *Yeniçağ*) tarafından yayınlanmış sığınmacı konulu tüm haberlerin nicel ve nitel bir analizini yaparak gerçekleştirmektedir. Bu temsil stratejilerinin hangi pratik amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanıldığını ortaya çıkartmak amacıyla Türkiye'de sığınmacılığın yasal çerçevesi ve bu çerçeve üzerinde yürütülen siyasi eleştiriler yakından incelenmiş, ve kullanılan stratejiler mevcut sığınma rejimi ve onun muhalefetine bağlamlandırılmıştır. Her ne kadar hem siyasetçiler hem de araştırmacılar tarafından sığınmacılık sıklıkla uyumlu bir sosyal kategori olarak kavramsallaştırılmış olsa da, gazeteler sığınmacıların hem temsiliinde hem de ayrıştırılmasında düzenli olarak zaten mevcut olan etnik ve dini kimlikleri kullanmışlardır. Bu tezin amaçlarından biri de bu kullanımın hem söylemsel hem de siyasi bağlamda içerdiklerini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In what way refugees, legally recognized or otherwise, are represented in host societies? This question, in its specific forms, has been a leading one for numerous research projects from diverse geographies, mostly focusing on close readings of media content, either qualitatively or quantitatively (Gale, 2004, Kaye, 2004, Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013, Holmes & Casteñada, 2016, Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). This thesis also starts off from a specific form of this general question: In what way refugees from Syria are being represented in Turkish media? However, to understand the representation of a people in their entirety, keeping intact all the intricacies of the represented in the eyes of the representer, as well as taking into account how the representer is fractious within itself is an immense task. To keep this task manageable the question has to be limited further, which I have done so by choosing to focus on newspaper coverages of refugees from Syria between early 2014 and 2015. I have chosen to focus on newspapers, and not on any other form of media that also has the power to publicly create or modify representations, firstly because of their considerable reach that cuts across class and geography—within reasonable limits—and their effectiveness in setting limits on public discourse by elevating certain forms of representation within it and dismantling others entirely. Thus, traditional news outlets such as newspapers still hold sway over respectable public discourse in a way that newer and more massive forms of media, such as the social media, does not, especially in Turkey. Secondly, I am not interested in analyzing the discourse solely for the sake of understanding it. Rather, in this thesis I

try to form a bridge between discursive techniques employed by the media and concrete policies implemented by the Turkish state. Under these terms, centering on newspapers in the Turkish context is essential, owing to the high degree of political parallelism present in their operation (Kaya & Çakmur, 2010, p. 521). This thesis will not attempt to re-established the repeatedly demonstrated lack of autonomy in Turkish media.¹ Rather, it will use the established fact of political parallelism to investigate precisely in what ways public discourse mirrors policies. The especially close ties between media and politics enable us to clearly distinguish competing political actors, who publicly establish and promote concrete policies, and the discursive techniques that are deployed by the attached media actors in order to defend these policies.

But what do I mean by the discursive techniques or concrete policies, and how are they related? In the literature, research that is focused solely on how Turkish media represents the refugees from Syria already exists (Efe, 2015, Pandır, Efe, & Aksoy, 2015, Erdoğan, Kavukçuer, & Çetinkaya, 2017, Sever, 2017). Most of this research is concerned with the relation between representation in the media and popular sentiment of the Turkish people regarding Syrians, i.e. what does public discourse on refugees from Syria influence people to think, or feel? The analysis of indirect and elaborate relations between political will and discourse formation is a popular area of study, following Foucault's argument that disciplinary power in the modern states are often wielded indirectly, through "humble modalities" and "minor procedures" (1995, p. 170). Yet occasionally, as Graeber observed, the workings of power can really be so crude and simplistic as daily evidence proves them to be (2015, p. 33), and the operation of mainstream Turkish print media is one such

¹ For some examples, see (Hendrick, 2011, Sözeri & Günay, 2011, Turkan, 2012)

occasion. In this case, the majority of discursive techniques advanced in the media are explicitly utilized for the success of particular political actions, and the discursive techniques of specific media outlets are inextricably tied to the actions of the actual political movements to which these outlets are aligned. The discursive techniques mentioned here are “micro-level properties of text, talk, interaction and semiotic practices” (van Dijk, 2008, p. 1), that are utilized as a result of interpreting the social world from the lens of a particular ideological framework. For example, if the ideology of a certain news outlet necessitates the application of a racist framework on its actors to make sense of events, such as newspapers written by and for southern white audiences in the US during the Jim Crow era, then these actors will be racialized, and the events in question will subsequently be recontextualized as a result of this racialization through certain discursive techniques, such as the usage of racial slurs and stereotypes (p. 45). Contrary to these techniques, concrete political actions are macro-level aspects of social interaction that are mediated by the power of the state, such as the text of the law and actual executive practices. These two aspects of political actions does not need to be in perfect synchronization, and executive practices utilized in the day to day workings of the state are often not limited by legal limits set upon by the judiciary. The refugee regime of Turkey set up by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, from its border checkpoints, to the law on foreigners of 2013 detailing the procedure that is to be followed for the people seeking refuge in Turkey, to the executive policing that separates and manages people in administrative centers from which they are unable to move away, is an example of a series of political actions that have created a regime of rules and policing regarding refugees. As expected, opposition parties in

the Turkish national parliament propose different political actions for the same question, and this thesis is an analysis of the relation between discursive techniques and political actions, whether proposed or actualized. For example, the unwillingness of the pro-government newspapers in Turkey to describe refugees from Syria as active agents shaping their own destiny and not merely as victims of malicious actors who mean them harm has already been noted (Efe, 2015, p. 49). Unanimously supporting the government's policy of accepting asylum seekers from Syria into the country as 'guests', the pro-government newspapers seek to invoke a moral responsibility on the part of the Turkish public to alleviate the suffering of their neighboring coreligionists. Yet there is another aspect to this rather straightforward framing which is often ignored. In their reluctance to ascribe agency to the refugees, the pro-government newspapers also legitimizes the present state of affairs which operate by the arbitrary management of refugee lives by executive decree, and grant only the minimal formal rights and legal protections to those it manages. When the Turkish minister of food, agriculture and husbandry stated that even if the refugees from Syria wanted to go back to Syria, the government wouldn't allow it, because they were unwilling to be deprived of the economic benefits derived from the presence of refugee workers,² he was precisely relying on this framing, on the state's pretension to know what's best for refugees when the refugees themselves disagree with the state, even with regards to policies that were to be enacted over their own lives. The victim representation of the refugee not only engenders sympathy, however deep or shallow, to the plight of the refugees on the level of inter-communal relations, but also legitimizes the executive management of the very same refugees

² Yeniçağ. (2017). Fakıbaba: "Suriyeliler gitmek istese de göndermeyiz". Retrieved May 27, 2018, from <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/fakibaba-suriyeliler-gitmek-istese-de-gondermeyiz-173929h.htm>

on the level of concrete policy. Any analysis of this discourse, therefore, must account for all social and political implications of its present use, not merely for the sake of comprehensiveness, but also for the sake of accuracy, the understanding of which may be hampered by an incomplete analysis of the political side of the question.

The choices involved in the selection and categorization of newspapers (*BirGün*, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Star*, and *Yeniçağ*), and the time frame from which the news were drawn from were made for a number of reasons. The newspapers are categorized under three groups, the pro-government papers (*Sabah* and *Star*), nationalist papers (*Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ*), and the single leftist paper (*BirGün*). This categorization is made in consideration to the real political movements that these papers were in association with at the time of publication. These associations, which will be explored more in-depth at the analysis section of this thesis, were established and maintained through an effective combination of direct ownership, tight editorial control, and sometimes extra-industry economic partnerships. Although there are more clearly differentiated political movements influential in Turkish media industry,³ these movements articulated strategies for establishment of distinct refugee regimes and policies for managing the broader refugee crisis, which were laid out and promoted in the aforementioned media outlets. The specific newspapers that are to be analyzed were selected with consideration to circulation numbers, policy influence, and ease of access during the writing of this thesis. This thesis does not attempt to use this sample of newspapers in order to generalize certain findings to the entire mass media subsection that the newspapers are grouped under. Rather, the

³ Of the rest, the most important are a number of Islamist papers that are disproportionately influential in governmental circles, such as *Akit*, *Milat*, and *Milli Gazete*, among others.

selection and the groupings are both utilized in order to stress the already existing common political aims of real political movements and their media counterparts, and to more easily compare and contrast these political aims with the discursive techniques that the mass media employ. Thus, the conclusions and the implications of this thesis are more about the discourse and how it functions than about Turkish media, or politics, or how these two interact.

The news which I will be focusing on for the content analysis section were published between April of 2014 and March of 2015. This time frame is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the year 2014 was when the number of refugees admitted to Turkey reached its present scale,⁴ and it was when the refugee regime that was to be put into place was still in limbo in policy terms. At first, Turkish government considered the refugees to be strictly temporary guests in the country who would return to Syria after the quick deposition of Bashar al-Assad through military means.⁵ As the Syrian Civil War stretched out and the Syrian Arab Army held its ground against the rebel advances, it became clear that a temporary arrangement of makeshift accommodations would not be enough for more than two million people and a new strategy was implemented, the specifics of which were debated for most of 2014 and 2015. This strategy culminated in the passing of a new decree granting the refugees work permits in 2016.⁶ Therefore, this period was a fertile time for news and opinion pieces regarding refugees in almost all media

⁴ After 2015, Turkish policy of permissiveness at the Syrian border was reversed, and the movement of refugees heavily restricted, which culminated with the building of a massive border wall. As of early 2019, it is to be seen whether any large number of refugees will be admitted in the near future following the possible evacuation or liquidation of the Idlib pocket, but such a course of events seem unlikely.

⁵ NTV. (2012). Davutoğlu Esad'a ömür biçti. Retrieved February 23, 2018, from https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/davutoglu-esada-omur-bicti,Nsez_e7zmEO7uz5O9Pv6hw

⁶ Bianet. (2016). Mültecilere çalışma hakkı yönetmeliği Resmi Gazete'de yayınlandı. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from <https://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/174223-multecilere-calisma-hakki-yonetmeligi-resmi-gazete-de-yayinlandi>

outlets. Secondly, the battle for Kobanî was waged between ISIS and YPG from late 2014 to early 2015. This battle was hugely significant, not only for the military situation in Syria,⁷ but also for the domestic politics in Turkey; not the least because it led to the admittance of more than four hundred thousand civilians fleeing war⁸ at a critical time when the refugee issue was already in the forefront of national discourse. Unlike the earlier arrivals, these refugees were predominantly Kurdish, which complicated their presence in Turkey from the government's point of view. Moreover, it was, and still remains, unclear whether the Turkish government helped YPG during the siege by allowing the peshmerga from Northern Iraq to reinforce the defenders⁹ in accordance with its strategic goals in the region, or whether the government was coerced into doing so through international pressure and massive waves of protest organized by the Kurdish opposition. Because of these reasons, this period not only marked the high point of national discourse regarding refugees in Turkey, it also laid bare some of the most crucial fault lines in Turkish politics that stood in relation to it. Most importantly, it revealed the workings of the process of securitization that was so important to the lives of the refugees and locals. Thus, the study of this period can potentially bring light to a plethora of intersections in discursive techniques in Turkish politics, ranging from those regarding Kurdishness and refugees, to the state and military power. This thesis attempts to do that, and to analyze the refugee regime and its discursive counterpart in relation to the larger

⁷ The Siege of Kobanî marked the greatest extent of ISIS expansion, and also their end. The overexertion of ISIS forces, coupled with the increasing close air support provided to YPG by the US-led coalition in Syria led to a devastating counterattack in the aftermath of the siege which would eventually eradicate ISIS altogether in early 2019.

⁸ BBC. (2015). Battle for Kobane: Key events. Retrieved February 14, 2019, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29688108>

⁹ The Guardian. (2014). Turkey to allow Kurdish peshmerga across its territory to fight in Kobani. Retrieved February 14, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/20/turkey-allows-peshmerga-forces-to-travel-to-kobani>

political debates in Turkey, such as the political status of Kurds, the tension between religious and ethnic identity, and the foreign policies of the Turkish state for the Syrian Civil War.

Every single news story reporting on refugees living in Turkey in the time frame of the thesis has been compiled and categorized according to the representative strategies used in the story. The quantitative data can be found in the Appendix, and is referred throughout the text in order to compare the number and occurrence rate of certain news and representative strategies between different newspapers. In certain places a specific news story is selected as an illustrative example of a discussed technique or strategy. These in-depth news stories are presented in their entirety.

The thesis is structured in the following manner: In Chapter 2, the critical theoretical tradition that will form the backbone of the analysis will be expounded. I will be relying on this tradition to construct a theoretical framework which can make sense of the figure of the refugee, the media which watches and articulates this figure, and their relation to host society. A quick sketch of the media landscape in Turkey is also provided here, which especially focuses on the close relation between this landscape and political actors, and how this relation influences both the media and politics. In Chapter 3, I will present the refugee crisis itself, and investigate the policies Turkey enacted regarding refugees of the Syrian Civil War. Two important comparisons are made in this chapter: First, on how the legal status of refugees states around the world differed from the Turkish case, and second, on what competing political actors in Turkey proposed with regards to this policy and how these proposals differed from what was being enacted. These comparisons help unearth what is peculiar about the Turkish refugee regime in the first place, and also on how

the different political actors were positioned with regards to it; the latter question being of particular importance for understanding opposition media and its preferences. In Chapter 4, the longest and most substantial chapter of this thesis, I will undertake the analysis of the aforementioned news stories with the already established theoretical tools. This analysis will be grounded on an empirical field that is also already established by the comparative methodology. First, the collected news stories will be categorized according to the methods of representation they use in reporting of their subjects, and a comparative quantitative analysis will be made according to this categorization. Second, some of these news and broad strategic choices made by the news outlets will be qualitatively appraised and compared. Finally, I will conclude the thesis by laying out the implications of this research on the present literature, and how future researchers can benefit from it. Also, I will address certain undertheorized aspects of the thesis in this chapter, and opine on how these gaps can be filled through further research.

Fundamentally, this thesis strives towards providing a knowledge that is both empirical and practical. The precise formulation of how the Turkish media represented refugees from the Syrian Civil War during a certain time period—which has already been done multiple times at this point—serves as an initial point in helping to understand how the news media interacts with the political sphere, and to make specific connections between particular discursive techniques and corresponding policies. A better articulation of this interaction, and these specific connections can help with analyzing not only particularities found within public and private discourses, but also political and ideological goals that guide them as well.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 On refugees¹⁰

In the Western philosophical tradition, theoretical perspectives on the category of the refugee have been primarily developed in its contradiction to the categorical quality of the national order of things. The nation, as a regime of classification, brings into life a system of ordering persons into national types, in a system of hegemonic topography (Malkki, 1995, p. 5). Balibar calls the working of such systems the “fundamental operation of classification”, by which the significance of the differentiations within human species are determined (1990, p. 55). The person of the refugee, as a liminal figure, represents the subversion of the very fundamental categories of differentiation in these regimes of classification. As Arendt posited, the refugee challenges “the time-honored and necessary distinctions between nationals and foreigners”. With characteristic acuity, Arendt also realized that the transgression of the categorical distinction led to the erosion of the institutions which were reliant for their very existence upon such distinctions: A significant damage is suffered by the “structure of legal national institutions” when “a growing number of residents had to live outside the jurisdiction of these laws and without being protected by any other” (1973, p. 286). The liminality of the refugee threatens to undermine, not only the categorical order of nations, but also the institutional totality which stands upon this categorical order, which is nothing less than the modern state.

¹⁰ A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country of citizenship in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster, whether recognized as such or not by a judicial authority. This thesis generally follows this general usage. An asylum seeker, in legal contexts, is a person who seeks to become a formally recognized refugee by seeking asylum in a foreign country. In this thesis, the distinction between asylum seekers and refugees is upheld in legal and political contexts where it is significant.

More significantly, even in categorical orders that seeks to understand human activity in more radical terms compared to the national order, the space that the figure¹¹ of the refugee occupies is still a liminal one. In Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the State, which “stratifies the space over which it reigns”, and establishes itself as a “zone of rights” over an entire “exterior” (1987, p. 385), the figure who transgresses this foundational differentiation between exterior and the interior attains almost an emancipatory significance. The Nomad, whose very existence is a threat unto the existing order, creates, through its life activity, an alternative to the exclusionary categorization of the State:

Even though the nomadic trajectory may follow trails or customary routes, it does not fulfill the function of the sedentary road, which is to *parcel out a closed space to people*, assigning each person a share and regulating the communication between shares. The nomadic trajectory does the opposite: it *distributes people (or animals) in an open space*, one that is indefinite and noncommunicating. The *nomos* came to designate the law, but that was originally because it was distribution, a mode of distribution. It is a very special kind of distribution, one without division into shares, in a space without borders or enclosure. (p. 380)

Although the figure of the Nomad is distinct from the figure of the Migrant, who “goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen, or not well localized”, the action of movement still occupies an especially transgressive place in the spatial understanding of Deleuze and Guattari. Nail goes further in this direction and considers the act of movement itself to be impossible along fixed points: “When an extensive movement occurs from A to B, the whole AB undergoes a qualitative transformation or change” (2015, p. 13). Understanding the Migrant, therefore, necessitates an entirely new theoretical framework which goes beyond traditional theories that operate by separating fixed

¹¹ A figure is not a fixed person or an identity. Rather, it is a relative social position that can be occupied for a length of time. A person becomes a figure for as long as they occupy its position.

conceptual spaces. Nail attempts to do this by introducing a new term, Kinopolitics, which is the “theory and analysis of social motion: the politics of movement. Instead of analyzing societies as primarily static, spatial, or temporal, kinopolitics or social kinetics understands them primarily as ‘regimes of motion’” (p. 24). Like with Deleuze and Guattari, whose attempts to undermine the territorializing operational logic of the state finds in the figure of the Nomad a naturally disruptive and deterritorializing force, Nail's endeavor to reconstruct a theoretical framework through which a deterritorialized understanding could be reached revolves around understanding the life practice of the Migrant.

The refugee is therefore an anomaly in the traditional ordering of things in any case. Whether this anomaly is understood to present a unique problem for the State to overcome, or to signify a deterritorialized practice of life outside of the State, traditional signifiers of difference could not make sense of refugees. A common response to this problem is to stress the aspects of the refugees that are thought to be universally human, in a way that supersedes the particular differences of culture. The rejection of any differentiation between humans in this manner can be called the species order of things, where distinctions rising beyond the base structure of biological species life is ignored in order to construct what is the widest category of subjects possible. This response is found not only in theoretical discussions on the aspects of being a refugee, but also in popular discourses that are centered around refugees and their life experiences: Malkki notes how “children are a crucial element in the representation of refugees,” and that “children have come to embody, more easily than adults, the universalism of a bare humanity” (p. 11). This totalizing discursive technique, which functions by squeezing out all historical traces from

particular people to find in the sediment an abstract essence shared by all humanity, reduces its subjects to bare biological bodies, to unhistorical humans. Barthes underlines this point by criticizing the totalizing impulse of the species order of things, where the perceived human condition which is common to all is mythicized:

This myth functions in two stages: first the difference between human morphologies is asserted, exoticism is insistently stressed, the infinite variations of the species, the diversity in skins, skulls and customs are made manifest, the image of Babel is complacently projected over that of the world. Then, from this pluralism, a type of unity is magically produced: man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way; and if there still remains in these actions some ethnic peculiarity, at least one hints that there is underlying each one an identical 'nature', that their diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould. Of course this means postulating a human essence, and here is God re-introduced into our Exhibition: the diversity of men proclaims his power, his richness; the unity of their gestures demonstrates his will. (1991, p. 100)

The human essence stressed by these representations does not need to be understood as biological. Moreover, this representation brings a theological significance onto itself in its totalistic essentialism. The close relation between religious discourse and the discourses of the dispossessed, of whom refugees are a subset of, grows from this mechanism of signification. Popular representations of refugees, whether positive or negative, religious or secular, often employ the same technique described above. Analyzing the Turkish media representation of refugees from Syria, Efe emphasizes how the frame of a “drama of humanity” often serves to obfuscate the active subjects within the news (2015, p. 56). Acutely cognizant of this pitfall, Malkki argues that a researcher has to go beyond the representation of a common human tragedy in order to gain insight into the “lived meanings that displacement and exile can have for specific people” (p. 16).

These forms of representations that refugees bear has tremendous impact on their lives. Razack convincingly showed how the imagery of the bare life of Muslims—and especially that of Muslim women—was consciously utilized in post-9/11 Euro-American political discourse in order to justify the repression of the very communities that these images were supposed to engender sympathy for (2008). The representation of the bare body, the sediment of humanity, is also used extensively in the Turkish media, both by supporters of the humane refugee policy of the government, and by supporters of mass deportation, seemingly in contradiction to one another. Fully comprehending the political implications of reducing the traditional signifiers of personhood will help us understand these contradictions.

Throughout this thesis, I will try to concretely demonstrate the shortcoming of understanding displacement and the experience of being a refugee not only as a process of losing distinctions and differentiations, but also as a theoretically singular process, a watershed event that can inform us, the implicitly non-refugee researchers, important facts about the system within which we act. Furthermore I will attempt to show the links between such theoretical statements and the current form of representation of the refugees as bare humanity; and also the forms of political actions that are supported by this representation.

2.2 On media

The precise role of the media in creating or shaping public opinion is a hotly debated issue in media studies literature. The ‘direct influence’ model of the media, which assumes that there exists a direct cause and effect relation between media content and societal response, with its heavily behaviorist undertones, was widely rejected after

the 1960s in favor of different models that recontextualized media as a major cultural and ideological force which interfaced with the broader society through more intricate mechanisms (Hall, 2005, p. 104). Most of the approaches developed after this ‘historic break’, as defined by Hall, wrestled with the problem of ideology, first introduced into the American academic discussion by the Frankfurt School, and developed further worldwide, usually by Marxist thinkers.

In his seminal essay on ideology, Althusser argues that media was part of a myriad of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) as the communications ISA (2001, p. 143). In Althusser’s conceptualization of ideology, the relations of domination that were found in the economic base of society are reproduced and reified in the superstructure of that society through the power of ISAs, ultimately serving to reproduce the entire relations of production (p. 154). Ideology, here, takes the form of “false consciousness”, imposed on the dominated classes directly by the organs of the state, which was controlled by the dominating class, i.e. the bourgeoisie. Given the central position Althusser’s essay holds in critical studies even today, it was not unsurprising that the later theoreticians often clashed with, modified or elaborated on Althusser’s thesis in their own conceptualization of ideology (Barthes, 1991, Eagleton, 1991, Hall, 1996, van Dijk, 1998, Laclau, 2012). Given that any analysis of the Turkish media has to rely on political distinctions that are not neatly collapsible along class divides, we have to move beyond, although not necessarily refute, Althusser’s orthodox conceptualization for now. Contra Althusser, Hall makes a more elaborate and practical case on ideology:

By ideology I mean the frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works. (1996, p. 26)

To Hall's definition, van Dijk adds that "ideologies are not limited to making sense of society, but they also serve to regulate social practices" (1998, p. 9). But what are these groups which utilize different ideological frameworks, and how is the media, and more precisely the press, is linked with the production and sustainment of these frameworks?

Van Dijk, adhering to a social constructivist framework, argues that significant social groups are constituted through conflicts with other, similar groups. He puts up three criteria to identify these social groups: Firstly, they must collectively act in such a way to overcome problems that they perceive as being shared among them. Secondly, they must retain a degree of cohesion beyond singular events. Thirdly, the group must collectively share social representations (1998, p. 141). The first two points are open to objective social, political or economic analysis, however, the third criterion is, in van Dijk's own terms, an "affective" relationship that can be hard to precisely analyze. He expounds on this point:

For the individual group members this means that part of their personal identity (self) is now associated with a social identity, namely, the self-representation of being a member of a social group ... we might further require that the individual and collective actions of the group members be monitored by these social representations. That is, not only should the collectivity, as a set of people, not be *ad hoc*, but also the decisions, goals and actions of the members of a collectivity should not happen to coincide or be similar, as was the case for the individual passengers travelling aboard the same flight to the same destination. (1998, p. 141-142)

For van Dijk, ideologies can only be made sense when considered together with social groups, and vice versa. Groups have shared ideologies, even where the

ideological features of the group are in contestation and subject to change. These ideologies, referring back to Hall's original definition, renders intelligible the disordered textures of social life, presenting a coherent view of society for the various social groups existing within.

Mass media occupies a very significant space in this framework. First of all, the existence of mass media is a technical prerequisite for the establishment of communities that span the territory of modern nation-states (Anderson, 2006, p. 35). Once thus established, modern social groups continue to rely on mass media, and especially the daily reproduction of the news, to sustain a particular "image of society" (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978, p. 59) primarily through differentiating what is ordinary and what is newsworthy, and delimiting all subsequent discussion on an issue by framing what the issue is in the first place. Crucially, however, the media is not an independent entity shaping the ideological frameworks of social groups by its autonomous will, neither it is all powerful in its efforts to do so. On the contrary, the structural position of the media subordinates it to individuals and cadres that are always already privileged within society. Hall et al. illustrates this point clearly:

... the media are frequently not the 'primary definers' of news events at all; but their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in *reproducing* the definitions of those who have privileged access, as of right, to the media as 'accredited sources'. From this point of view, in the moment of news production, the media stand in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers. (p. 59)

We can say therefore that the media is incorporated into existing social structures; however, we should also underline that this is a double incorporation, firstly to the general society within which the news are produced, and secondly to the

specific social group within society that the media outlet in question is catering to. In their production of daily news, media outlets employ distinct frameworks according to the perceived preferences of their patrons, however, these frameworks are limited by the standards of acceptability within the larger society that the outlet operates within.¹²

The question that follows from here is the ways in which the Turkish media fits into this framework. The groups within which specific media outlets are embedded into will be of particular interest.

2.3 On Turkish media

The fate of the Turkish media in the twenty-first century has been inextricably tied to the continuous pressure that the ruling party of Turkey exerts on it. Ever since its ascension following the general elections in 2002, AKP attempted to discipline the existing media outlets via intimidation of the media owners, and mass firings and imprisonment of journalists, as well as creating its own media through buying existing outlets and setting new ones up from the scratch (Corke, Finkel, Kramer, Robbins, & Schenkan, 2014, pp. 1-2). This intimidation campaign served a double function: Firstly, a new group of media outlets which were fiercely protective of AKP policies gradually appeared, and secondly, the range of acceptable speech for the whole of media was shrunk to such a narrow field that Freedom House changed Turkey's press freedom status to "not free" in 2014 (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p.

¹² A question arises here regarding to which level of analysis that the framework of ideology could be applied to. If we are speaking only in terms of class, we can talk about the bourgeoisie ideology, but with increasingly granular frameworks of society, we can also speak of the Turkish ideology, or the Kemalist ideology. I think that this is first and foremost an instrumental problem, and different analyses can gainfully utilize the concept of ideology to highlight issues in different levels of interest. Hall's definition of the term, which I will be using throughout this research for various ends, is flexible enough to be applied to any level of analysis.

1592). Today, it has become impossible to separate the media outlets that the AKP consciously set up as party mouthpieces from the policies that the party advocates, and autonomy for the media in this sense is entirely extinguished.

The structural features of Turkish media ownership contributed heavily to the effectiveness of AKP's disciplining strategies. As almost all media outlets in Turkey are owned by multi-focused conglomerates that also heavily invest in other sectors, intimidation could be easily carried out for the media activities of these conglomerates in non-media sectors (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012, p. 23). Conversely, given government's important role in the Turkish economy, conglomerates often willfully use the media as a weapon in the service of the AKP in order to benefit their non-media investments. Most importantly, there are no legal barriers against the participation of such groups to public tenders, the administration of which was used to great effect to influence the media owners by the AKP.

What about the media outlets that were able to stay relatively free from AKP's grasp? Even for independent outlets, it was impossible to stay totally autonomous in the face of the long-standing pressure exerted by the government. For example, in a national survey of journalists from around Turkey conducted in 2011, 96.2 percent strongly agreed that they could not air important news out of fear from political reprisal (Arsan, 2011), and there are no reasons to assume that this number would be lower under present conditions. However, there were varying degrees of disciplining, and even today it is possible to talk of an opposition media, albeit heavily repressed. An important point to note here is the presence of high degrees of political parallelism (Kaya & Çakmur, 2010), which is also present among these outlets that are relatively independent from the government. The level of institutional

autonomy for the media has been comparatively low for the most of Turkish history, furthermore, the liberalization of the media ownership laws in the 1980s did not lead to the reconstruction of media as an institution autonomous from the state, as many predicted, but rather increased the level of subordination to political and economic structures (p. 528). As I have already mentioned, the main reasons for this convergence was the centralization of the production process in the hands of multi-sector conglomerates. Moreover, in such an institutional culture where lines of distinction are sharply drawn along political lines, the remaining independent outlets, which are often able to stay independent thanks to their lack of ties to non-media sectors, also differentiate themselves along the same lines. For example, the owner of one of the more successful newspapers in Turkey that also follows a strict anti-AKP editorial stance, *Sözcü*, only has stakes in a number of newspapers. Another paper that fits this mold, *Cumhuriyet*, is publicly owned and entirely reliant to its print sales to stay solvent.

The resulting sector under these historical conditions is remarkably consolidated and polarized at the same time. While politically mainstream media outlets have mostly adapted to AKP's allowed range of editorial standards and the explicitly pro-AKP media has grown exponentially, there are still outlets that try to stay outside of, and even act against, AKP's political and social hegemony. Most of these outlets are politically parallel to opposition parties and movements, and cater to people from these political leanings. Thus today, the most significant marker of differentiation in all media, and print media especially, is political affiliation. It will also be the most important point of analysis of this thesis.

2.4 Conclusion

Although the political consolidation of media in Turkey cannot be overstated, there are still some points of public policy where performances of contention are allowed to an extent. Esen and Gumuscu argue that the accurate descriptor of the Turkish political system at this historical moment is “competitive authoritarianism”, where a performance of opposition is allowed, and elections are formally open to challenge, but civil liberties are systematically violated and the “playing field” is highly skewed in favor of the ruling party (2016). Therefore, although causing a change in policy through public deliberation and bargaining was unlikely at best, setting up a public discussion by whatever media channels that the opposition had at its disposal was possible on the issue of refugees from the Syrian Civil War, and many papers framed the news regarding the refugees in ways that they hoped would benefit the political movement with which they were interconnected. As a result, a relatively multivocal discussion about the policies regarding the refugees from Syria was had in the media, although most of the mainstream papers that were light in specifically political content usually ignored the event as usual (Erdoğan, Kavukçuer, & Çetinkaya, 2017, p. 16). Conversely, the majority of the news coverage came from politically engaged papers of either explicitly pro-AKP or anti-AKP leanings, and these coverages almost completely mirrored the policies instigated or proposed by the political movements that the papers were embedded in.

Herein lies the significance of this study. As the majority of newspapers in Turkey are reliant on political institutions in order to generate funding, either through clientelistic elite networks or through the support of politically mobilized masses, they tend to support specific political movements which support specific policies.

From here, we can analyze how specific ideological frameworks and discursive techniques support these policies, and build an analytical bridge between political speech and political activity, which will stay significant at least for other cases of host countries accepting refugees. I think that this analysis is important, not only for understanding how public discourse influences and is influenced by public policy, but also for helping our theoretical search to understand the experience of displacement, and even highlight how our understanding of displacement effects the experience of displacement itself.

CHAPTER 3

THE LEGAL STATUS OF REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

3.1 A historical background

The roots of the contemporary refugee crisis lies in the Syrian Civil War, and the roots of the civil war lies firmly in the context of the Arab Spring. While the contentions within Syria eventually spiraled out of control and morphed into a many-sided civil war with numerous international actors involved, the beginning of the crisis was onset by a relatively minor act of civil disobedience. The arrest and subsequent torture of a group of high schoolers—aged between thirteen and fifteen—for the crime of inscribing anti-government graffiti on a school wall in Daraa, a small and predominantly Sunni town just a few miles away from the border to Jordan, at first only led to local sit-ins and protests, but when security forces opened fire on the protesters in March 2011, the unrest quickly spread to other cities across Syria.¹³ Faced with a popular resistance at a historical moment when public demonstrations had already weakened and led to the toppling of authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Libya, the Assad government responded with extreme violence, and security forces continuously shot at and brutalized protesters. However, these acts of repression failed to deter the protests, as protesters continued to re-assemble and re-mobilize even against the credible threat of violence (Bellin, 2012, p. 140). Under these conditions, an armed resistance to the Assad regime quickly developed, centered around Sunni-majority areas and materially supported by Turkey, Qatar, Saudi

¹³ CNN. (2012). Daraa: the spark that lit the Syrian flame. Retrieved January 9, 2018, from <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/01/world/meast/syria-crisis-beginnings/index.html>

Arabia, and the US¹⁴¹⁵ (Manna, 2012), although the extent and effectiveness of this support has been disputed (Holliday, 2012, p. 16). As the civil war ensued between the Assad regime and an armed opposition which was internally fractured along ethnic, religious, and political lines, what was then the Islamic State of Iraq capitalized on the situation by quickly taking control of eastern Syria and rechristening itself, at first as the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant, and then simply as the Islamic State.¹⁶ The global aspirations of ISIL, and the fears of greater instability spreading through the region led to an intervention by the US-led coalition under a joint task force, and Russia also extended direct military support to the Assad regime, one of its few close allies in the region.¹⁷ Currently, as of February 2019, the Syrian Civil War has been raging on for almost eight years, and while the eventual military victory of the Assad regime seems inevitable, reaching a quick and peaceful settlement in Syria hinges on surmounting significant problems of commitment between all sides of the conflict, and thus seems unlikely (Lundgren, 2016).

The displacement of civilians happened concurrently with the eruption of hostilities. Already from April 2011, just one month after the brutalization of protests in Daraa, thousands of people from Syria were seeking refuge in the Turkish province of Hatay at the Syrian border (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 1). At this time, Turkey was following an open-door policy that allowed the refugees from Syria who could reach the border to cross the border and be admitted into Turkey, rather than

¹⁴ The Financial Times [FT]. (2013). Qatar bankrolls Syrian revolt with cash and arms. Retrieved January 10, 2018, from <http://ig-legacy.ft.com/content/86e3f28e-be3a-11e2-bb35-00144feab7de#axzz53mASuXSp>

¹⁵ BBC. (2015). Syria: how a new rebel unity is making headway against the regime. Retrieved January 10, 2018, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32540436>

¹⁶ Al Jazeera. (2017). MAPPED: the battle against ISIL. Retrieved January 10, 2018, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/04/map-isil-syria-iraq-170413092750456.html>

¹⁷ Al Jazeera. (2015). Russia carries out first air strikes in Syria. Retrieved January 10, 2018, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/russian-carries-air-strikes-syria-150930133155190.html>

being intercepted or refused entry. While the initial group of arrivals to the Turkish border numbered no more than three hundred (AIDA, 2015), eventually very large number of refugees had to flee the country due to continuing threat of violence at home. The number of persons externally displaced from Syria were already at one and a half million by May 2013 (UNHCR, 2013, p. 7), and as of the writing of this thesis in early 2019, more than five million refugees from Syria are registered at neighboring countries, excluding those who managed to reach Europe and apply to asylum there (UNHCR, 2018a).

3.2 Refugees from Syria around the world

The arrival of the people displaced from Syria to other countries, despite the unusual speed in which the crisis developed, happened gradually and progressed geographically. States immediately bordering Syria felt the repercussions of the civil war quickly, as twenty percent of the country emptied with shocking speed which left the institutions tasked with supporting the refugees overwhelmed by the extent of the required aid (UNHCR, 2015). The countries which received the most refugees at this early stages of the crisis were the neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Iraq was not a viable destination for most, considering that the control of ISIL extended to both sides of the border, and Israel outright refused, and continues to refuse, to admit any refugees at all (Sobelman, 2015). It took until 2015 for the refugee crisis to reach the shores of Europe, and by this time Syria's direct neighbors were collectively hosting more than four million refugees already (UNHCR, 2015, p. 9). 2015 saw the record number of migration to Europe with the arrival of over one million people, about half of whom were fleeing the civil war in Syria and about one-

third of whom were seeking political asylum in a European Union (EU) country (Greenhill, 2016, p. 317). The amount of asylum applications were highly unequally distributed among the EU states, with Germany clearly receiving the greatest number of applications, totaling to 35.2% of all in the EU (Eurostat, 2016). Together with Sweden and Hungary, these three states received 61.5% of all EU applicants. The EU-Turkey refugee deal that was signed on March 2016, which attempted to redirect the flow of displaced people back to Turkish territory from where many of the refugees moved on to EU territories via either land or sea, was a result of these conditions which frightened the governments of Europe. Currently, as of early 2019, the EU-Turkey deal seems to have worked out for its stated aim of reducing incoming refugees to Europe, with the effects of the deal being felt immediately in the year it was signed. During 2016, the number of refugees who arrived at EU plunged by two-thirds.¹⁸ However, directly as an effect of this deal, more and more refugees were forced to rely on unreliable methods of transformation at moving to Europe in the hopes of avoiding border controls, and total migrant deaths increased by 35% in 2016 compared to the previous year, even though the total number of arrivals had decreased drastically (IOM, 2017). As a result of the EU-Turkey deal and the restriction of migration to the European mainland, the refugee populations in the countries neighboring Syria continued to increase, although there are a fewer number of refugees coming out of Syria in recent years. The reasons for this decrease are twofold: Firstly, all of the countries neighboring Syria, with the exception of overwhelmed Iraq, instigated more strict border controls as the crisis dragged on, and tightened what were once relatively porous borders. Secondly, the military situation

¹⁸ Al Jazeera. (2017). Number of refugees reaching Europe plunged in 2016. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/number-refugees-reaching-europe-plunged-2016-170106132732972.html>

in Syria, although far from being peaceful, became more localized and comparatively more stable. As a result, some areas of Syria witnessed a relative decrease in violence in 2017 compared to previous years, and there were no large-scale population movement outside Syria. It is predicted that 2018 will also see no significant external displacement, although on-going conflict in parts of the country will continue to generate high levels of internal displacement (UNHCR, 2017, p. 6).

The legal situation that the refugees from Syria experienced in all of these different countries that they ended up in vary tremendously. Of the major host countries, I will leave Turkey aside for now and focus on the situation in the other four countries with biggest Syrian refugee populations: Jordan, Lebanon, Germany and Hungary. By doing so, I hope to place the Turkish refugee regime, which I will analyze later, within a global context of differing refugee regimes. Even though all of these countries are bound with international treaties stipulating a certain form of legal commitment towards asylum seekers, nation states are still able to pursue very different strategies in managing the legal rights of refugees and the institutions designed for them. Thus, analyzing the range of opportunities in which these states operate is also important for understanding both the unexceptional aspects of the Turkish refugee regime and its unique characteristics.

3.2.1 Jordan

As of January 2018, Jordan has registered more than six hundred thousand refugees from Syria, making it one of the countries most heavily populated by refugees per capita (UNHCR, 2018a). Jordan is not a signatory to the UN 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees (ACAPS, 2013, p.6), therefore it does not extend formal

legal protections to the refugees it accepts to the country.¹⁹ Significantly, Jordan lacks any specific domestic legislation concerning asylum seekers coming into the country, which is a fact made doubly significant by the long history of displaced Palestinians in Jordanian territory. In general terms, refugees to Jordan are subject to Law no. 24 of 1973 Concerning Residency and Foreign Affairs, which makes no differentiation between refugees and non-refugee foreigners and provides no protections to either (Library of Congress, 2016, p. 198). Rather, Jordan relies on direct executive action through policing and border controls, and on expanding or contracting funding to the programs that the refugees rely on in managing the refugee population within the country. While the original response of the Government of Jordan (GoJ) to the people displaced by the civil war has been considered "open and generous" (Chatty, 2017, p. 29), through these executive measures, the GoJ gradually restricted access both to the country at the Syrian border, and to the services critical to survival within Jordan. Two such services restricted by government intervention are health and education. In 2014, the GoJ decreed that refugees from Syria will no longer have the right to free health care at state hospitals (ACAPS, 2014, p. 15), making access to health care a virtual impossibility for the majority of refugees. In education, most children of refugees are only allowed to attend second-shift schools. Not only does this practice make the children go through an inferior curriculum with reduced hours, it also assures that interactions between Jordanian and Syrian children are kept at a minimum, upholding the segregation between the refugee and host societies (Chatty, p. 29). On the issue of employment, a work permit is required from

¹⁹ The 1951 Geneva Convention defines the legal rights of refugees, most significantly the right of non-refoulement, and makes it possible for an individual who has been granted refugee status by a signatory country to move relatively freely between other signatory countries without a passport (UNHCR, 1978).

non-citizens who wish to work at a legitimate sector, which in practice has never been granted to refugees from Syria. The GoJ reports that many refugees from Syria work informally (ACAPS, 2013, p. 2), which renders them vulnerable to work hazards and exploitation by their employers.

There are two unique features of the Jordanian refugee regime which further need to be mentioned. Firstly, the registration of refugees is not solely done by the state of Jordan, but also by the United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR asylum seeker certificate gives access to international humanitarian services, while the service card granted by the Jordanian Ministry of the Interior is required for accessing state health care and education services (ACAPS, 2014, p. 18). In this way, the GoJ heavily relies on transnational humanitarian institutions in dealing with the most immediate needs of the refugees, and doubly benefits from the international aid it receives towards its expenditures for the refugees. The extent of these benefits are hotly disputed, but policy-makers generally recognize how the host community directly benefits from international aid related to hosting refugees (Chatty, p. 30). Secondly, Palestinian refugees from Syria have been specifically barred from entry to and residence in Jordan since the beginning of the conflict (HRW, 2014). This distinction made between Palestinian refugees from Syria and non-Palestinian refugees from Syria is rooted in the history of Palestinians in Jordan, and especially the 1970-71 Black September conflict between Palestinian guerrilla organizations and the Jordanian army. This specific treatment of Palestinian refugees reflect the capability and willingness of the GoJ in selectively excluding a portion of the incoming asylum seekers from the country. In summary, the GoJ does not grant any legal protections to the refugees it admits, and

manages their lives through executive decisions made by the Ministry of Interior.

Additionally, the GoJ heavily depends on international actors, especially the UNHCR, in providing aid to the most immediate needs of the refugees. In this way it externalizes the cost of being a host country.

3.2.2 Lebanon

Lebanon, like Jordan, is not a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention (ACAPS, 2013, p. 4). Also similarly to Jordan, Lebanon does not have any domestic legislation specifically concerning refugees (Library of Congress, 2016, p. 213), although the Article 26 of the 1962 Law protects the right of non-refoulement.²⁰ However, economic migrants from Syria had a long history of finding employment in Lebanon before the outbreak of the civil war, and additionally, Syria hosted a large number of Lebanese refugees first during the Lebanese Civil War and more recently during the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon (Chatty, p. 28). Partly as a result of these historical ties, and partly as a result of its geographical proximity, Lebanon, in the first quarter of 2018, was the country that hosts the greatest number of refugees from Syria per capita (UNHCR, 2018a), with about one and a half million refugees living in a country of six million people. In managing these people, the Government of Lebanon (GoL), like the GoJ, closely works together with international organizations, most prominently the UNHCR, under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). The LCRP brings together the GoL and its international and national partners related to the persons displaced from Syria. The majority of the economic aid given to refugees

²⁰ For a partial English translation of the 1962 Law regulating the status of foreign nationals in Lebanon, see https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/lbn/1962/order_no__319_regulating_the_status_of_foreign_nationals_in_lebanon_en_html/Order_no_319_EN_excerpts.pdf. Retrieved February 16, 2018.

are made possible only with the international donor contributions made under the LCRP (UNHCR, 2018b, p. 8), and the GoL is mostly uninvolved in providing assistance to the vulnerable refugee population (Chatty, p. 31). Rather, the GoL is involved in the lives of the refugees in its functions of policing and punishment. There are illegal curfews from six pm to six am in force in over forty municipalities, specifically targeting refugees from Syria, and in addition, vigilantism and social discrimination are often not prosecuted by the Lebanese judiciary (Chatty, p. 29). As a result, despite the long historical association between Syrians and Lebanon and existing kinship ties, many Syrians feel cut off from Lebanese society. The only assistance for the refugees from Syria are provided by international organizations, and they have no legal protections within Lebanon, neither from the host community, nor from the GoL.

3.2.3 Germany

Unlike Jordan and Lebanon, Germany, being geographically removed from Syria, did not feel the effects of the Syrian Civil War immediately. It took until 2015 for the refugees from the civil war to reach Europe regularly and in large numbers, and within the EU, Germany was the country that the asylum seekers applied most frequently: Over half a million asylum seekers applied to German authorities in 2015 alone. While this number is a historic high, a similar number of asylum applications were processed during the early 1990s in response to the war in former Yugoslavia (Juran & Broer, 2017, p. 150), implying that the contemporary crisis was not as unprecedented as the European media often claimed it to be. In dealing with this crisis, Germany has emerged as the leading country in the EU in accepting and

processing the asylum applications in a manner that consistently reflects the existing conventions and laws (Schmidtke, 2017).

According to German law, which incorporates and builds on the 1951 Geneva Convention, the right to asylum is afforded to all who flee political prosecution. The rules for admission and management of refugees are laid out in the Asylum Act and the Residence Act.²¹ As a general rule, applicants have to demonstrate that they come from an unsafe country of origin, fleeing political persecution in order to be accepted as a refugee by German authorities. Once accepted as such, the refugees receive a residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) with a time limit of three-years, after which it is upgraded to a settlement permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*) with no time limit, provided that the Federal office for Migration and Refugees does not object (Library of Congress, 2016, p. 137). The application procedure and what it entails is clearly laid out in the domestic legislation of Germany, and the law is consistently exercised as it is written.

While the process of applying for asylum is streamlined and the results are mostly sufficient for satisfying the immediate needs of the refugees, the process itself can often take years to complete. Moreover, the expansion of legal rights for asylum seekers through domestic legislation has often been followed by equally legal rights restrictions (Crage, 2016). For example, the law passed by the Bundestag in February 2016 included restrictions to the reunification rights of refugees by requiring those who were not personally persecuted by an unsafe state to wait for two years before being allowed to reunify with their families (p. 360). However, the restrictions of

²¹ For the complete English text of the Asylum Act, see https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_asylvfg/index.html. For the complete English text of the Residence Act, see https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/englisch_aufenthg.html. Translation provided by the Language Service of the Federal Ministry of the Interior in both cases. Retrieved February 9, 2018.

these kind are different in kind than the restrictions practiced by the governments of Qatar and Lebanon, where the absence, rather than the presence, of domestic legislation becomes the basis of executive restriction.

3.2.4 Hungary

As a member of the EU, Hungary is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, and the Dublin Convention of 1990.²² This means that the country is within the established common framework of refugee acceptance and management of the EU. Its domestic legislation is on par with the established EU standards, and the rights of the refugees for asylum, non-refoulement, access to health care, etc. are respected de jure (AIDA, 2016). However, the practical situation in Hungary differs widely from other countries where similar legislation exist, such as Germany or Sweden. Anti-immigration rhetoric plays a major part in the political program championed by the ruling party Fidesz in Hungary,²³ and its control of the executive institutions of the country allows for a level of restriction that goes beyond what is implied by the written legislation. For example, two barbed-wire fences were erected at the borders of Hungary, one along the border with Serbia in September 15, 2015, and the second along the border with Croatia in October 16, 2015 (AIDA, 2016, p. 16). There are only two points of access each to Hungary along these fences, and the procedures for entry are deliberately kept slow and difficult. The Government of Hungary (GoH) provides little to nothing to meet basic human needs of the refugees who are kept

²² The Dublin Convention is an agreement between EU countries that establishes a common framework for determining which country in the EU decides an asylum seeker's application and ensures that only one member state should process each asylum application. For more information on the Dublin Convention, see https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/5851/dublin_aug2002.pdf. Retrieved February 17, 2018.

²³ POLITICO. (2018). Viktor Orbán: Hungary doesn't want 'Muslim invaders'. Retrieved February 17, 2018, from <https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-hungary-doesnt-want-muslim-invaders/>

waiting at these so-called transition zones. Coupled with the draconian punishments meted out for irregular entry to Hungary, which is imprisonment of up to ten years and/or the immediate deportation (p. 17), the security practices established by the GoH practically negates the right of asylum for refugees in Hungarian territory.

The case of Hungary demonstrates the relative independence of a hostile environment from the possible legal protections enjoyed by the refugees. Executive action, regularly and with government's blessings, hinders those who try to claim the protections codified by national law and international treaties. Contrasted with another country with similar legal provisions, Germany, where executive action has been far less hostile towards the refugees, the Hungarian case typifies a combination of practical hostility and ineffective legal protections. As of early 2019, the antagonistic contradictions between legislative principles and executive action in Hungary has been moving towards a resolution that may establish an even more restrictive refugee regime, with the Hungarian parliament approving a law that will allow for the unconditional detainment of all asylum seekers within the country,²⁴ and the recent elective increases predicted to the opposition party Jobbik at the polls ahead of the April 2018 general elections, which is even more xenophobic and nationalist compared to the far-right ruling party Fidesz.²⁵

²⁴ The Independent. (2017). Hungarian parliament approves law allowing all asylum seekers to be detained. Retrieved February 17, 2018, from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungary-parliament-asylum-seekers-detain-law-approve-refugees-immigration-crisis-arrests-border-a7615486.html>

²⁵ Reuters. (2017). Support for Hungary's ruling Fidesz highest in six years in October: pollster. Retrieved February 17, 2018, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-politics-fidesz/support-for-hungarys-ruling-fidesz-highest-in-six-years-in-october-pollster-idUSKBN1D21DE>

3.3 Refugees from Syria in Turkey

Turkish domestic policy for treatment of displaced people arriving from Syria has been closely linked with the Turkish foreign policy regarding Syria. Turkey was involved with the Syrian Civil War even since its inception, as it supported and continues to support various rebel groups fighting against the Assad government (Kanat, 2012), excluding the Kurds. As the conflict grew in intensity and changed in unpredictable ways, Turkey directly intervened in Syria multiple times, most notably in Jarablus and Afrin, and has hinted at further intervention at Manbij and east of Euphrates.²⁶²⁷ During the seven year long civil war, Turkish foreign policy in Syria shifted from an aggressive approach that sought to depose the Assad government to a more conservative strategy which seeks to secure the border territories of Turkey from perceived hostile forces such as ISIL and YPG (Gawwad & Mostafa, 2018, p. 65). The reigning refugee regime of Turkey, like its foreign policy, also significantly shifted during this period, thus, its analysis should be aware of these transformations and how they paralleled the transformation of foreign policy. Broadly speaking, we can analyze the transformation of the refugee regime of Turkey through two distinct tendencies: The open borders and exclusionary care of the early years, which was later changed by increasing militarization at the borders and a domestic policy that is less antagonistic to integration.

During the first years of the civil war, Turkey pursued an open door policy towards displaced persons from Syria crossing the border, which was in line with

²⁶ Al Jazeera. (2016). Operation 'Euphrates Shield' ends ISIL rule in Jarablus. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2016/08/operation-euphrates-shield-ends-isil-rule-jarablus-160825085704650.html>

²⁷ Al Jazeera (2018). Turkey to launch imminent Syria operation against YPG. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/turkey-launch-imminent-syria-operation-ypg-180114161302663.html>

Turkey's attempts to portray itself as a normative power that opposed the Assad regime in Syria on humanitarian grounds (Oktav & Çelikaksoy, 2015, p. 412). All arrivals from Syria were allowed to cross the border, and after October 2011, the Government of Turkey (GoT) extended the status of temporary protection²⁸ to refugees from Syria, thereby granting them access to basic humanitarian services and protection against refoulement. Legally, however, the status of refugee was withheld from displaced persons from Syria, even though Turkey was a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention which guarantees the rights of asylum seekers and regulates the procedures that they could be subjected to. The legal basis for this restriction was Turkey's upholding of the geographical limitation clause of the 1951 Convention (Library of Congress, 2016, p. 256), which limits the protections granted by the refugee status only to persons arriving from Europe. During this early phase of the conflict, Turkey attempted to keep most of its refugee population within designated camps. The conditions within these camps were described as being "five-star" by international experts (International Crisis Group, 2013, p. 9), with most of them boasting dedicated areas for education, healthcare and recreation, although conditions deteriorated in time as camps started to house more inhabitants. Under this status of temporary protection, displaced persons from Syria were provided with immediate relief, but the status also excluded them from transferring to third countries as UN-recognized refugees, legal employment, out-of-camp education and healthcare (p. 6). The expectation of the GoT was for a swift end to the Syrian Civil War, the deposing of the Assad regime, and the return of the refugees from Syria to

²⁸ Temporary protection is an exceptional status devised by the EU in response to the Yugoslavian War. It is designed to provide displaced persons from non-EU countries with immediate and temporary relief, and it applies where the standard asylum system is unable to cope with the mass arrival of refugees. For the 2001 directive that defined the status, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:212:0012:0023:EN:PDF>

their homelands. The hopes of the government were perfectly exemplified by an interview given by the then-prime minister of Turkey where he argued that the resolution to the civil war in Syria and the overthrow of the Assad regime was not a matter of years, but of months or even weeks (NTV, 2012). These hopes came to naught, however, as the war dragged on and more and more refugees arrived at the borders every year. Only about 200,000 of these refugees could be housed at camps as the resources allocated by the GoT were drawing thinner, and the rest of the arrivals lived out-of-camp, in increasingly precarious conditions as their savings dwindled.

The GoT sought funds from overseas as the financial situation grew more precarious. While it eventually succeeded in securing significant funding via the Facility for Refugees in Turkey,²⁹ this institution was established on the aftermath of the signing of the Turkey-EU deal on refugees in early 2016, and was dependent on the GoT fulfilling its obligations towards the EU by acting as a gatekeeper for future refugees. The funds devoted to the Facility were directly spent on the care of refugees, significantly lessening the economic role played by the GoT in this capacity, although it did not relieve it completely.³⁰ The shift in the strategy of the GoT in the later stages of the Civil War towards more securitized border practices can be partly explained by the Turkey-EU deal, and the aims of the international parties to lessen the number of refugees leaving Turkey for Europe. It is also important to note that Turkey was not special in receiving EU funds related to the

²⁹ See <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/eu-response-refugee-crisis-turkey-710>

³⁰ The Facility had a total budget of about €6 billion to spend between 2016-2019. Turkey spent an estimated amount of \$30 billion for the care of refugees since 2011. See https://www.avrupa.info.tr/sites/default/files/uploads/facility_table_1.pdf

care of refugees, Germany, which accepted far fewer number of refugees throughout the crisis, enjoyed a similar amount of monetary compensations from the EU.³¹

As a response to these new conditions where an end to the Syrian Civil War was not immediate and the number of out-of-camp refugees dwarfed those living in camps, the GoT began shifting its strategic priorities. In April 2013, an extensive new law on foreigners and international protection, prepared jointly with the UNHCR, came in effect that had important consequences for both in-camp and out-of-camp refugees.³² Previously, asylum was covered in Turkey under secondary legislation such as administrative circulars only, and this was the first domestic law in Turkish history that specifically regulated asylum (Library of Congress, 2013). The law includes provisions which:

- i. Defines the purpose and the scope of the right to non-refoulement.
- ii. Establishes the Directorate General of Migration Management, directly under the Ministry of Interior, in order to implant migration policies and strategies.
- iii. Defines the rights and guarantees granted to stateless persons.
- iv. Regulates the process of detention and deportation of foreigners.
- v. Defines the concept of international and temporary protection and regulates asylum applications and refugee status.
- vi. Defines the rights and obligations of persons under international or temporary protection and regulates the recipients' access to assistance and services.

³¹ Deutsche Welle. (2018). Germany to receive compensation payments for refugees: report. Retrieved May 28, 2019, from <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-to-receive-compensation-payments-for-refugees-report/a-44038746>

³² For an unofficial translation of “Law of Foreigners and International Protection” published by the Ministry of Interior, see http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf

The 2013 law on foreigners was praised by UNHCR in no uncertain terms. The High Commissioner himself commended the law as a reflection of “Turkey’s strong commitment to humanitarian values and principles.”³³ While the 2013 law laid the ground for the legal protections of rights of persons seeking asylum in Turkey, its installment was accompanied by increasing militarization at the Syrian border and an active policy of excluding the refugees from Syria from the host society in urban and sub-urban spaces.

Although the Turkish border to Syria was considered to be “open” for a long time, in practice this access was always mediated by a variety of factors which prioritized the asylum claims of some displaced persons’ over others. For example, Palestinians residing in Syria who were displaced by the civil war were routinely denied access to Turkey on the grounds that they lacked proper visas (Amnesty International, 2014, p. 12). Another refugee group who has been excluded from the open door policy of Turkey were Yazidis fleeing from the massacres perpetrated by ISIL in Mount Sinjar in the early August 2014. Many Yazidis without passports were denied entry to Turkey and had to rely on illegal smugglers for crossing the border (Pamuk, 2014). This exclusionary policy was openly admitted by the then Deputy Prime Minister who openly stated that Turkey would prefer if the Yazidi community stayed outside the country in camps instead of coming to Turkey (Koca, 2015, p. 217). As time went on, these exclusionary practices were gradually generalized to all displaced persons from Syria, culminating in the building of a massive border wall, 911-kilometer long and heavily militarized, at the Syrian border (Vamenn & Lucht, 2017). This strategic shift was also influenced by the EU’s desire to lessen the

³³ UN News. (2013). Turkish law on protection of foreigners wins UN praise. Retrieved February 25, 2018, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/04/436952-turkish-law-protection-foreigners-wins-un-praise>

number of refugees from the point of their entry into the EU. The EU funds that Turkey received were conditioned on Turkey pursuing a strict border security and accept the refugees that the EU refused to. Currently, as of early 2019, the militarized border practices of Turkey, combined with visa restrictions instigated for arrivals from Syria by air and sea, polices the borders to such an extent that they make legal crossing unlikely at best for the majority of persons displaced in Syria.

Once within Turkey and under the temporary protection regime, most refugees from Syria faced a variety of exclusionary practices. Most of these practices were designed to keep the population from Syria separate from the host community and to keep them manageable for the executive actions that the GoT felt could be necessary in order to reach a favorable resolution in the Syrian Civil War. First of all, the services that were to be provided by the state as part of the temporary protection status that was afforded to refugees from Syria were left to the arbitrary mercy of the executive authority (Yıldız & Uzgören, 2016, p. 199), making the refugees vulnerable to direct and indirect political manipulation. Moreover, these services, such as access to healthcare, education, and direct material aid, not only failed to provide refugees with basic legal rights, but also prevented the development of effective integration strategies (p. 200) rather than facilitating them. For example, the existence of direct material aid made it possible for the GoT to prevent refugees from working under legal protections with work permits. For almost five years, work permits were not granted for refugees from Syria, and this became possible only through an executive decree issued by the prime minister in April 2016.³⁴ This decree, while representing a significant step in the integration of the refugees from

³⁴ For the regulation regarding the work permits, see <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160426-1.htm>

Syria into the larger Turkish society, still does not protect refugees from direct relocation and management by the GoT as it limits the validity of the work permits to the specific city in which the refugee is registered in. As of early 2019, there are still no avenues for reaching refugee status of naturalizing as a Turkish citizens available for the majority of refugees from Syria, who are left in a legal limbo, at the same time both outside the Turkish state in their status as foreigners, and within it, in their vulnerability to Turkish state power.

3.4 Political contentions: Challenges to the refugee regime of Turkey

Turkey has been ruled by the single-party governments constituted by the AKP since the fateful general elections of 2002. AKP and its long-time leader increasingly centralized political power during this period, culminating in the adoption of the presidential system as the result of a narrowly won referendum in 2017. The growing authoritarianism of the Turkish state has been widely recognized in the literature (Öniş, 2015, Öktem & Akkoyunlu, 2016, Somer, 2016), however, Turkey's strain of authoritarianism is not marked by the total eradication of the political opposition and elections, but their co-option for the seemingly healthy continuation of the existing political power in a form of competitive authoritarianism where the playing field is highly skewed in favor of the ruling party (Özbudun, 2015, Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). Political contentions towards specific policies by opposition parties are not uncommon in such a system, and the refugee regime of Turkey has emerged as one of the most significant sites of contention following the arrival of refugees from Syria in 2011. In this section, I will highlight some of these political contentions

which were intertwined with the coverage of the refugees made by opposition-adjacent media.

The most visible contention to Turkey's refugee regime has been mounted by the secular nationalist opposition, which is most prominently constituted by the nationalist faction within the Republican People's Party (CHP),³⁵ and more recently by the newly established Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) off-shoot İYİ Party. AKP's policies regarding refugees from Syria has been harshly criticized from this perspective for being too permissive and inclusionary, and for being unable to effectively advocate for the interests of Turkish ethnic nationals. Alternative policies proposed by this segment of the opposition has ranged in their extent, from a CHP MP modestly arguing against the work permits granted in 2016 in the parliament floor (Şimşek, 2016), to the leader of the CHP radically calling for the expulsion of all refugees back to Syria.³⁶ Underlining the propaganda significance of framing the refugees from Syria as deserters from an ongoing battle, multiple MP's from both CHP and the ultra-nationalist MHP³⁷ independently called for the forced conscription of all Syrian refugee men to wage a proxy war in Syria on Turkish behalf.³⁸³⁹⁴⁰ These

³⁵ For a long time, CHP has been internally fractured between nationalist and reformist factions (Ciddi, 2014, p. 48), with the nationalist faction upholding a uniquely strict interpretation of Kemalism and advocating for a continuation of ethnic nationalist policies. While the current leader is often seen as a proponent of the reformist wing, he tries to uphold a fragile balance between these two factions, often disappointing both.

³⁶ Posta. (2017). Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu: 'Suriyeliler ülkelerine geri gitsin'. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.posta.com.tr/kemal-kilicdaroglu-suriyeliler-ulkelerine-geri-gitsin-haberi-1325769>

³⁷ While MHP's constituency is strongly anti-immigration, the ongoing political alliance between MHP and AKP makes it politically unfeasible for MHP officials to advance radical criticisms against government policies.

³⁸ Hürriyet. (2017). CHP'li Yedekçi : Suriyeli erkekler askere alınsın, Suriye için savaşsın. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/chpli-yedekci-suriyeli-erkekler-askere-alin-40395090>

³⁹ Sözcü. (2017). Sinan Oğan: Suriyeliler sahilde Türk kızlarını dikizliyor. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/sinan-ogan-suriyeliler-sahilde-turk-kizlarini-dikizliyor-1712208/>

⁴⁰ Diken. (2018). CHP'li Toprak: Suriyeli sığınmacılar eğitilip ÖSO'ya katılsın, vatanlarını kurtarsın. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.diken.com.tr/chpli-toprak-suriyeli-siginmacilar-egitilip-osoya-katilsin-vatanlarini-kurtarsin/>

contentions all center on the perceived vulnerability of the nation against the threat of foreigners, and they seek to introduce exclusionary or repressive policies in order to isolate and neutralize this threat.

A significantly different contention to the Turkish refugee regime came from the left-wing opposition. Although purely left-wing parties, with the important exception of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP),⁴¹ saw little electoral success during the AKP period, many leftist voters support CHP electorally, and moderate leftists are present and visible in the party cadres. The existing left-wing criticism mounted from these parties starts from the point of human rights, and they repeatedly underline the importance of legal rights for refugees. HDP representatives advocated for the establishment of labor protections for refugees,⁴² criticized nationalist calls for the conscription of all refugee men⁴³ and called for the granting of the refugee status to non-Europeans in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Covenant.⁴⁴ CHP, on the other hand, gathered an official commission to investigate refugee issues in 2016. In stark contrast to the public pronouncements for state repression often made by the party, this commission produced a report which criticized the legally undefined position of the refugees from Syria, and advised the government to legally recognize the reality of their situation by abolishing the geographical clause of the 1951 Covenant (CHP, 2016, pp. 61-62). A call for the adoption of a legally guaranteed,

⁴¹ HDP is a left-wing party that places strong emphasis on minority rights, local governance and egalitarianism. Its voter base and cadres come from predominantly Kurdish backgrounds and their political positions are intertwined with Kurdish nationalism. The party apparatus was subjected to severe repression following the breakdown of peace talks between the GoT and the Kurdish insurgency.

⁴² Bianet. (2016). HDP Suriyeli çocukların çalıştırılmasını Meclis'e taşıdı. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <https://bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/179969-hdp-suriyeli-cocuklarin-calistirilmasini-meclis-e-tasidi>

⁴³ Diken. (2018). HDP'den 'Suriyelileri savaştırılm' diyen CHP'li Toprak'a: ÖSO'yu meşrulaştırır. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.diken.com.tr/hdpden-suriyelileri-savastiralim-diyen-chpli-topraka-osoyu-mesrulastirir/>

⁴⁴ Hürriyet. (2016). Demirtaş'tan 'Suriyelilere vatandaşlık' açıklaması. Retrieved March 12, 2018, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/demirtastan-suriyelilere-vatandaslik-aciklamasi-40144578>

internationally valid refugee regime has been the bedrock of the left-wing contention to the existing policies.

Since the Turkish parliament is almost entirely dominated by the AKP, and the executive organs of the state are subordinated to the office of the president, who is officially the head of the AKP, how predictive these policy proposals are for the case of hypothetical future governments are unclear. I would argue that they are mostly advanced for their function as speech acts in the public sphere rather than being genuine policy proposals for an alternative refugee regime. Nevertheless, these speech acts are intertwined with the ways in which refugees from Syria has been represented by the Turkish mainstream media, and they can help us understand the precise functions and effects of these representations.

3.5 Conclusion

The refugee regime of Turkey must be understood in an international and political context. Like Jordan and Lebanon, Turkey was not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, and it did not boast extensive domestic legislation concerning refugees. Unlike Jordan and Lebanon, however, Turkey was politically invested in the fate of the refugees, as it attempted to promote itself as the head of a humanitarian order struggling against the barbaric Syrian regime, although for a long time it did not compromise its executive arbitrariness by codifying the rights of refugees in Turkey. Yet as the Hungarian case shows us, the willingness to legalize is still distinct from the intent to actualize, and the conditions created by the Turkish refugee regime was, at least for a time, relatively sufficient for the care of the refugees. Turkey also did not, and still does not, commit to a policy of integration between the refugee

community and the host community, and preferred to keep the refugee community separate and vulnerable to political action. The refugee regime resulting from these conditions was one of exclusionary care, although the quality of the care continuously deteriorated with the decreasing prominence of camps. The representations of refugees found in the Turkish media, particularly those articulated by pro-government papers, is closely related to this regime of exclusionary care, and these representations are tied to the specific policies constituting this regime.

CHAPTER 4

INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF REFUGEES FROM SYRIA IN TURKISH NEWSPAPERS

4.1 Refugees from the Syrian Civil War in pro-government newspapers: The cases of *Sabah* and *Star*

4.1.1 Overview

As of 2019, both *Sabah* and *Star* have been firmly established as fervently pro-government newspapers for a significant period of time. A quick glance at their history and the changes of ownership are sufficient to determine the extent of this association, and the processes which led to their convergence with the AKP government. They are not alone in experiencing these processes, many such newspapers were turned into partisan outlets after being bought out by controlled capital, or after their owners were intimidated through economic and extra-economic means.

Sabah has been daily published as a national newspaper with significant circulation since 1985.⁴⁵ It had a complicated financial history, having been owned by multiple groups since its establishment. In 2007, the newspaper and a number of other firms owned by Ciner Group were seized by the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund of Turkey (TMSF),⁴⁶ ostensibly for the illegal and secret dealings involved in their original acquisitions.⁴⁷ Following a legally scheduled public auction, the

⁴⁵ Although bearing the same name, it has no relation to the Ottoman newspaper *Sabah* (1875-1922).

⁴⁶ TMSF is legally the governing body which insures all savings deposits and participation funds in Turkey. Its extensive authority in administering legally liable firms and their assets puts the institution into a powerful position of financial influence.

⁴⁷ Hürriyet. (2007). TMSF atv ve Sabah'a el koydu. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from

newspaper was bought by Çalık Group, whose CEO was a major ally and the son-in-law of the then-prime minister. There was no other participant in the auction, and the whole operation took less than an hour.⁴⁸ The new owners dismissed the editor-in-chief of *Sabah*, and established a new editorial direction which involved providing active support for the AKP government as a mainstream, middle-brow newspaper. Although *Sabah*'s circulation numbers almost halved following the ownership change, it remained as a high circulation newspaper for the Turkish market.⁴⁹

Star, first published in 1999, was politicized by a political actor rival to AKP. The newspaper was owned by the Uzan Group, of which the majority shareholder entered politics as the head of *Genç Parti* in 2002. This party earned a large amount of the votes in the general elections of 2002 at 7.25%, surprising many commentators, but failed to win any seats as a result of stringent Turkish election threshold at ten percent. Following this showing, Uzan Group's corruption and embezzlement was exposed, and many of its companies, including *Star*, were seized by the TMSF.⁵⁰ At this point, *Star* was the unofficial mouthpiece of *Genç Parti*. Following a public auction, *Star* and some other media firms were bought by the Hedef Alliance Holding, which was owned by an old AKP ally, and underwent an extensive readjustment. Owner of the Hedef Alliance Holding later became a member of AKP's top decision making committee,⁵¹ and presently holds this position. Under his ownership, *Star* has evolved into a fiercely pro-AKP newspaper

<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/tmsf-atv-ve-sabaha-el-koydu-6248828>

⁴⁸ Hürriyet. (2007). Sabah-atv Çalık Grubu'na satıldı. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/sabah-atv-calik-grubuna-satildi-7814793>

⁴⁹ In 2013, *Sabah* changed hands once more and was sold to Kalyon Group. However, Kalyon Grup is also close to the government, and this sale did not bring about a change in editorial direction.

⁵⁰ Sabah. (2004). TMSF, Uzan şirketlerine el koydu. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2004/02/15/eko101.html>

⁵¹ Evrensel. (2007). AKP'nin yeni MKYK'si belli oldu: Ethem Sancak da listede. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/320487/akpnin-yeni-mkyksi-belli-oldu-ethem-sancak-da-listede>

that also boasts of having a strong writing staff that stands in close proximity to the Islamist publishing tradition of Turkey. Compared to *Sabah*, it is lower in total circulation and has less mainstream in appeal, but aims for more informed and politically active readers.

At the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, both *Sabah* and *Star*, in conjunction with the foreign policy of the Turkish government, engaged in an energetic campaign of support for the opposition in the civil war. This campaign also involved urging acceptance for the refugees who were just starting to move into Turkey, and the majority of these refugees were envisioned as temporary guests who would be leaving the country with the defeat of the Syrian regime (Efe, 2015, Pandır, Efe, & Aksoy, 2015, Erdoğan, Kavukçuer, & Çetinkaya, 2017). As the military situation changed during the early years of the war and a stalemate began to develop, these assessments began to change.

4.1.2 Analysis

Between 2014 and 2015, *Sabah* and *Star* ran 72 and 68 major new stories respectively on refugees from Syria. Comparative to their total page count and the stories ran in other newspapers (see Appendix), these are low numbers, and show the willingness of pro-government papers' to ignore the issue in the first place. Some common strategies emerged where they chose to confront it, most prominent of which was the framing of the refugees as sympathetic coreligionists to the host society. According to this framing, it was a religious obligation upon the host society to help shelter their brothers and sisters against the tyranny of the Syrian regime.

This necessitated utilizing certain techniques and ignoring non-religious obligations in some situations.

The first step in stressing the obligation of the hosts was to uncover the magnitude of violence suffered by the refugees at the hands of the tyrannous regime; thus justifying the extent of this obligation on the one hand, and possible military action against the tyrant on the other. For example, *Sabah* ran a story on the violence suffered by the Syrians since the beginning of the Civil War at the hands of the regime (see Figure 1) in March 15, 2015, that included some of the most violent images printed without censorship for the publication. As a mainstream conservative newspaper, *Sabah* rarely publishes violent or sexually risky imagery, but made an exception to stress the barbarity of the regime in this case.

In these violent news, children and women were prominently displayed as objects of pity. In the aforementioned *Sabah* story—which is about the mounting death toll of the Syrian Civil War—both of the prominently displayed bloodied figures are children, and a caricature on the top left features a wounded child holding out his hand to grasp a fleeing Bashar al-Assad. Both of the newspapers were careful to associate all cases of violence with the military rivals of Turkey in the region, the most prominent of which was the Syrian regime. In *Sabah*, 14 (an occurrence rate of 0.19 in all of the news) news stories were ran with explicit criticism of the regime, in *Star*, 18 (0.27) of them were. Most of these news were the ones reporting on the victimization of the refugees, whose suffering was starkly and repeatedly depicted. European states were also heavily criticized in these types of news, mainly for their

Her 10 dakikada 1 Suriyeli ölüyor

Suriye'de, iç savaşa dönen halk ayaklanması bugün 4'üncü yılını doldurdu. Esad rejiminin kimyasal silah ve varil bombalarıyla kan gölüne çevirdiği ülkede bilanço ağır oldu:

İlke simge kurban Hamza oldu

EL Hatib ailesi, Suriye'nin Dera Vilayeti'nin Cize köyünde yaşıyordu. 13 yaşındaki Hamza el Hatib, yağmurun doldurduğu su kanallarında yüzmeyi seviyordu. Kuraklık nedeniyle kanallar boş kalınca, güvercin beslemeye başladı. Cömertliğiyle biliniyordu. 2011'in başındaki gösterilerde henüz ortada silah yoktu. Ancak rejim Darulhanı durdurmak için şehrin giriş çıkışlarını kapattı. 29 Nisan'da çevreden toplanan yüzlerce kişi, kapısına altındaki Darulhanı gıda götürmek için yola çıktı. 12 km yürüyerek Dera'ya ulaştılar. Hamza da oradaydı. Orda daha fazla beklemlerine izin vermedi. Açılan ateşle onlara kişi öldü. Hamza kayboldu.

Ailesi günler sonra bir hapisanede buldu onu. Oğlunun hayatına olduğunu gören baba, "O daha çocuk, serbest burkun" dedi. Fakat bu talep, işkenceleriyle tanınan Hava Kuvvetleri subaylarına daha da sinirlendirdi. 24 Mayıs'ta Hamza'nın cesedi ailesine teslim edildi. Çenesi ve diz kapakları kırılmış, vücudunda elgara sönürünlüğ ve organları kestirmişti. Göğsünde 3 kurşun deliği vardı. Hamza, prototip olarak sembolü olmuştu. Hamza'nın hapisane peşinler, o güne kadar 'Batılı eğitim almış, reformlarına önümü açacak lider' olarak görülen Esad'ın maskenini değiştirmişti.

Şimdiye kadar en az 220 bin kişi öldü.
Bazı kaynaklara göre ölü sayısı 300 bin.
Her 10 dakikada bir Suriyeli ölüyor.
Ölenterin 65 bini sivilidi.
6 bin sivil rejimin varil bombalarında öldü.
18 bin 500 çocuk hayatını kaybetti.
840 bin kişi yaralandı.
5,6 milyon çocuk acil yardıma muhtaç durumda.
11,5 milyon kişi evlerini terk etti.
4 milyon kişi ülke dışına kaçtı.
215 bin kişi rejimin hapisanelerinde tutuluyor.
20 bin kişi, hapisanelerde kayıplara karıştı.
11 bin 427 kişi işkence altında hayatını kaybetti.
Rejim, 2 bin ibadethaneyi karargâha çevirdi.
Ülke genelinde ışıkların yüzde 83'ü söndü.
Ülkenin ekonomik kaybı 202 milyar dolar oldu.
Nüfusun yüzde 80'i yoksulluk sınırına altına indi.
Ortalama yaşam süresi 20 yıl azaldı.

'Yardım eli uzatan tek ülke Türkiye'

TÜRKİYE Gençlik ve Eğitim Hizmetleri Bakanlığı (TÜRKİYE) Bakanı Arzu Akalin, vakif olarak Türkiye'ye sığınan Suriyelilere el uzatmaya çalışıldığını belirterek, başta BM olmak üzere uluslararası toplumun bu konuda daha fazla çaba göstermesi gerektiğini söyledi. BM'de katıldığı programların ardından Anadolu Ajansı'na konuşan Akalin, "Gururla söylemeliyim ki dil, din, ırk, mezhep, cinsiyet ayrımı yapmaksızın Suriyeli mazlumlarına elini uzatan tek ülke Türkiye oldu" dedi.

'Devletin çökmesinden yana değiliz'

CIA Direktörü John Brennan, önceki gün katıldığı bir konferansta "ABD'nin, Şam'daki devlet kurumlarının çökmesinden yana olmadığını" söyledi. Bu durumun radikal gruplara Şam'ın kapısını açabileceğini belirten Brennan, ABD'nin tutumunun, "Besar Esad'ın, Suriye'nin geleceğinde rol oynamaması" yönünde olduğunu da sözlerine ekledi.

Fig. 1 A Syrian dies every 10 minutes

unwillingness to domestically host more refugees, contribute financially for the countries that already do—primarily Turkey—and for obstructing diplomatic and

military efforts of Turkey in Syria. This criticism was often combined with the laudatory tone adopted when describing the Turkish help given to refugees. The relation proclaimed here was unmistakably paternal, with the Turkish state being willing and able to fulfill its responsibilities to the helpless refugees as European powers watched on without pity. An oft-repeated figure of speech to describe this relation was ‘*kucak açmak*’, which means to open up one’s bosom, as an analogy of the paternal love the Turkish state and society bears for the refugees. The close relation between the criticism of European states and adulation of the Turkish policy was perfectly encapsulated in a *Star* header from September 20, 2014 (Figure 2), which reads:

Five thousand Syrians, mostly women and children, sought refuge in Turkey from the cruelties of ISIS taking with them the few belongings that they could carry. As Turkey opens its bosom for these refugees, who say that Turkey in their “new homeland”, the silence of Europe drew criticism. (Translations mine unless stated otherwise)

The primary source of this obligation to care was unmistakably religious.

Star, in particular, stresses the sanctified nature of this obligation by often referring to the host Turkish society as *ensar*, and the refugees from Syria as *muhacir*.⁵²

Except on opinion pieces, this historical-religious framing was not used by *Sabah*, attesting to the more mainstream editorial direction of the newspaper compared to *Star*’s more explicitly Islamist aspirations.

⁵² *Ensar* (ar.: the helpers) and *Muhacir* (ar.: the emigrants) refer to the citizens of Medina who gave refuge to the early Muslims after the latter were driven out of Mecca; and the emigrating Muslims, respectively. It is a commonly made historical analogy on the religious obligation of the host society to care for refugees.



Fig. 2 Brother's door

The central quality of the one group of refugees which obligated the Turkish state and society to render them assistance, their religion, also meant that another group of refugees who lacked this quality could only be comparatively weakly accepted. Sunni Muslim refugees could claim to be related to the Turkish body politic in several ways, such as through their shared denomination, through the bonds of centuries of proximity, and most nakedly through a bare, common humanity; non-Sunni Muslim refugees on the other hand, could not stake a claim to the most operationally powerful of these. This method of separation also mirrored Turkish military strategy in Syria, where support of cash and equipment was primarily granted to Sunni Muslim challengers to the Syrian regime (Philips, 2012, p. 12-13).⁵³ Given that the minorities who were displaced from Syria often belonged to some of the most hard-pressed and oppressed groups, this representational choices often

⁵³ The relations between YPG and Turkey is an exception to this, and will be explored further in detail.

ended up implicatively differentiating between refugees with no regards to how badly they needed Turkish help.

A good example of this dynamic could be seen in the flight of the Yazidis, who were heavily persecuted by ISIS in Northern Iraq and sought help from Turkey at its Syrian border. Belonging to a minority religion in Iraq, the Yazidis were barred from crossing the border into Turkey (Koca, 2015), but limited humanitarian aid was provided through a multinational effort. Star ran a story on the situation of the Yazidis at August 16, 2014 (Figure 3), which described it as a “mobilization to make sure that the Yazidis who are fleeing from the terror of ISIS can stay in their own country”. Although a glaring difference between the treatment of Yazidis and other refugees remained, the selective enforcement of the border security was normalized and reframed as being for the good of the people who were supposed to be seeking, in the terms of these outlets, the paternal protection of the Turkish state. This normalization was made possible in the first place by the representation of the refugees primarily as brothers and sisters in religion. Although the Turkish state admitted the non-Yazidis within the country and set up camps for their well-being, the Yazidis’ treatment was decidedly exclusionary in comparison. The newspaper justified this exclusion by stressing the separate “homeland” of the Yazidis, and reporting that the Turkish state was trying to make sure that the Yazidis would stay in “their own homelands” rather than coming into Turkey.



Fig. 3 Mobilization for the Yazidis

Overall, refugee representation in pro-government papers were in harmony with the exclusionary care policy of the Turkish state. The moral responsibilities of the Turkish state and people were repeatedly underlined, and positive examples of Turkish hospitality were prominently displayed. In 35 (0.49) and 36 (0.53) news respectively, *Sabah* and *Star* displayed instances of selfless Turkish assistance to the refugees, a rate that far outstrips newspapers which were relatively independent of government policy. However, this enthusiasm in promoting material help was not replicated in questions of legal difficulties and the integration of refugees to the host society. In all news, *Sabah* only ran one (0.01), and *Star* two (0.03) news stories that represented the refugees as rights-bearing subjects, and these were about difficulties faced by refugees in getting regular work, which was a serious problem that deeply affected the community for a long time. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the refugee

regime of Turkey shifted in time in response to the political developments in Syria, and the border security was progressively ramped up in time. How these newspapers reported the tightening border security was also revealing.

Koca analyzed the increased securitization⁵⁴ of the refugees from Syria and investigated how this securitization proceeded without accompanying exclusionary “speech acts” in the public discourse (2016, p. 1). The conundrum was simple: Scholars of the Copenhagen School, who developed the critical framework of securitization, posited that these “speech acts” were a necessity in the process of securitization, yet Koca argued that the refugees from Syria were securitized in Turkey without such shifts in the discourse. In my investigation, *Sabah* and *Star* presented the process of securitization—which mainly consisted of practices of extraordinary policing at the border in this case—as acceptable by reframing these practices as being made against Turkey’s external enemies, rather than against refugees themselves.

In March 13, 2015, *Sabah* ran a rather prominent news story on border security (Figure 4). It was headlined “Syrian border locked,” and reported that Syria’s leader had “planned to create chaos in Turkey through thousands of prisoners that he has specially trained”, thus, “all procedures in Cilvegözü and Öncüpınar border check-points were put under close scrutiny”. The story further conveyed that creation of “special military zones” in border cities was being discussed by the high command of the Turkish military and the government in order to protect public safety in the eve of elections. In this way, the responsibility in the tightening of border controls and further possible policing actions were transferred onto

⁵⁴ Securitization theory is an analytical framework utilized to make sense of how states legitimate extraordinary practices against certain groups which are socially constructed as security threats (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1997, Bain, 2006).

geopolitical rivals. This was not an isolated story, as the same arguments regarding security were made numerous times, at times impugning the Syrian regime and at others YPG, in both newspapers.



Fig. 4 Syrian border locked

The logical endpoint of this representation is the direct weaponization of the refugees at the hands of the nation's enemies. In this case, securitization is enabled rather directly, and the very bodies of the refugees that the state was obligated to protect can be turned into clear-cut threats by denying them agency. A good example of this technique can be seen in a news story *Star* ran at November 13, 2014 which

described the displacement of Aleppo residents (Figure 5). The story was titled “Great exodus has started from Aleppo”, and argued that “since the beginning of the battle (of Aleppo), Assad’s objective was to create a flood of exodus towards Turkey”. These newly displaced peoples who were moving towards the Turkish border should be understood primarily as weapons of the Syrian regime, and strict scrutiny, legal exclusion and arbitrary policing could all be utilized in order to neutralize these weapons. In this way the threat of the refugees can be socially constructed even when the refugees themselves were not considered its applicators, but merely its objects. These instances of securitizing discursive techniques were mirroring the tightening controls on the Syrian-Turkish border and the unwillingness of the Turkish state in admitting new refugees to the country as the military situation in Syria devolved into a stalemate.

The representative strategy broadly followed by the pro-government newspapers were faced with a crisis at the September of 2014 as civilians fleeing from the city of Kobani and its surroundings reached Turkish border. To explain why the Siege of Kobani posed a unique problem, I must first recount the context around the event and its direct impact in domestic Turkish politics. In the middle of September 2014, the vanguard of the ISIS forces in Iraqi Kurdistan, in cooperation with certain other military groups such as al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham, wheeled west from the banks of mount Sinjar to mount a massive assault at the YPG positions at the province of Kobani. Reaching the Turkish border at Hasakah and Manbij, they commenced the siege by fully encircling the city and cutting off its land connection to surrounding YPG controlled areas.



Fig. 5 Great exodus began from Aleppo

More than three hundred thousand civilians at the countryside took flight before the ISIS assault and sought refuge at Turkey, the border of which remained the only way out of Kobani.⁵⁵ Being fully encircled, YPG units deployed at the city had no choice but to make a stand against the comparatively heavily equipped ISIS forces, which were armed with a variety of artillery and even a limited number of armor and self-propelled guns. The siege involved heavy urban fighting, and during the early months of 2015, YPG fighters, enjoying the close air support provided by US planes and bolstered by a limited number of Free Syrian Army (FSA) soldiers

⁵⁵ The Daily Star. (2014). Syria says giving military support to Kurds in Kobani. Retrieved March 26, 2019, from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Oct-22/274938-syria-says-giving-military-support-to-kurds-in-koban.ashx>

and peshmerga from the Iraqi Kurdistan, managed to drive back ISIS forces and gradually recaptured the city and its environs.

From the point of view of the Turkish policy makers, this campaign posed a uniquely complicated problem to overcome. The fact that ISIS had Kobani completely surrounded apart from its border with Turkey meant that Kobani's defenders had to rely on, if not Turkey's help, then at least its benign disinterest in order to get resupplied and reinforced. However, Turkey was making it clear from the beginning of the Syrian Civil War that it saw YPG as the extension of PKK, and it had no interest in the prolonged existence of YPG fighters at its southern border. On the other hand, the fact that it was hostile ISIS, and not one of Turkey's own clients in the region such as the FSA,⁵⁶ who were seeking to displace YPG at the east of Euphrates meant that the alternative scenario was also a threatening one for Turkish interests. Trapped between a rock and a hard place, Turkey at first decided to navigate the quagmire through disjointed policies: First, the Kurdish refugees were granted passage into the country—a repeat of the Sinjar massacre right at the border checkpoint would have been greatly damaging to Turkey's international image—and basic resupplying of the YPG fighters—with food, fuel, small arms ammunition and such—was tolerated. However, USAF air supply operations were criticized directly by the president,⁵⁷ and peshmerga from the Iraqi Kurdistan, who were substantially more heavily equipped compared to YPG fighters trapped at Kobani, were not allowed through Turkish territory to help with the defense.⁵⁸ A substantial portion of

⁵⁶ Turkey would later help its clients to conquer large swathes of YPG territory west of Euphrates and repeatedly threatened to invade the eastern part from 2017 to 2019.

⁵⁷ Diken. (2014). Erdoğan: ABD üç gün önce Kobani'ye YPG için iki uçak dolusu silah indirdi. Retrieved March 28, 2019, from <http://www.diken.com.tr/erdogan-abd-uc-gun-kobaniye-ypg-icin-iki-ucak-dolusu-silah-indirdi/>

⁵⁸ Radikal. (2014). Peşmerge'nin Türkiye'ye geçişine henüz izin verilmedi. Retrieved March 28, 2019, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/pesmergenin-turkiyeden-gecisine-henuz-izin-verilmedi-1220329/>

the military was mobilized, and the border at Kobani was reinforced by two armored brigades which dwarfed the forces engaged in the fighting, yet Turkish forces did not intervene one way or another.⁵⁹ Ultimately, Turkey allowed passage to the peshmerga and negotiated FSA's limited support against ISIS only after the domestic Kurdish opposition took to the streets in widespread protests starting from early October of 2014.⁶⁰

Therefore, for policy makers, refugees coming from Kobani provoked a different strategic consideration compared to the refugees who arrived in the earlier years. Most importantly, being predominantly ethnically Kurdish, they were of a people who were already being securitized by the Turkish state for at least forty years, and were considered to be a dangerous population, especially by the security apparatus. Furthermore, the fluidity of the military situation east of Euphrates also meant that, unlike the days of 2011 and 2012, their quick departure from the country after a swift victory could not be hoped for. How did the pro-government newspapers manage to represent these refugees in a way that was conducive to government policy, but also cast the ruling party as being beyond reproach from different sections of the population? The answer of this question is also illuminating to the constitution of the very refugees themselves in the public discourse.

For the first day, and the first day only, Turkish border policy towards refugees from Kobani was undecided. The civilians were not admitted into the country, but neither were they immediately dispersed. With the official policy non-existent, the pro-government papers reported this event in a subdued and neutral

⁵⁹ Takvim. (2014). Kobani'ye 5 bin asker. Retrieved March 28, 2019, from <https://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2014/10/04/kobaniye-5-bin-asker>

⁶⁰ The extent to which these protested effected Turkish policy towards Kobani is highly contentious. However, the limited Turkish tolerance in this case can be best understood as a reluctant compromise. The protests would later be referenced by the president as a betrayal, a stab-in-the-back, etc.

manner. For example, *Sabah* reported the story at September 19, 2014, with these words: “ISIS attacked Kurdish villages in Syria. Prime minister Davutoğlu ordered the governors to “provide help” for the Kurds massing at the Turkish border”. *Star* also reported of the arrival of specifically Kurdish Syrians as a result of the ISIS offensive, and the Turkish help provided for them at the border. The language utilized was an unremarkable one, widely used prior for describing refugees arriving at Turkey, save for the lack of embellishments of suffering.

In September 20, Turkey admitted these refugees into the country, and the language that the newspapers were using for them immediately changed. After this date, the ethnicity of the newly admitted refugees was quietly but uniformly and consistently dropped in both *Sabah* and *Star*, and they were started to be reported generically as Syrians, rather than specifically being Kurds, or Kurdish Syrians. *Sabah*, after first reporting the refugees at the border as Kurds, stopped doing so as early as September 21. The news story *Sabah* ran regarding the refugees from Kobani at this date does not use the word Kurdish, consistently refers to the refugees as Syrians and represents ISIS and YPG as being equally responsible for their flight (Figure 6). The story summarizes the situation in these terms:

A great number of Syrians, who are running away from the conflict in the Tel Abyad district of the city of Raqqa between the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Democratic Unity Party (PYD), which is the extension of PKK in this country, continues to enter Turkey at the district of Suruç ... indicating that they have barely saved their lives, the Syrian refugees said that they felt grateful for Turkey which has opened its gates for them.

On September 20, *Star* also ran a similar story (Figure 2) that also avoided the Kurdish identity of the majority of refugees. Ironically, a quote by the then-Prime minister which was used by the newspaper in this story read: “We will receive our

brothers who thought of Anatolia as a place of refuge against the threat of death without any discrimination on the basis of sect or ethnicity”. Both politically and discursively, however, discrimination on the basis of sect or ethnicity have been the cornerstone for distinguishing between refugees who were to be accepted as guests, and refugees who were seen as security risks. For Kobani refugees, this meant that their primary form of representation was tied to their momentary position with regards to government policy, as they could become either Kurds or Syrians when it was deemed necessary.



Fig. 6 The number of refugees at the border became 60 thousand

How these pro-government newspapers treated of the identity of Kobani refugees with increased plasticity, underlines a significant point on media analysis. As I have emphasized in relation to theoretical debates regarding refugees, the refugee is first and foremost a social figure, which should be understood as a social position rather than identity. A person who occupies the social position of the refugee is also constituted by a multiplicity of identities, the histories of which almost certainly predate his current positioning as a refugee. Thus, these multiple identities could be immediately referred to in their representation, and taken together they constitute the historically specific refugees in question. Understanding how these identities were deployed, as well as their discursive effects, is crucial in being able to conceptualize and analyze a particular historical moment of refugee representation. In the case of refugees from Kobani, pro-government newspapers relied on already conceptualized identities which predated the refugees' existences in order to render the world intelligible to their core audiences. When the government acted in a supportive way to the refugees, representations based on the priorly securitized Kurdish identity were shelved in favor of comparatively benign—but passive and needy—ones based on a shared Syrian identity. On the other hand, when the refugees acted in a way that was contrary to the Turkish policies in the region, the former representation could be deployed again, as it happened when the YPG fighters were contacted and resupplied by the newly arrived refugees and the local Kurdish population around Suruç. In these cases, the Kurdishness of these people were repeatedly emphasized, in stark contrast to how they were represented under different circumstances.

4.1.3 Conclusion

From these findings, we can draw a direct parallel between Turkish policies regarding refugees—which evolved from a regime of exclusionary care into a strict border protectionist one—and discursive techniques utilized by pro-government newspapers in refugee representation. A suitable subject of the caring regime is constructed as oppressed, religiously proper, grateful and dependent on vital Turkish assistance. The legal system of exclusion is set into place only for the protection of this subject and harmonizing the relations between refugee and host societies. Politically, this subject is stunted in its lack of a territorial community and military weakness, which necessitates its physical protection from common enemies by the Turkish state. On the other hand, strict security measures are justified by invoking already established, and already securitized groups and identities. The Syrian regime and the YPG are both used as justifications for the securitization of the border and the refugees. This representation has a double function, not only does it permit extraordinary measures to be taken domestically, it also justifies military activity against the invoked entities. In this way, military and domestic policies merge in a single continuity of governmental policy, with the latter concerns being necessarily subordinated to the infinitely more vital demands of the former sphere, as military action is definitionally a matter of life and death. Therefore, we can also conceptualize these discursive strategies as parts of the larger process of Turkey's broader shift towards what can be called a politics of emergency in recent years (Kaygusuz, 2018, p. 281).⁶¹

⁶¹ Politics of emergency broadly refer to a state of affairs in a polity where executive sovereignty is enhanced in order to combat a perceived existential threat (Honig, 2011).

4.2 Refugees from the Syrian Civil War in nationalist newspapers: The cases of *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ*

4.2.1 Overview

Although at various points of time they have both used the same slogan *Türkiye Türklerindir*⁶² below similarly stylized pictures of Mustafa Kemal as their logos, *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* are very different newspapers on their targeted audience, scope, and ownership histories. What brings them together in my classification is a shared ideological commitment to what could be called the post-28th February consensus, which considered Kemalist principles of nationalism and secularism to set the limits on acceptable public discourse, and asserted the absolute primacy of security concerns to ensure the continuation of the state (Cizre, 2003, p. 213). Through time, both of these newspapers politically diverged from this shared framework in various ways, but by the mid 2010s, they were still firmly writing for secular nationalist patrons and audiences, although their position within this framework significantly differed.

Hürriyet was one of the oldest and most prominent Turkish newspapers. Founded in 1948, it has enjoyed a consistently high circulation and mainstream acceptance for most of its existence. By the time of AKP's electoral victory in 2002, it was owned by the Doğan Media Group, a juggernaut of a media conglomerate that controlled numerous major Turkish newspapers and TV channels. A mainstream and conservative newspaper by the standards of the early 2000s media landscape (Özyürek, 2006, p. 197), *Hürriyet*, as a part of the Doğan Media Group, famously clashed with the AKP government over a number of contentious issues, such as the

⁶² Literally: Turkey belongs to the Turks.

headscarf ban and the office of the presidency (Silverman, 2014). This conflict was resolved by the March of 2018, as Doğan Holding finally capitulated to political and fiscal pressures and sold the majority of its media companies to the Demirören Group, a key AKP ally. The signs of this eventual capitulation was already visible by 2014. *Hürriyet*, as a part of the general Doğan Media Group strategy to appease the government and avoid further punishments such as the massive fine of half a billion dollars levied for tax fraud in 2009,⁶³ had adopted a softer editorial tone in general and appointed certain high profile conservatives as opinion writers in particular. In spite of these concessions, however, the editorial direction of *Hürriyet* was still one of mainstream secular-nationalist one, albeit tempered with a strong unwillingness to antagonize the government.

Compared to *Hürriyet*, *Yeniçağ* was, from its inception, a much more modest but politically minded enterprise. It was founded by Ahmet Çelik, an active member of the Turkish ultranationalist movement and its flagship party MHP. Personally supported by the leader of MHP, *Yeniçağ* was a continuation of an older weekly paper named *Kurultay*. Although circulating only in modest numbers, the paper was successful enough to survive, and boasted some prominent intellectuals as opinion writers. However, *Yeniçağ*'s editorial direction shifted away from MHP and its leader as the party came to an understanding with the AKP government, and continued to present itself as a staunchly Kemalist and secular-nationalist alternative to the ruling government. In 2018, Ahmet Çelik became an İYİ party MP from İstanbul, and oriented the newspaper towards the İYİ party line, which was an offshoot of the MHP that primarily criticized MHP's cooperation with the AKP

⁶³ Reuters. (2009). Turkish index suspends Doğan group, Petrol Ofisi shares. Retrieved March 29, 2019, from <https://uk.reuters.com/article/dogan-shares/turkish-index-suspends-dogan-group-petrol-ofisi-shares-idUKIST00336620090318>

government. Published under these conditions, *Yeniçağ* was, and still is, a thoroughly political newspaper, concerned most with criticizing the ruling government and presenting an alternative vision based on secular ultranationalism. Conversely, it has a diminished reach compared to papers such as *Sabah* or *Hürriyet*, but is still sold more than the majority of other politics-first newspapers.

The general outlook of these newspapers to the refugees from Syria were similar. In both cases, the government's open door policy was understood as overly generous to the detriment of native Turkish citizens, and competing political arguments were given more weight. In *Hürriyet*'s case, the majority, but not all, of criticisms were implicitly advanced, and relied on uses of framing, and subtle turns of the phrase; *Yeniçağ*, on the other hand, was much more aggressive and explicitly critical on the issue. This contrast will help us distinguish implicit discursive methods employed in policy criticism and promotion.

4.2.2 Analysis

At their core, both *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* utilized a globally widespread representative strategy in referring to refugees and ethnic minorities, which can be called the competitor model. Fundamentally, this model relies on framing the refugees as competitors to the host society for scarce resources, and their presence as problems to be solved by the representatives of the host society. In his research on racism in the European press, van Dijk finds this "overall topicalization of affairs" to be a common one (1991, p. 114), and its use in Turkey is little different from that in Europe. The two papers differ from one another in the extent of their reliance upon this model, and in the aspects of it which they stress; with *Hürriyet* usually adopting

a more restrained and mild tone, especially on the criticism of the government for the perceived favoritism of refugees over native citizens, and *Yeniçağ* being much more overtly critical of the government and the president. On the whole, *Hürriyet*'s pattern of commonly used refugee representations were more similar to pro-government newspapers compared to *Yeniçağ* (See Appendix). *Hürriyet* ran more stories that represents the refugees as victims (0.54 to 0.29), and significantly less stories that represented them as threats, material or otherwise (0.18 to 0.52). While these patterns reveal the extraordinary hostility of *Yeniçağ*'s coverage, *Hürriyet* also differs significantly from pro-government papers in tone and framing, even while utilizing formally similar representative strategies.

The competitor model of minority coverage relies on reporting a scarcity of goods caused by the minority, and how this scarcity hinders the majority, and both *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* often framed their news stories in these terms. For example, *Hürriyet* reported the rising housing prices in November 28, 2014, with the title "Many Syrians, few houses," and featured an image of a large group of haggard-looking families with regional attires (Figure 7). The majority of this news story focuses on the refugees as the catalyst of rising housing prices, and relegated another explanation, that of the rising number of students seeking housing, to a mention that is easily ignored by a passing eye. In comparison, when *Star* ran a similar story in August 1 of 2014, it gave prominence to the explanation which credited the students for the rising prices, and featured an image of a group of happy young people in a university setting. A criticism, not necessarily explicit, implied by this representation is that the government was at fault for choosing to provide for so many refugees with so many goods, and that it was the host society which would grow inevitably poorer

as a result of this excess. *Yeniçağ*, less concerned with upholding amicable relations with the government, often made this criticism explicit.



Suriyeli sığınmacı ve üniversite öğrencilerinin ev talebi kiraları yükseltti

SURİYELİ ÇOK EV YOK

TÜRKİYE'ye sığınan Suriyeli mülteciler İstanbul, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa ve Hatay'da kiralık ev talebinde patlamaya yol açtı. Kira fiyatlarında yüzde 100'e varan artışlar yaşanırken, kiralık ev bulmak da zorlaştı.

Gülistan ALAGÖZ

SURİYE'deki iç savaşın devam etmesi nedeniyle Türkiye'ye sığınan mültecilerin artması akıllara şu soruyu getiriyor, "Bu kadar mülteci nerede kalacak?" Sığınmacıların bir kısmı ülke genelindeki 24 kampta yaşarken, önemli bir bölümü kendi güçleri ile ev kiralama ya da akrabalarının yanında yaşamayı seçiyor. Birkaç aile bir araya gelerek ev arayan Suriyeliler, İstanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay ve Gaziantep gibi illerde kiralık ev fiyatlarının artmasına ve arzın tükenmesine yol açıyor. Emlak değerlendirme uzmanları ve emlak ofisi yöneticileri ülke genelinde kiralık ev fiyatlarının son bir yılda yüzde 20 ila yüzde 100 oranında arttığını belirtiyor. Suriyeli mülteciler, üniversite öğrencilerinin yeni ev arayışı ve evi kentsel dönüşüme girenlerin ev talebi birleşince son aylarda kiralık ev bulmak her zamankinden daha da çok zorlaşıyor.

UCUZ YERİ SEÇİYORLAR

İstanbul Emlakçılar Odası Başkanı Nizamattin Aşa'nın verdiği bilgiye göre Suriyeli mülteciler İstanbul'da Esenler, Bağcılar, Güngören, Esenyurt ve Hadımköy bölgelerini seçiyor. Bazı bölgelerde kiraların yüzde 100'ü bulan ölçüde arttığını belirten Aşa, geçen yıl ortalama kiralama fiyatlarının 500-600 lirayken, bu yıl 900-1000 liraya yükseldiğini belirtti. Anadolu yakasında Üsküdar, Pendik ve Kartal'ın tercih edildiğini söyleyen Altın Emlak Genel Müdürü Hakan Erikkun, geçen yıl 700-750 lira olan kiralama bedellerinin taleple birlikte 1000 liraya ulaştığını belirtti. Gaziantep'de kiralar yüzde 30 ila 50 arasında artış gösterdi. Gaziantep Tüm Emlakçılar Odası Başkanı Mehmet Aytaç, Suriyelilerin Şahinbey ve Şehitkamil bölgelerini seçtiklerini, kiraların 600 ila 1200 lira arasında değiştiğini söyledi. Şanlıurfa merkezinde kiraların 2013'e göre yüzde 25 arttığını belirten TSKB Gayrimenkul Değerleme Genel Müdürü Makbule Yönel Maya, "Sınra yakın bölgelerde artış yüzde 50'yi geçti. Hatay'da kiralar bir yılda yüzde 20-25 arttı. Kırkhan, Reyhanlı'da artış yüzde 50'yi buldu" dedi.

Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteci sayısı

1.5 milyon*

Ev tutan Suriyeli sayısı

550 bin

*Son 2 ayda gelen mülteciler dahil değil. Özellikle son haftalarda gelen yoğun göç sonucunda ülkelerindeki cadde kentlerde yaşıyor. AFAD'ın 26 Eylül'de yaptığı açıklamaya göre bir haftada 160 bin kişi sınırları geçiyor.

Urfa'da kira bedeli 3 bin TL

HATAY'da kira fiyatlarının 400 ile 1200 lira arasında değiştiğini belirten emlakçılar, "Geçen yıl 350 lira olan bir ev şimdi 550 lira. Kimi ev sahipleri fırsatçılık yapıyor" dedi. Şanlıurfa'da ise kira bedelleri 700 lira ile 3 bin lira arasında değişiyor.

Suriyeliye daha pahalı

Ev sahipleri Suriyeli mültecileri, emlakçılar ve devamlılık konusunda riskli oldukları için 1 yılda kira bedellerini %50 arttırıyor ve bölge rayajlarının artmasında bedelleri talep ediyorlar. Kimi illerde ise Suriyeli kiracılara sıcağı haklanıyor.

Fig. 7 Many Syrians, few houses

A cartoon which was published by *Yeniçağ* on the same date with the *Hürriyet* story, November 28, 2014, presents us with a visual version of the competitor representation (Figure 8). In this cartoon, a man carries a heavy load, which is helpfully described as “Turkey’s own problems”, while another man, with traditional Syrian headgear, is in the process of falling upon him, who is just presented as “the refugees”. It is implied, with the subtlety of a freight train, that at its current troubled state, the addition of a refugee problem would crash the Turkish society, and this fate can only be avoided by a refusal to admit them.

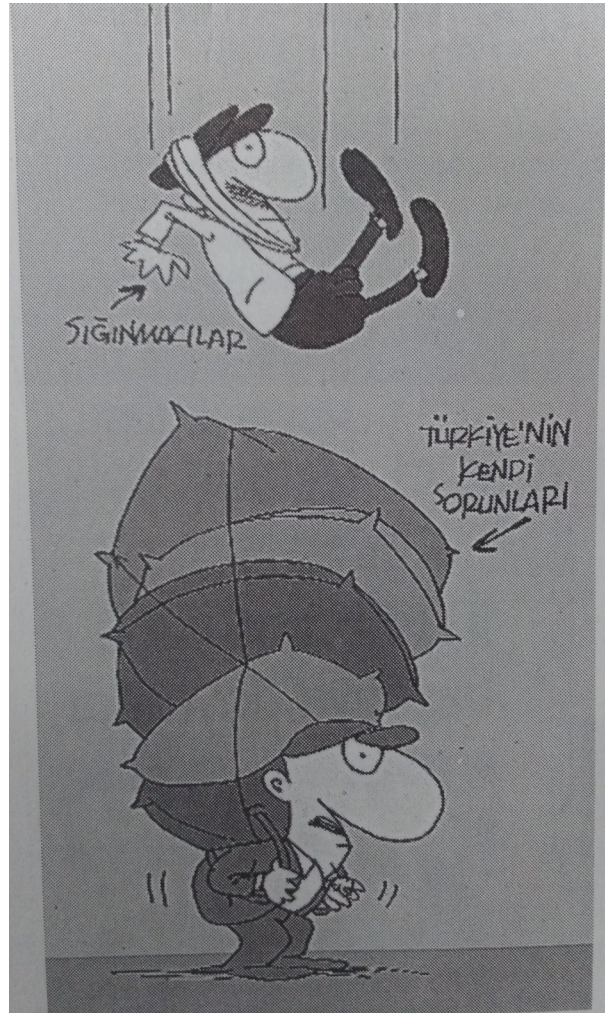


Fig. 8 Turkey’s own problems

These critical news were concurrent to the nationalist opposition's criticisms of the government on the grounds of refugee assistance, and functioned, in the political sphere, to legitimate these criticisms, and the nationalist opposition relied on these reports of scarcity to ground their criticisms. The focus on scarcity—the scarcity of space, of money, of goods, etc.—relies on problematizing the very existence of the refugees outside their proper place, that is, the country of their citizenship. If the host society did not have enough to begin with, even without the extra drain on these resources exerted by these newcomers, and if the refugees did not have the capacity to present them with any benefits whatsoever, then even the barest existence of the refugee would have to be deemed a problem. Thus, the mere biological functions vital to the bodily reproduction of the refugee would take on a political significance, which shows itself in these newspapers as a disproportional preoccupation with the biopolitical markers of the life of the refugee: The birth rate, the number of the diseased, the intricacies of their diet, etc. The birth of the children of refugees, especially, is presented as a unique problem that must be politically overcome. *Hürriyet*, on 8 November, 2014, reported on the new births in border cities, and the estimates on how many of those births were given by refugee women (Figure 9). This story was titled: “30 thousand Syrian babies born: In 3 years, the number of Syrian babies born ‘only in the 10 cities with camps’ has surpassed 30 thousand. And these were merely the ones under record.” The story was flanked by two annotations; on the left side, a helpful table informs the reader of the number of refugees in Turkey's major cities, and on the right side, the story of the photo of a woman who just gave birth is provided: “Amir and Meryem Mirşag, who came last year from the city of Hama as a couple with their 7 children, just had their 8th baby in

Turkey”. The choice of using an uncharacteristically prolific couple for the photo was not a neutral one, neither was it to provide the total number of the refugees with the story.



Fig. 9 30 thousand Syrian babies born

The birth rate was reported in a way that evokes social ills such as habitual drinking or personal firearm use, with concerning statistics and an especially troubling case provided by the paper. Here, the problematization of the refugees start with their bare bodies. Another example of this type, if of a different subject, was the story *Yeniçağ* ran on 8 May, 2014 (Figure 10). Titled “By not getting their shots, they are damning Turkey,” this story was about a new vaccination program targeted at eradicating polio from children in the southeast, and most prominently featured an

unsubstantiated claim about how the refugees from Syria were placing Turkish children in danger by choosing to not get their children vaccinated.

Aşı vurdurmayıp Türkiye'yi yakıyorlar

Bakanlık çocuk felcine karşı aşılama kararı almasına rağmen Suriye'den gelenlerin bir kısmı çocuklarına aşı yaptırmıyor. Bu da Türkiye'de çocuk felci salgını riskini artırıyor

Türkiye'de 15 yıldır görülmeyen 'çocuk felci' hastalığına karşı alarmla geçen Sağlık Bakanlığı, Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Şırnak ve Adana'yı kapsayan 7 ilin ardından Türkiye'ye göçeden Suriyeli ailelerin 5 yaş altındaki tüm çocukların 'çocuk felci' hastalığına karşı bağışıklık kazanması için aşı programı başlattı. Ancak Suriyeli bazı ailelerin, aşı yaptırmaya karşı çıktığı iddiası yürekleri ağza getirdi. Uludağ Üniversitesi (UÜ) Tıp Fakültesi Halk Sağlığı Anabilim Dalı Başkanı Prof. Dr. Kayıhan Pala, çocuk felcinin, kişiden kişiye rahatlıkla bulaşabilen, hijyenin yeterince olmadığı ortamda yiyecekler ve su vasıtasıyla bulaşma ihtimalinin çok yüksek bir hastalık olduğunu belirtti.

Erişkinler de risk altında

Pala şöyle konuştu: "Eğer gerekli önlemler alınmazsa 15 yıldır görünmeyen bir hastalığın tekrar ülkemizde çocuklarımızı sakat bırakma hatta öldürme ihtimali var. Bu sebeple herkesi duyarlı olmaya çağırıyorum. Bursa'da bir rakama göre 10 bin, bir rakama göre 30 bin civarında Suriyeli göçmen var. En az birkaç bin çocuğun aşılanması gerektiği ortaya çıkıyor. Ancak Suriyeli bazı ailelerin bağışıklanmaya karşı tutum içerisinde olduğu ve aşıya karşı çıktığı bilinmektedir. Bunu halk sağlığı açısından büyük tehdit olarak görüyoruz. Suriyeli ailelerin mutlaka ama mutlaka çocuklarının aşılanması sağlanmalıdır. Bu gerçekleşmezse çocuk felci virüsü tehdidi altındaki çocuklar yalnızca o ailelerin çocukları olmayacak tüm Bursa'daki çocuklar hatta erişkinler risk altında olacak"



Sokak göle dönünce...

Bursa'nın Osmangazi ilçesinde, bir sokak yağmur suyuyla dolunca, şişme botta ulaşım aracı oldu! Küçükbalıklı Mahallesi Okul Caddesi yağmur suları sebebiyle adeta göle döndü. Altyapı yetersizliği sebebiyle cadde su ile kaplanınca bazı vatandaşlar ulaşımı botlarla sağladı. İşe gitmek için servis durağına gidemeyen vatandaşlar karşı tarafa geçirilirken, eve gidemeyenler de aynı yöntemle evlerine ulaştırıldı. Bot sahipleri son günlerde her yağmurda bu görünümlerin yaşandığını söyledi. Mahallede bazı dükkan ve evleri de su bastı. Mahalle sakinlerinden Mehmet Yaşın, sokakta biriken suyun tahliyesi konusunda sorun yaşadıklarını söyledi. Daha önce dilekçe yazarak konuyu belediyeye ilettiklerini ancak çözüm bulunamadığını belirten Yaşın, "Her 5-10 dakikalık yağmurda burası sel oluyor. Bazı dükkanları su bastı. Botla geziyoruz çünkü işe gidecek arkadaşlar vardı. Onları işçi servisine yetiştirdik" dedi.

Diyarbakır Kulp'ta çekirge istilası

Diyarbakır'ın Kulp ilçesine bağlı Barın mahallesi ve çevresindeki alanlarda görülen çekirge istilası köylüleri tedirgin etti. Ürünleri çekirgeler tarafından talan edilen köylülerden Faik Kahrman "Bu sene toprağa hiçbir şekilde tohum bırakmadık. Seneye ekinlerimizden ürün alamayacağız. Üzümlerin yaprakları azalmış ve sanki bağlarımızın içine kara keçi girmiş gibi olmuş. Ne dal kalmış ne de yaprak. Yakında bağlarda hiç yaprak kalmayacak. Eğer bu çekirgelere karşı ilaçlama veya benzeri yöntemlerle önlem alınmazsa önümüzdeki yıllarda kesinlikle kuruyacak hale gelecek ve köyümüz yaşanmaz hale gelecek bizi göç zorlayacak" dedi.

Fig. 10 By not getting their shots, they are damning Turkey

The fear of disease, as a part of the risks posed by the human body, dominates this story, as well as the foreign threat towards Turkish ethnic nationals.

This preoccupation with the body of the refugee, and the perceived clear ethnic delineation between the host and refugee societies also underline other problems, more peculiar to their Turkish context. While reducing ethnic minorities to their physical functions and representing them as fierce competitors over scarce resources is common worldwide, another quality of the refugee-host dichotomy—constructed by, and for, Turkish nationalists—that is little found elsewhere is the emasculation of the refugee through this process of physical reduction, and valorizing the military capabilities of the host society in its reverse. In parts, the construction of this dichotomy draws on from older formations of self identity and representations of Arabs within Turkey. The most prominent discursive artifacts here are the identification of Turkishness with skill and inclination towards the manly pursuit of war, and Arabness with womanish cowardice and backstabbing.⁶⁴ Drawing from these historical representations, the nationalist view sees the refugees as cowards who, rather than defending their homeland, in a way that a red blooded, noble Turk would have done, chose to disgrace themselves and run away. This dichotomy also maps onto how the refugees are most prominently presented through their biological qualities, and thus the refugee is identified with nature, passivity, and femininity, and the host is identified with culture, militarism, and masculinity.⁶⁵ In

⁶⁴ Turks' natural inclination for military pursuits is exemplified in the famous slogan: Every Turk is born a soldier! Inversely, the view of Arabs as habitual backstabbers is justified with reference to the experiences of the World War I, when major Arab tribes allied with the British forces and fought against the Ottoman Empire.

⁶⁵ To my knowledge, this dichotomy is unique to the Turkish case in the issue of refugee representation, but analogous accounts may be found for larger social contexts. For example, Ghassem-Fachandi describes a similar dichotomy between the Hindus and Muslims of Gujarat, where the former assumes the qualities of peacefulness, vegetarianism, and femininity, and the latter of violence, carnivorousness, and masculinity (2012). For a more humorous take on the similarly contentious representational relationship between Israeli and Diaspora Jews, see Valley (2016).

contrast to how seemingly radical it is, this representational schema is actually commonplace in Turkish public discourse, sometimes appearing explicitly and comprehensively, at others implicitly and through assumptions, associations, and other operationalizations. It is the logic that informs nationalist MP's in the parliament when they propose that the refugees should be forcibly conscripted so that they will not ogle Turkish girls when the Turkish youth were dying at the Syrian border on their behalf (Sözcü, 2017).

On October 11, 2014, *Hürriyet* ran a news story titled “The message of the martyr” (Figure 11). It was about the last Facebook messages sent by a Turkish policeman killed in the line of duty. One of the messages, which the newspaper quoted at length for about half of the story, said:

Did you ever hear something like a Turkish refugee in history? You cannot hear such a thing. If a civil war ever happens, the Turk either dies by standing exactly where he is, or establishes a new state by planting his flag. An honorable death is preferable to living on your knees.

These sentiments perfectly encapsulate the roles associated with the refugee and the host through the application of the historical representations of the Arabs and Turks to the present moment. The Arab, living on his knees, is destined to a life of passive domination, while the ethnic Turk lives or dies gloriously by the sword. In *Yeniçağ*'s coverage of the Syrian Civil War, these representations are often utilized for highlighting the nobility of the Türkmen military groups fighting in Syria even as Syrians themselves flee the country. A strategy of motivated support for Türkmen military groups and fervent opposition to Kurdish ones informed the majority of *Yeniçağ*'s coverage of the Syrian Civil War, therefore, these representations are influential frameworks for the refugees residing in Turkey as well.

ŞEHİDİN MESAJI

Şehit Başkomiser Hatipoğlu, 16 Eylül'de Facebook'taki paylaşımında, 16.09.2012'de Karlıova'da PKK pususunda şehit düşen 8 polisin fotoğraflarıyla taziyе mesajı yayınlamış ve "Sizin için hepi topu 16 Eylül bugün. Sıradan bir gün yani. Benim için ise 8 kardeşimi kaybettiğim Kanlıova" diye yazmış. 28 Eylül'de de "Siz hiç Türk mülteci duydunuz mu?" diye bir mesaj geçmiş.

BİNGÖL'de şehit düşen Başkomiser Hüseyin Hatipoğlu'nun eşi Sibel Hatipoğlu ile birlikte bir sosyal paylaşım sitesindeki hesabında, şehitlerle ilgili paylaşımları yürek burktu. Şehit Başkomiser, 16 Eylül'deki paylaşımında, 16.09.2012'de Karlıova ilçesinde terör örgütü üyelerinin pususunda şehit düşen 8 polis memurunun fotoğraflarıyla taziyе mesajını yayınlamış ve "Sizin için hepi topu 16 Eylül bugün. Sıradan bir gün yani. Benim için ise 8 kardeşimi kaybettiğim Kanlıova" yazmış. Şehit Başkomiser, 8 şehidin fotoğrafının bulunduğu resmi 3 Ekim'de tekrar paylaşmış. 28 Eylül'de ise, "Siz hiç Türk mülteci diye bir şey duydunuz mu tarihte? Duyamazsınız. Türk iç savaş çıkarsa ya olduğu yerde kalıp can verir, ya da sancağı dikip yeni bir devlet kurar. Şerefli bir ölüm, dizleri üstünde yaşamaktansa daha makbuldür" diye yazmış.

ŞÜHEDA APARTMANI

Ordu'da görev yaptığı sırada gazeteci olan Sibel Hatipoğlu ile tanışıp 3 yıl önce evlenen

Rıza ÖZEL / ANKARA



BİNGÖL'deki silahlı saldırıda şehit olan Emniyet Müdür Yardımcısı Atıf Şahin için Kocatepe Camisi'nde dün ikindi vakti tören düzenlendi. Törene Şahin'in annesi Cemile, babası Ahmet,

Sena (15), akrabaları, TBMM Başkanı Cemil Çiçek, CHP Lideri Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu ve meslektaşları katıldı. Başbakan Yardımcısı Yalçın Akdoğan, baba Ahmet Şahin'i teselli etmeye çalıştı. Harp Okulu öğrencisi Ahmet Akif babasının tabutuna sarılarak gözyaşı döktü. Küçük Yiğit Alp'i ise kadın polis teselli et-

Fig. 11 The message of the martyr

Like the pro-government papers, nationalist papers also considered Kurdish refugees as special cases within the larger refugee population, and the Kobani events brought

those considerations fully into view. For decades, Kurdish identity was extraordinarily securitized by the Turkish state and security apparatus, and public discourse on Kurdishness followed suit. This historical fact was especially important for *Yeniçağ*, which was committed to seeing an end to the peace process,⁶⁶ and return to the heavily securitized status quo of the late 90s. The majority of news, opinion pieces, and sheer space of the newspaper was devoted to what was presented as the grotesqueness of the peace process, and the shame which was being visited upon the Turkish army and the state. Thus, the siege of Kobani and its spillovers in Turkey was covered extensively by *Yeniçağ*, which refused to use the Kurdish name in referring to the city and, as a matter of principle, used its Arabic name, Ayn al-Arab. While *Hürriyet*'s mettle was blunted by the government long ago, and utilizing a level of discursive aggression approaching *Yeniçağ* was not feasible for the paper, a similar logic also motivated *Hürriyet*'s coverage during this period.

During the first days of the crisis, *Yeniçağ* utilized a reversion of the method pro-government papers used in navigating between Kurdish and Syrian identities in reporting the siege and the admission of refugees. Where *Sabah* and *Star* mentioned the Kurdish identity of the incoming refugees during the first days of fighting and then ceased doing so after they were admitted into the country, *Yeniçağ* mentioned the identity of the refugees only after they were admitted into the country. In November 19, 2014, *Yeniçağ* wrote:

Thousands of Syrians are swarming our border! About 3 thousand people, running away from the fierce fighting in Syria's Telabyad and Kobani provinces between ISIS and YPG, which is the armed force of PKK's extension in this country, PYD, started to swarm our borders. The military took security precautions with armored vehicles at the

⁶⁶ The peace process was a period of truce and negotiation between the PKK and the Turkish state to end the long running conflict in Southeast Anatolia. The talks collapsed in 2015, partly as a result of the ongoing Syrian Civil War and the parts played by the primary actors during it.

border for the sake of this Syrian crowd, which has women and children among them.

By November 21, this group of refugees were admitted into Turkey. *Yeniçağ* reported this story, now with the title: “We opened our border to the PKK!” And further wrote: “The border was opened for the Syrian Kurds who swarmed the border two days earlier at the Dikmetaş village in the Suruç province of Şanlıurfa, running away from the terrorist organization ISIS” (Figure 12). The Kurdishness of the Kobani refugees, newly discovered by *Yeniçağ* after reporting it became a viable avenue of attack to the policies of the government, were never forgotten hereafter, often being invoked in order to advocate for adopting an aggressive foreign policy against YPG, further securitizing the refugees within Turkey as a result. Thus, admission of Kobani refugees into Turkey was thoroughly instrumentalized in *Yeniçağ*'s continuous campaign of agitation against the Kurdish political movement in Turkey and the YPG in Syria. The refugees in general, and the Kobani refugees in particular, were used for this function in *Yeniçağ*'s proposed military strategy, and their representation was tailored in order to legitimate it and bring this strategy into practice. *Hürriyet*'s editorial direction was less motivated for agitating for an anti-YPG military strategy in Syria. Rather, the events around Kobani and the Kurdish identity of the refugees were utilized in order to bring other, less radical nationalist policy priorities into the public eye. Most important of these priorities was for more stringent border security, and these specific representations were used towards that end.



Fig. 12 We opened our border to the PKK!

In November 27, 2014, *Hürriyet* reported on the people who went through the border in order to reach and help Kobani, with the title: “They bulldozed through it,” and used a picture of men tearing down a border fence (Figure 13). The same story also argued that all of those men were HDP members, and quoted them as saying: “We do not recognize borders. All of here are Kurdistan soil.” The choice of quote and the framing of the event all implied a much more fragile border security regime compared to pro-government papers, and *Hürriyet* also made use of other opportunities to legitimate a more strict border regime.



Fig. 13 They bulldozed through it

4.2.3 Conclusion

Although their representations of the refugees differed significantly from pro-government newspapers, *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* adopted similar logics in deciding which representations to deploy, and when. Like *Sabah* and *Star*, *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* chose from well established, and widely used forms of representation and discursive techniques in order to legitimate specific policies proposed by the political movements that they articulated for. For the nationalist papers, these policies were a stringent border security, minimizing the economic aid given to refugees or cutting it entirely by deporting them, and in *Yeniçağ*'s case, an enthusiastic military strategy at Syria and Turkey aimed at crushing YPG and PKK. While this military strategy was

not directed at the refugees, it was unavoidably about the refugees, and the specific, historical identities carried by them. This was not only true for *Yeniçağ*'s case, the logic carried for both of the pro-government papers as well, and the refugees themselves were thoroughly differentiated from one another based on the role that they could potentially play for specific military situations, distinguished by their ethnoreligious identity. In this sense, it is impossible to separate refugee policies, and their representations, from military strategies, and the demands of the latter dictated the preferred form of the former in many cases.

4.3 Refugees from the Syrian Civil War in a leftist newspaper: The case of *BirGün*

4.3.1 Overview

Leftist newspapers usually have a diminished reach in the Turkish press compared to right-wing or moderate ones, partly owing to the numerous political purges suffered by the left following the military coups of the twentieth century. Since there was no influential, mainstream left movement apart from the center-left wing of the nationalist adjacent CHP for a long time, there was no leftist media outlet with a reach comparable to that of *Hürriyet* or *Sabah* either.⁶⁷ The existing leftist print media operate as highly politically engaged publications with shoestring budgets, often surviving purely through establishing a small but passionate group of readers that share the politics of the paper's editorial direction. *BirGün*, while a part of this group, is distinguished by its comparatively successful sale numbers, which is still dwarfed by all of the other newspapers analyzed in this thesis.

⁶⁷ An exception may be made here for the Kurdish political movement and publications that are close to it. However, these publications are seen as security risks to a much greater degree than *BirGün*, and are rarely allowed to publish daily and nationally.

BirGün was founded in 2004 by a collection of funders; including private persons, certain unions, and trade associations. The majority of these funders were affiliated with the *DevYol* tradition within the left, and some of them were involved with the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP). *BirGün* has remained collectively owned since its foundation, beholden more to its readers rather than to a private ownership structure. In editorial direction, it follows the left libertarian political movement which stands in close contact to, but not overtly affiliated with, the Kurdish political movement led by HDP. As expected, its coverage of the Syrian Civil War and the refugees fleeing from it paralleled its political positioning in Turkey.

4.3.2 Content

The majority of *BirGün*'s news stories regarding the refugees focused on their daily plight. However, in contrast to pro-government newspapers, these stories were focused on their lives in Turkey, and not the ones they led in Syria, which were destroyed by the civil war. The difficulties the refugees were faced with in their access to housing, clean water, health care, and the social exclusion that they suffered from were all common topics in these stories. Unlike nationalist newspapers, the refugees' presence within Turkey was not problematized, and prior of potential refugee admissions into the country were not considered to be valid avenues of criticism towards the government. Nevertheless, *BirGün* was comparatively the most critical news outlet analyzed so far, with 28 (0.54) of the news stories published being explicitly critical of the AKP government. *Yeniçağ*, as aggressive as it was in other issues—such as the peace process—was not nearly as

critical on the issue of refugees. Most of these criticisms focused on the two aspects of the existing refugee regime: Firstly, the care provided to the refugees were often found to be lacking, and secondly, the exclusionary practices of the Turkish government and its refusal to integrate the refugees into the host society were considered discriminatory. Of those analyzed, *BirGün* was the only newspaper that consistently represented the refugees as rights-bearing subjects, with 14 (0.27) of the stories constructed as such.

A good example of this type of rights based news story was ran at December 2, 2014. Titled “They are suffering from discrimination”, the story was about the problems of the refugees in Hatay and Urfa provinces, most prominently the difficulties they faced in accessing health care and housing (Figure 14). The interesting part of this story is its framing of these difficulties, with the subheading stating: “Syrians are facing difficulties in accessing their fundamental rights. Although it is thought that regulations would solve these problems, a regulation is not the answer for the doctors who refuse to see them as patients.” It is evidently true that access to basic necessities are, as per the constitution of Turkey, a fundamental human right, yet refugees are rarely represented as being entitled to these rights. The pro-government papers prefer to represent the refugees as beneficiaries of the beatific charity of the Turkish nation, and with any obligation upon the nation to provide this charity being purely moral. Since the relationship thus asserted is unmistakably that of a benefactor and a beneficiary, the continuation or the intensity of the relationship is left to the wishes of the benefactor. While their tone is decidedly different, the nationalist papers also present this relationship in similar terms. Acknowledging that the refugees are entitled to certain rights legally provided to them, and arguing for

the expansion of these rights and protections, *BirGün* mirrored the arguments made by the then-leader of HDP (Hürriyet, 2016), and the CHP's special commission for immigration and immigrants (CHP, 2016) for the extension of legal refugee status towards refugees from Syria. These policies recognize the refugees first and foremost as legal subjects, with rights and responsibilities dictated by the foundational legal texts of the country and superseding international agreements, and this recognition is supported by *BirGün*'s chosen method of representation.



Fig. 14 They are suffering from discrimination

Among the refugees, *BirGün* was careful to not to make distinctions based on religion and identity. Diligence in doing so sometimes obfuscated relevant news, especially following the exodus of people from the city of Kobani, which *BirGün* referred to by its Kurmanji rendering, Kobanê. In November 20, 2014, *BirGün* reported the people fleeing ISIS and admitted at the border gate of Suruç into Turkey with the titles: “The people who were running from ISIS attacks came to the Turkish border,” and “They closed the border at first, but then opened it” (Figure 15). In this news story, the incoming refugees, the majority of whom were Syrian Kurds, were referred to as: “*halk*” (lit. people), the “*halk* of Kobanê”, or as Syrians, but not once as Kurds or Syrian Kurds. This practice was in stark contrast with that of nationalist papers, which utilized this Kurdish identity of the refugees from Kobani in order to securitize their admittance into the country, or that of the pro-government papers, which also utilized it in order to securitize their activities within the country. However, *BirGün* was not entirely blind to differing ethnic or religious identities, as another story visible on the very same page demonstrates. It was titled “Discrimination of the Yazidis is unacceptable,” and focused on the Yazidi people’s struggles in southeastern Turkey. As Koca also demonstrated, Yazidi people were discriminated against by the Turkish government on the basis of their ethnoreligious identities throughout the war (2015, p. 217), and *BirGün* made an exception in their editorial direction in order to highlight this.

İŞİD SALDIRILARINDAN KAÇAN HALK TÜRKİYE SINIRINA YÖNELDİ

Siniri önce kapattılar ardından da açtılar

İŞİD'in Kobani'ye yönelik saldırılarından kaçan binlerce kişi Türkiye sınırına doğru harekete geçti. Sınır gelenlere sınır kapısı kapatılırken tepkiler nedeniyle geçişlere izin verildi

Davutoğlu'ndan göç açıklaması

RESMİ ziyaretlerde bulunmak üzere Bakü'de bulunan Başbakan Prof. Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, İŞİD saldırıları sonrası başlayan yeni göç dalgasına ilişkin açıklamalarda bulundu. Davutoğlu, "Şu anda bu girişler başladı, çok ani bir gelime olduğu için arkadaşlarımız organize olmaya çalışıyor. Bu kardeşlerimizden kısa sürede yerleştirilecek ve ihtiyaçları karşılanacak. Bu konuda kimsenin tereddüdü olmasın. Türkiye var oldukça, sığınan herkese elindeki imkanlarla yardımcı olacaktır. 4 bin kardeşimiz ülkemizde ağırlanacak ihtiyaçları karşılanacak" dedi.



Radikal İslamcı örgüt İŞİD'in Kobani'ye yönelik saldırılarına YPG güçleri karşılık vermeye devam ediyor. Saldırlardan kaçan binlerce kişi ise Türkiye sınırına doğru yöneldi. İŞİD'in saldırılarından canlarını kurtarmak isteyenlere sınır kapısı önce kapatıldı ardından gelen tepkiler neticesinde açıldı. Sınırdan canlarını kurtarmak isteyenlere ise Türkiye tarafında askerlerin kısa süreli saldırısı oldu. Sınırı geçmek isteyen bir kadın ise mayına bastı. Mayına basan kadının kimliği tespit edilemeyen durumunun ağır olduğu bildirildi. Türkiye'nin sınır kapısını geçmek için açılmasına tepki geldi. Konuyla ilgili açıklama yapan HDP Eş Genel Başkanı Selahattin Demirtaş ise İŞİD'e karşı mücadelelerinin süreceğini altını çizdi.

dırınları değerlendirirken, "Suruç'ta insanlar çadır açacak, sivil eylem ve etkinlikler yapacaklar. Ama, bununla yetinilmemeli. Bütün gençlere İŞİD'e karşı cephede savunma çağrısı yapıyorum" dedi. Başbakan Ahmet Davutoğlu'nun Kobani'den sınıra gelenler ile ilgili açıklamasını da eleştiren Demirtaş, "Sadece, 'oradan göç etmeye hazırlanan insanları karşılamaya hazırlanıyoruz' demek, 'İŞİD vursun onları onlarda bu tarafa göç etsin' demektir, zemin sunmaktır. Başbakan Davutoğlu'nun yaptığı bu açıklama İŞİD'e ancak cesaret verir, İŞİD'i korkutmaz" dedi.

göçlü şunları söyledi: "Sınır kapısının açılması kararını yerinde buluyorum, doğru bir hareket. Neticede Türkiye'nin gerçek anlamda hayatları tehlikeye olan insanlara kucakını açması lazım, biraz gecikerek de olsa sınır kapıları açıldı. Bu insanlara gereken kolaylık sağlanmalıdır." Ote yandan CHP Genel Başkan Yardımcısı Sezgin Tanrıkulu da verdiği bir yazılı soru önergesiyle İçişleri Bakanı Efkân Ala'ya "İŞİD'in Türkiye'de eylem planı olup olmadığı yönünde bilgi var mı?" diye sordu.

CHP'DEN DESTEK
CHP'li Faruk Loğoğlu, sınır kapısının açılmasıyla ilgili bir açıklama yaptı. Lo-

SINIRI KAPATTILAR

İŞİD tehdidinden kaçan ve geçişlerine izin verilmediği için sınır hattında bekleyen Suriyelilerin, Türkiye'ye alınmamasını protesto eden kalabalığın tellerin olduğu bölgeye yönelmesine askerler izin vermedi. Askerlerin bu tutumuna karşılık halk büyük tepki gösterdi. Halkın tepkisine askerlerin yanıtı ise saldırı oldu. Biber gazlı ve tazyikli suyla yapılan saldırının ardından kalabalık, sınır hattından uzaklaşmak zorunda kaldı. Grubun ayrılmasının ardından güvenlik güçleri Suriyelilerin beklediği bölgeye 100 metre uzaklıkta barikat oluşturarak, sınır hattına geçişlere uzun süre izin vermedi. Bu gerginlik sırasında Suriye tarafında sınıra doğru gelen 50 yaşındaki bir kadının başına mayın infilak etti. Sınırda yaralanan kadın, battaniye ile sınırdan geçirdi ve otomobille Suruç Devlet Hastanesi'ne kaldırıldı.

MİRTAŞ'TAN GENÇLERE ÇAĞRI
Eş Genel Başkanı Selahattin Demirtaş, İŞİD'in Kobani'ye yönelik sal-



ÖDP: Emperyalistlere karşı halklarla dayanışacağız

İŞİD saldırılarıyla ilgili olarak Özgür Halk ve Dayanışma Partisi de bir açıklama yaptı. Eş başkanlar Alper Taş ve Bilge Seçkin Çetinkaya imzalarıyla yayımlanan açıklamada şu ifadeler yer verdi: İŞİD çetecileri şimdi de Kobane halkına karşı bir katliama yönelmiş du-

ruma. Sınırlarımızı cihadist çetecilerin geçiş noktası haline getiren AKP, zulümden kaçan halka ise kapıları kapattı. Sınır halkın direnişi ile aşılabildi. Bu kanlı katliamcı-çeteci zihniyet karşısında Kobane ve Ortadoğu'da halkın direnişi, insanlık için bir direniştir. Bu direnişin ve zulümden

kaçarak ülkemize sığınan halkların yanında, onlarla dayanışma içerisinde olacağız. Ortadoğu'yu bir kan gölüne döndüren çeteciler, ABD'nin başını çektiği emperyalist güçler eylem desteklenerek ve onun yarattığı kaotik iklim içerisinde bulunduğu imkansızlarla gelişip güçlendi. Bölgede geliştirilen emperyalist müdahaleci, barbarlığa ve çetecilere karşı halkların dayanışmasını güçlendireceğiz. Kobane halkının yanındayız.

Ezidilere ayrımcılık kabul edilemez

İRAK'TAKİ İŞİD saldırılarından kaçan binlerce sığınmacı Güneydoğu illerinde zor şartlarda barınmaya, beslenmeye, tedavi olmaya çalışıyor. Ciddi sağlık sorunları riskiyle karşı karşıya olan sığınmacıların durumlarına dikkati çeken Türk Tabipleri Birliği (TTB) basın toplantısı düzenledi. TTB Merkez Konseyi Başkanı Dr. Beyazıt İlhan tarafından kamuoyu ile paylaşılan metinde şu görüşlerin altı çizildi: Gerek Suriye'de gerekse Ezidiler Türkiye'nin imzaladığı Cenevre Sözleşmesi kapsamında 'sığınmacı' kabul ediliyor. Hükümete, bu insanlar için 'sığınmacı' statüsünü kabul etmesi ve bununla ilişkili olarak uluslararası kurullar doğrultusunda gerekli yapımı, Burcu Cansu

İŞİD'e karşı islamcıları besliyorlar!

Obama Yönetiminin İŞİD'e karşı mücadelede ABD'li askerler olmadan uluslararası bir koalisyon oluşturma stratejisinde Suriye'de savasan İŞİD dışındaki diğer İslamcı gruplara verilen öneme vurgu yapıldığı New York Times gazetesi, Reyhanlı kaynaklı haberinde ilerde kurtulan ve ABD tarafından kontrol edilen merkezde İŞİD'e karşı mücadele etmesi için diğer İslamcı gruplara yönelik çalışmaların yapıldığı yazıldı. Haberde bu gruplara lojistik ve mali desteğin de sağlandığına yer verildi.



Fig. 15 They closed the border at first, but then opened it

BirGün's reluctance to represent the refugees from Kobani as Kurds, or as Kurdish Syrians also paralleled, in subtle ways, the strategic aims of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria. PYD, which was the ruling party of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria—commonly known as Rojava—relies on the ethnically Kurdish population of Syria as its base of power. Moreover, YPG, which forms the nucleus of Rojava's armed forces, is predominantly constituted by Kurdish militias. However, PYD also claims to practice democratic pluralism, and its leaders often stresses the multicultural aspects of the Rojava federation rather than its reliance on the Kurdish population (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2012). Consistent with this portrayal, *BirGün* was careful to not refer to the YPG and the PYD as specifically Kurdish organizations, and represented them as institutions that embodied the wills of the peoples of Syria. Reluctance in distinguishing between the refugees, especially of those coming from Kobani, was therefore the extension of an unwillingness to distinguish between PYD's constituencies for *BirGün*'s part. In the news stories where the subjects were reported in relation to a non-PYD organization, such as the story about Yazidis in Turkey, this unwillingness was not observed. In this way, we can see how *BirGün*'s representation of the refugees was, at least partly, influenced by the military situation in Syria and the parties that engaged in the Syrian Civil War.

While *BirGün* averted from openly distinguished among refugees on the basis of their ethnoreligious identity, and were usually guarded against applying the logic of security against them, on occasion it used political distinctions to a similar effect. For this end, "Jihadists" was a popular term used in the paper, which was virtually unseen in pro-government newspapers and only rarely invoked by

nationalist ones. *BirGün* often argued that there were Jihadists present within the refugee population, and that the state should take care not to be blindsided by their presence, since their interests stood in opposition to the people's. On October 5, 2014, *BirGün* published an investigative piece about the relations between the refugees and the host society in İstanbul's three neighborhoods of Bağcılar, Esenler and Güngören, titled: "Neighborhoods that are ready to explode" (Figure 16). In this story, these neighborhoods were likened to "fault lines," with conflicts between "certain Syrians who are Jihadist sympathizers," and "small business owners" being commonplace and poor and homeless Syrians being targets of racist violence. The growing of racism was also associated with the low wages paid to unprotected refugee workers, which also depreciated the wages of legal native workers. Some local people were also reported as gathering support for ISIS and other Jihadist groups, or going to Syria in order to join the fight themselves. A local person was quoted in the story as saying: "There was someone here, who for years dabbled in marijuana and such. On the other day he came to me and 'asked for my blessing,' saying that he was going to Jihad. There are a great number of young people like him leaving too." Through news stories such as these, *BirGün* attempted to draw attention to the security risks posed, both to the social and political orders, by the Jihadists both local and refugee. While a political and not ethnoreligious category—although intersecting heavily with Sunni Syrians—the logic of securitization was extant in the presentation of it.

BİRGÜN BAĞCILAR- ESENLER-GÜNGÖREN HALKIYLA KONUŞTU Patlamaya hazır mahalleler



Türkiye-Suriye ilişkilerinde AKP'nin yanlış politikaları İstanbul'da bazı mahalleleri adeta fay hattına çevirdi. Mahallelerden para karşılığı 'cihad' gidenlerin olduğu öne sürüldü

Türkiye-Suriye ilişkilerinde AKP'nin yanlış politikaları İstanbul'da bazı mahalleleri adeta fay hattına çevirdi. Cihatçı ya da sempatan kimi Suriyeliler ile esnaf arasında gerilimler yaşanırken, yoksul/evsiz Suriyelilere ırkçı saldırılar da artıyor. Hükümetin plansız, programsız bir mülteci politikası izlemesine bağlanan bu durumdan bazı yerler daha fazla etkileniyor. İstanbul'da Suriyelilerin yoğun biçimde yerleştiği Güngören, Bağcılar, Esenler gibi ilçelerde yaşayanlar ile Suriyeliler arasında gerginlik giderek artmıyor. Suriyelilerin yaşamlarını sürdürmek için çok düşük fiyatlarla çeşitli işlere evet demesine ilçede bulunanlar tepki gösteriyor. Bu tepkiler çok kısa sürede ayrımcı söylemlere dönüşüyor. Bu tepkilerin yoğun olarak yaşandığı yerlerde tepkiyi gösterenlerin neden böyle bir yol izlediğini kendilerine sorduk. Gazetemize konuşanlar gelebilecek tepkilerden ve IŞİD vb yapıların saldırılarından korktukları için isimlerini veremektan kaçınıyorlar.

BENDEN DAHA UCUZA ÇALIŞIYOR!
Güngören 'merdivenaltı tekstil faaliyetinin' en yoğun yaşandığı yerlerden bir tanesi. Burada çalışanların büyük çoğunluğunu gençler oluşturuyor. Gençlerden bir tanesi kendisinin Kürt olduğunu söylüyor. Suriye'de yaşananların kendilerini oldukça olumsuz biçimde etkilediğini söyleyen genç ekliyor: Zaten burada oldukça düşük maaşlarla çalışıyoruz. Şimdi bunlar geldikten sonra bu da gitti. Patron da bunun farkında bunları yok fiyatına çalıştırıyor. Bize de onları gösteriyor. Bunlar yüzünden vaziyetimiz giderek kötüleşti.

BUNLAR ÖTEKİLERDEN DE 'KÖTÜ'
Bağcılar'da da durum çok farklı değil. Afyonlu olduğunu söyleyen bir tekstil işçisiyle konuşuyoruz. Onun tepkisi ise en dikkat çekici olanı. Bugün Suriyelilerin yaşadıklarını daha



Geçen Ramazan Bayramı'nda IŞİD yanlıları İstanbul'da bayram namazı kılmıştı.

önce Kürtlerin yaşadığını söyleyen tekstil işçisinin kendini savunmak için dile getirdiği şu sözleri durumu özeter nitelikte: Doğu'dan gelenler bizden düşük çalışırlardı, şimdi işi öğrendiler ama bu Suriye'den gelenler onlardan da düşük fiyata çalışıyor. Yani bizim istediğimiz parayla 2-3 tane Suriyeli rahat çalıştırılabilir. Bizi kimse bunun için tercih etmiyor.

'BİR DE YER AÇILAR'
Suriyelilere yönelik ortaya çıkan tepkiler sadece tekstil atölyelerinde çalışanlarla sınırlı değil. Bölgede esnaflık yapan küçük dükkân sahipleri de yer yer ayrımcılığa varan tepkilerini net biçimde ortaya koyuyor. Güngören'de Suriyelilerin yoğun yaşadığı mahallelerden bir tanesi de Merkez Mahallesi. Bu mahallede geçtiğimiz günlerde Suriyeliler tarafından küçük bir dükkân açıldı. Döner satan bu dükkâna mahallede bulunan esnaf tepki gösteriyor. Kendisinin yıllardır bölgede çalıştığını söyleyen bir esnaf şunları söylüyor:

BURASI KALDIRMAZ
Caddede üzerine bir yer açtılar. Sadece kendileri alışveriş yapıyor. Bir tane Güngörenli yok oradan alışveriş yapan. Zaten burada çok sevenleri de yok. Buradaki insanları rahatsız ediyorlar. Burası aile yeri biz muhafazakâr insanları böyle şeyleri kaldıramayız.

BÜYÜK KAVGA ÇIKACAK
Aynı kişiye göre Suriyelilere yönelik Güngören ve Bağcılar'da büyük tepki var: 'Ben dükkânıma gelip düzen bozanlara mal satmıyorum' derken kendisi dışında da Suriyelilere dönük büyük tepkinin olduğunu şöyle belirtiyor: Vallaha yakında burada büyük kavga çıkar. Her gün bunlarla ilgili bir haber geliyor. Geçen gün Bağcılar'da oldu. Burada da olması an meselesi.

BU PARALAR İŞİD'E GİDİYOR
Konuştuğumuz sırada yan dükkânın sahibi olduğunu söyleyen bir kişi içeriye giriyor. Konuşmamızı duyuyor ve konuya dahil oluyor. Tezgâhın üzerinde duran ve neredeyse tüm işyerlerinde bulunan 'sadaka kutusunu' işaret ederek 'Bu paraların hepsi IŞİD'e gidiyor. Ben kaldırdım' diyor. Konuyu IŞİD'e getiren bu esnafa (kişiye) göre İslamcı gruplar Güngören, Bağcılar ve Esenler'den para karşılığında gençleri Suriye'ye savaşmaya götürüyor.

PARAYLA GÖTÜRÜYORLAR
Aynı isim konuyla ilgili bir anısını da şöyle anlatıyor: "Burada yıllardır esrar vb işlerle uğraşan birisi vardı. Geçen gün geldi benden 'helallik isted' cihada gidiyorum dedi. Bunun gibi bir sürü genç var giden." Kendisinin de Suriyelilerden rahatsız olduğunu ise üzerine basa basa söylüyor.

Ayrımcı söylem artıyor

SURİYELİLERE yönelik ayrımcı tepkilerin nasıl bir seyir izleyeceği ve bu tepkilerin karşı henüz bir adım atılmamasının ne gibi sonuçlara neden olacağına Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği'nden Piri Erçoban'a sorduk. Erçoban gelinen noktada atılmayan adımları ve nelerin yapılması gerektiğini BirGün'e anlattı: "Maalesef, Suriyeli mülteciler özelinde mültecilere karşı ayrımcı, dışlayıcı ve nefret üreten bir söylem artmakta, hatta bu söylemle sınırlı kalmayıp artık Suriyeli veya Suriyeli olduğu sanılan kişilere, evlerine, arabalarına, işyerlerine saldırılar, linç girişimleri şeklinde artık nefret suçuna dönüşebiliyor. Bunu örneğini son aylarda İstanbul, Ankara, Antep, Urfa, Hatay gibi pek çok ilde görmekteyiz. Sosyolojik bir arka plan çalışması yapılmadı ama bu söylem ve saldırıların arkasında çeşitli nedenler hukuki statülerinin belirsizliği, yapılacak işlemler ile hak ve yükümlülükler dair mevzuatın belli olmaması, yeterli bilgilendirme ve empati yoksunluğundan tutun da dışlayıcı, nefret üreten dil, saldırıların cezasız kalması, ırkçılık, kışkırtmalara kadar farklı olduğunu düşünmekteyiz.

CEZASIZLIK CESARETLENDİRİR
Erçoban'a göre yaşanan saldırılar kadar bu saldırılara zemin hazırlayan bakış açısı da tehlikeli. Erçoban meseleyi şöyle yorumluyor: Saldırıları, nefret suçları ile mücadele devletlin, medyanın, sivil toplumun birlikte hareket etmesi gerekiyor. "Ne kadar misafirperveriz", "Bu olaylar müferit olaylardır", "Bizde ırkçılık olmaz" gibi ifadelerle ve cezazılıkla ancak ve ancak bu saldırıları cesaretlendirir ve suça ortak oluruz.

Atılması gereken adımların artık tamamlanması gerektiğini ifade eden Erçoban sözlerini şu sözlerle noktalar:

Sonuç olarak hak ve yükümlülüklerin hukuki çerçevesi net ve insan haklarına riayet edecek bir şekilde çizilmeli, bu insanların hakları olduğu açık bir şekilde anlatılmalı, cezazılık bir norm olmamalı, yerel halk ile mültecilerin birlikte yaşamasına, kaynaşmasına olanak sağlayacak politikalar geliştirilmeli.

Fig. 16 Neighborhoods that are ready to explode

4.3.3 Conclusion

As already indicated, *BirGün*'s strategy in representing the refugees cannot be analyzed separately from the political movement constituted by its funders and readers; who were, as a result of *BirGün*'s unique ownership structure, one and the same. Unlike pro-government papers, which constructed the refugee subject

primarily through its religion and lack of capacity to self-regulate, necessitating a benevolent authority in order to manage their lives, *BirGün* preferred to construct this subject primarily in its shared humanity, transcending ethnoreligious identities, and in their capacity and rights to bear the rights entitled to them by treaty and law. It is important to note that this was not a choice necessitated by tactical or strategic considerations as they pertained to the insurgency in southeastern Turkey and the Syrian Civil War; nonetheless, it legitimated the preferred refugee regime of HDP and the left wing of the CHP on a discursive level. *BirGün* was also suspicious towards the security apparatus of the Turkish state, consistently reporting in opposition to its usual deployment against minorities. In the place of ethnoreligious identities, *BirGün* substituted political categories as security risks, most often with the Jihadists.

4.4 Conclusion

A common thread of political instrumentalization is present in all of the newspapers analyzed in this thesis. Most importantly, the discursive techniques mentioned can be understood only within this context. An emphasis on the communal and personal powerlessness of the refugees and their lack of political agency, and a prioritized focus on their bodies, whether this focus is presented positively or negatively, is present in both pro-government and nationalist newspapers, in spite of the antagonistic political and discursive ends towards which they labor. This contradiction can be resolved considering the fact that both the pro-government newspapers and the nationalist newspapers share exclusionary refugee regimes as political ends, which demonstrates the function of this representative strategy of

focusing on the shared bare humanity of the subjects rather than their lived contexts. The pro-government newspapers, favoring an exclusionary care regime, interpret this strategy as obligating upon the host society relevant responsibilities to care for the refugees, whereas the nationalist newspapers interpret it as presenting an unresolvable contradiction with the host society that necessitates complete exclusion and even expulsion. The leftist newspaper, by contrast, does not utilize this strategy, since it does not share an exclusionary refugee regime as a political goal. It is also easy to see how the basic logic of securitization was shared to some extent by all newspapers, yet mobilized towards different subjects. As expected, these subjects were drawn from existing political contentions, and their securitization was pursued with differing intensities, but a shared logic prevailed.

A general question can be raised on what determinates the specificities of the content that the newspapers produce. Since this discursive production rests on the real political movement, the question then becomes one on whether the ideological character of the political movement, or its structural position vis-à-vis state power determines its political goals. This thesis is too narrow in scope to satisfactorily answer the question, however the analysis of the discursive techniques can, in a limited way, help us with answering it. The antagonistic relation between pro-government and nationalist papers, in particular, hints to a structural explanation for their differences, since their ideological divergences are few and far between, especially for more mainstream papers. However, a final answer to this question can only be answered through further and broader research into the political movements themselves.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The work permits granted to the refugees in the spring of 2016 was a huge step for the integration of the refugees into the host society. However, this integration was made deliberately partial, and the refugees were kept only in a semi-protected position in relation to Turkish workers precisely for the economic benefits that this precarity brought to certain sections of the Turkish capital. Bélanger and Saracoglu described this situation as a “state-market convergence,” (2018, p.1) and argued that “the existing regulations pertaining to the employment of Syrian refugees enable Turkish capital to generate higher profits through the informal use of Syrian labor, which, in turn, keeps the wages of Turkish workers low” (p. 15). More than seven years after the arrival of first refugees from Syria in Turkey, the refugees still live in a state of legal limbo, and the executive management of their lives have been weaponized by the capital against labor. In this way, the integrative tendencies of the recent years fell quite short of any comprehensive objective, and the already existing legal precarity of the refugees was indefinitely extended.

In the field of foreign policy, Turkish incursions into Syria have been more and more extensive. A long-term safe haven for Turkish supported rebel groups in Syria were created with the operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch, and the rebel pocket encircled at Idlib is partially occupied by the Turkish-backed National Front of Liberation (NFL) coalition, which is spearheaded by the FSA and Ahrar al-Sham. As a direct result of these territorial acquisitions made by Turkish clients at the border, possible transportation of the refugees from Syria into these territories is

being discussed at the highest levels of decision making. In January 2019, the President of Turkey said that in the near future four million refugees would be placed at the newly created safe regions in Northern Syria.⁶⁸ Today, it seems that such an attempt would not be overtly difficult, even if some refugees may not want to move back into these territories, since the existing refugee regime of Turkey renders the refugees vulnerable to direct executive management by limiting their movement to a single city within which they could work, and leaving most of the aid they receive to the mercy of executive organs of the state. Any decision that stands to be made in the near future for the continued presence of the refugees in Turkey or their translocation will be done according to a measurement of gains and losses that their presence or absence could bring about for the Turkish government. Both economic and political consideration are involved in this calculation.

It is easy to see how the refugee representation of the Turkish newspapers intersects with the present situation. The passively victimized representation that was ever present in pro-government media not only reflected the existing refugee regime of the time, but also predicted the possible future trajectories possible for this regime. Extending legal rights to the refugees was never seriously entertained as a policy idea, in no small part from fear of both international and national backlashes, and this was evident from the forms of representation consistently utilized by pro-government papers. The opposition, on the other hand, never held executive power since the government's first electoral victory almost two decades ago, and their proposals, both from the left and from the right, were never implemented in any large scale. However, from the discursive techniques and methods of representation analyzed so

⁶⁸ Evrensel. (2019). Erdoğan: Güvenli bölgelere 4 milyon Suriyeli mülteci yerleştirilecek. Retrieved April 7, 2019, from <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/372169/erdogan-guvenli-bolgelere-4-milyon-suriyeli-multeci-yerlestirilecek>

far in this thesis and the present situation on the ground, we could conclude certain point; not just about the refugee regime of Turkey and its print media, but also about the academic analysis of discourse and its effects on politics.

At their core, both pro-government and nationalist newspapers advocated for an executive refugee regime; in contrast, the leftist newspaper argued for a rights-based one. The fact that the pro-government and nationalist newspapers disagreed on the content of this form was certainly significant, and the markers of this difference in the competing discourses deployed by the camps were plain to see, however, the form which they advocated for through their constant and deliberate editorial direction was reliant on the state's practically unlimited power over the lives and bodies of the refugees. Both pro-government and nationalist newspapers resorted to what could be called the de-politicization of the subject in legitimating this authority. The refugee was, in pro-government newspapers, a body upon which pain was unleashed by a heretical oppressor. The Turkish state and nation has afforded the refugee the only relief from pain that he has known, and enjoys the refugee's boundless gratitude as a result. In many cases, the refugee was not politically positioned at all, and his loyalty towards the Turkish state and its leaders was explained only in reference to this bodily relation even as it was explicitly paraded for political capital. The nationalist newspapers took this paradigm and inverted it. They accepted that the refugees were fleeing from pain and seeking asylum in Turkey, but then criticized them for not being political subjects in the first place. Various Türkmen armed groups within Syria were often placed as foils for these non-Turkish refugees, and their political activities were posited as evidences of a superior moral character. In both cases, the refugees were associated primarily, or only, with

issues that were essentially outside of politics. The leftist newspaper, by contrast, often reported the myriad legal problems faced by the refugees in trying to navigate the obscurantist regime that the Turkish state created for their management. Here, the refugees existed as legal subjects, and their relationship with the state, at least normatively if not practically, was not altogether one-sided. A leftist direction for the refugee regime to take, according to this newspaper, would be one that is based on recognizing the rights entitled to refugees according to what the law and international treaties demanded, thus also protecting the wage of the host workers from depreciation.

In creating these methods of representation, the newspapers did not rely on abstract and theoretical conceptualizations—such as the refugee or the citizen—but drew from an already established well of historical representations of existing identities. From here, we can see how the concrete practices diverged from the theoretical tradition of trying to make sense of the figure of the refugee by his present situation alone. Ethnoreligious identities with long historical contexts in Turkish public discourse—Kurds, Arabs, Türkmens, Sunnis, Shias, and others—were deployed for a variety of ends by all media outlets. These identities, together with some other features, informed the historical and spatial particularity of our subjects, both refugee and media. Political affiliations, while distinct from ethnoreligious identities, were often conflated with one or more identities for advancing seemingly impartial, but very often sectarian positions. The Kurdish identity—often substituted with and for various political affiliations, such as the KCK, PYD, etc.—was especially important for already being hyper-securitized through decades of Turkish state discourse. Both pro-government and nationalist newspapers were careful in

using it in order to securitize certain processes of refugee admission, or avoid using it in order to not securitize others. Most of the decisions involved in these articulations—which amounted to choosing which group of refugees to securitize and when—were taken in accordance to strategic demands that the military situation in the Syrian Civil War created. Of course, since these political movements were articulating for competing social groups, the strategic demands widely differed between them, most starkly seen in the nationalist hostility and leftist approval towards YPG activities in Northern Syria. Representations of refugees from Syria, especially for the case of those arriving on the outbreak of the siege of Kobani, were determined to a very large degree by these strategic concerns, and reflected the preferences of military priorities for the political movements paralleling the newspapers. In these cases, there could be no sole engagement with the representation of a subject as it is, since the representation would always be tied to a political aspect of the subject. Since these representations are inextricably tied to political interests, any argument for or against a particular representation, or the discursive securitization of a particular identity, must necessarily leave the bare discursive sphere and become a political argument in order to be resolved.

In the literature of refugee representation in Turkey, directly political implications of the most fundamental forms of representations, as well as the spatially and historically bounded nature of the identities utilized in constructing those representations were often ignored in favor of a strictly abstracted discursive analysis approach. While this thesis was heavily influenced by Koca's important work on deconstructing the open door policy of the Turkish government, and the process of securitization of refugees and its effects on labor (2015, 2016); many

other research projects operated by separating discursive material from its legal-political context. For example, Pandır, Efe and Paksoy (2015), and Erdoğan, Kavukçuev and Çetinkaya (2017) both analyzed the print media during the years of 2014 and 2015 in their research, yet they did not once referred to the obvious particularity of the refugees from Kobani, or how their representation differed from, and modified that of the larger refugee community. In handling the discursive material in the abstract, and not making a concentrated effort to link it to the concrete political reality, most of the work done in content analysis limits itself to being able to say only what is directly related to the discourse. This can be a conscious choice since limiting our engagement to a single facet of a subject can help us reach a deeper understanding of it; yet in the case of Turkish press, which is so tightly intertwined with what is directly political, doing so distorts our understanding of what is being said and why that was being said in the first place. In direct opposition to the aims of such specialized analysis, a narrow engagement with the discursive can distort our understanding of the very content of that discourse.

Here, the practical realities of the media and the rational scrutiny of theory converge. In establishing the theoretical framework of this thesis, I have discussed the significance of refugees in contemporary political philosophy. The challenge of conceptualizing being a refugee as a determinant category that is self-sufficient for explaining certain social facts is a difficult proposition precisely for the reasons that have been discussed throughout this thesis. Moreover, the de-politicizing logic of this abstraction mirrors the discursive techniques used by both pro-government and nationalist newspapers in stripping the refugee from their political context. In this way, the very question that was the driving force behind this thesis, which was

composed in an attempt to understand how refugees were represented in host societies, demonstrate its limitations. Can we understand refugees, in this case, as a coherent category? Of course, a degree of distortion of the concrete is necessitated by the very attempt of abstraction in the first place, but the second question can only be satisfactorily answered in the affirmative by showing that this particular abstraction, which is that of all refugees as a common object of the print media, helps us understand more about the case than what it distorts. I would argue that, within the strict confines of this thesis, the category of the refugee unearths some common aspects of representation for the actual people displaced by the Syrian Civil War in Turkey. This conclusion, however, is by no means foregone, and must be drawn in a case-by-case basis.

Malkki argued, in her research on the displacement and loss among Hutu refugees in Tanzania, that any special insight of a people must be derived from the lived experiences of those specific people, and the meanings that the people attach to their experiences, rather than try to derive it from abstract commonality of human tragedy and loss (1995, p. 16). This thesis attempted to apply this method to the other side: In order to come to an awareness about how the displacement of the Syrians was understood by the Turkish media, it tried to look at the meanings that the media attached to the experiences of a specific people at a specific time. Thus, considering also that the Turkish media presents a limit case in the integration of the political and the discursive, it is unclear how much that we can apply the insights derived from this analysis to other contexts. The autonomy of the editorial direction of the media from ideological pressures has been a contentious issue for a long time, and further research in different contexts would always be illuminating. However, I think that

the major pitfalls that I have underlined in assessing the literature on refugee representation in Turkey would hold for the majority of the cases approached in this vein. An analysis of a content of media, much like an analysis of the media in general, should rely on the economic and political context in which the media apparatus operates; not solely for better understanding the economic and political context, but for understanding the content under analysis in the first place.

APPENDIX

METHODS OF REPRESENTATION USED IN ALL NEWS

BY TOTAL NUMBERS AND RATE OF OCCURRENCE

	<i>Sabah</i>	<i>Star</i>	<i>Hürriyet</i>	<i>Yeniçağ</i>	<i>BirGün</i>
Total news	72	68	66	62	52
Active agents	9 (0.13)	2 (0.03)	8 (0.12)	6 (0.1)	8 (0.15)
Victims	34 (0.47)	44 (0.65)	36 (0.55)	18 (0.29)	32 (0.62)
Criticism, AKP	0	0	8 (0.12)	20 (0.32)	28 (0.54)
Criticism, Turkish opposition	4 (0.06)	12 (0.18)	2 (0.03)	0	1 (0.02)
Criticism, Assad	14 (0.19)	18 (0.26)	6 (0.1)	4 (0.06)	3 (0.06)
Criticism, Europe	10 (0.14)	12 (0.18)	10 (0.15)	10 (0.16)	2 (0.04)
AKP support	18 (0.25)	24 (0.36)	6 (0.1)	0	0
Turkish support	35 (0.49)	36 (0.54)	20 (0.3)	10 (0.16)	4 (0.08)
Benefits	9 (0.13)	6 (0.09)	4 (0.06)	0	1 (0.02)
Rights-bearing	1 (0.02)	2 (0.03)	2 (0.03)	0	14 (0.27)
Strife	4 (0.06)	14 (0.21)	2 (0.03)	28 (0.45)	8 (0.16)
Threat	10 (0.14)	6 (0.09)	12 (0.18)	32 (0.52)	1 (0.02)

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