


Hate and Propaganda Media and Narratives in Turkey





Hate and propaganda media in Turkey: Affiliations, models and patterns

 News reporting in terms of hate media with their contents promoting violence against or harassment of individuals and disadvantaged groups, along with a polarizing rhetoric that fosters fanaticism and again encourages violence in targeting their “hate objects.”


 Those media that position themselves as nationalist, patriotic and critical of the ruling party, the AKP, share a common language with the partisan media when they see threats to the founding ideology of Turkey where the government’s control of the media and communication conflicts with fundamental principles of freedom of speech.


 The analysis of political-economic basis showed that the highly concentrated media market and the inexplicit and non-transparent financial structures of media ownership are the biggest obstacles to media pluralism in Turkey.


 As of 2020, disinformation disseminated by pro-government media with political and business interests in the government is spread in the name of “love for President Erdoğan” and “propagandizing for his government.”


 The analysis reaffirmed the commitment not only of the pro-government media to spreading propaganda and disinformation but also of the patriotic media’s hate-filled news reporting when the “national interests” are at stake.


Hate and disinformation narratives in the online mediascape in Turkey

 It seems that it is mostly the state actors lighting the fuse for using language of enmity towards the political opposition and journalists critical of the government. The discourse of terror accompanies the hate speech.


 Hostile language towards political opponents of the government and critical journalists goes along with death threats and humiliation, respectively.


 Hate speech includes profane language against Syrian refugees.


 When it comes to the discriminatory language against “women”, users are tagging the state actors on Twitter when they want to target those defending the Istanbul Convention while publicly commenting on the issue.

 Although new regulations on social media have come into force in Turkey, they do not include any legislation regarding hate language used in online media and communication platforms.


Policy recommendations for countering hate and propaganda media and communication


 Monitoring of financial connections between media owners and the government should be performed on a regular basis by the NGOs conducting media ownership watch to indicate interdependence between the ruling party/government and hate and propaganda media and their owners.


 In order to distinguish which institutions or individuals benefit from impunity, a monitoring mechanism should be established to render the judiciary’s different interpretations of the boundaries between hate speech and freedom of expression visible.

 Data mapping for “media owners and their other investments” through networks such as the “Network of Dispossessions” should be updated on a regular basis otherwise a new open access database or map should be established by the NGOs and volunteers working with them and the reports should be published at least quarterly.

 A self-regulatory body should be established and developed by the nongovernmental organisations who conduct media monitoring in order to render hate speech and disinformation in all media visible. They should develop the mechanisms and tools to facilitate the monitoring and publishing of “Social Media Hate Watch” reports weekly, monthly, and yearly.

 Monitoring efforts should not be limited to the media organizations known to generate hate content; the online media accounts and Twitter accounts of the platforms that claim to publish and broadcast independently should also be monitored. This will help to monitor users’ comments there for possible hate speech and comments that can lead to disinformation.

 New regulations for media ownership are needed in order to break the domination of hate media in a hopefully pluralistic media environment.

 Media literacy campaigns by civil society organizations should be encouraged to react against hate content.



These are findings of the research on hate and propaganda models of media and communication in Turkey and findings of the research on hate narratives in Turkey conducted, in 2020, within the project “Resilience – Civil society action to reaffirm media freedom and counter disinformation and hateful propaganda in the Western Balkans and Turkey” in seven countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.