

An Assessment of the Role of Syrian Social Media in Integrating Syrian Refugees in Turkey

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1. Introduction

Due to the ongoing war in Syria, a large number of Syrians has fled the country in order to seek safety, particularly, in the neighboring countries. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published data, as of July 2017 the cumulative number of the registered Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries and North Africa exceeded 5.1 million¹ as detailed in the table below:

| Country | Persons of Concern | Percentage |
|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Turkey | 3,106,932 | 60% |
| Lebanon | 1,001,051 | 19% |
| Jordan | 661,114 | 13% |
| Iraq | 242,558 | 5% |
| Egypt | 122,228 | 2% |
| North Africa | 30,104 | 1% |
| Total | 5,163,987 | 100% |

Source: UNHCR

The table shows that Turkey is the top hosting country of Syrian refugees as compared to all other listed countries. Moreover, the figures of the UNHCR suggest that Turkey is currently hosting the largest refugee population worldwide followed by Lebanon and Jordan.² According to the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) 2016 Annual Report, based on the figures of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), only 9% of the Syrian refugees registered in Turkey are hosted in refugee camps while the remaining 91% are residing in host communities.

Hosting this large number of Syrian refugees represents a serious challenge for Turkey as it “continues to put pressure on Turkey’s infrastructures and services” (3RP 2016, p. 31). This is true taking into consideration that “Turkey has spent approximately USD 25 billion of its own fiscal resources in support of Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis in Syria” (3RP

¹ Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

² Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>

2016, p. 31). An IMF document published in 2016 points out that the medium-term impact of the inflows of refugees on output level, Government debt/GDP and unemployment rate for the EU would be negative under the scenario of slow refugees' integration in the destination countries (IMF, 2016). However, the cumulative number of Syrian asylum applications in all the European countries as of May 2017 (which reached 952,446)³ represents only 31% of the number of Syrian refugees that Turkey currently hosting. Hence, facilitating a rapid and effective integration process should be prioritized by all the involved stakeholders in order to control the challenges resulted from the large number of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

As per an article by the UNHCR, refugees are defined as “persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution” (UNHCR, 2015). However, migrants “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons” (UNHCR, 2015). For the purposes of data collection and analysis, the term “refugees” in this paper is going to be used to indicate Syrians who arrived to Turkey between the beginning of 2011 and May 2017.

This research explores the input of social media networks originated by Syrians -as a minority in Turkey- in integrating Syrian refugees in the country against a background discussion of the key elements required to facilitate both refugees and migrants' integration in the host community, the mission of minority media and the roles they typically tend to fulfill. In this regard, the research aims chiefly at examining the reality of selected Syrian “minority” social media networks to assess their contribution to the integration process; it also seeks pinpointing the main challenges that Syrian refugees encounter in Turkey as a host country.

The significance of this research stems from the fact that it classifies the content of the studied Syrian social media outlets in terms of their role in the integration process. Consequently, the social media platforms can be enhanced or rectified in accordance with the findings.

The study will first provide a literature review (LR) on the topic before proceeding to a description of the applied qualitative and quantitative research and the thematic analysis

³ Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>

methods. Then, the findings will be presented and discussed followed by highlighting the research limitations and recommendations for further relevant studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Requirements of Integration

Identifying the requirements of refugees and migrants' integration in the host community has received a considerable attention in the literature. To start with, Alastair Ager and Alison Strang constructed a framework outlining the requirement of successful integration. This framework underscores key domains of integration in connection to four main themes: “achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment” (Ager and Strang 2008, p.166).

In explaining the themes included in this framework, the study first suggests that providing refugees with access to employment, housing, education, and health care is vital to successfully integrate them in the host community such access will enable them to generate income, enhance their sense of security and stability, improve their employability, and well-position them for a better social participation and engagement in the new society (Ager and Strang, 2008). Following this, the study highlights the importance of maintaining the social bonds of the refugees with their families, friends and like-ethnic groups to sustain their familiar patterns of relationships and to help them feeling settled. Furthermore, the study indicates that a well-established connection between the refugees and structures of the state, such as government services, has a positive impact on the integration process. Subsequently, the study points out that the ability of the refugees to speak the main language of the host community is an essential part of the integration process in addition, safety and stability of the refugees are important aspects of the integration process (Ager and Strang 2008). Lastly, the two researchers argue that in order to develop an effective policy on integration “governments need to clearly articulate policy on nationhood and citizenship, and thus the rights accorded to refugees” (Ager and Strang 2008, p.175).

The requirements of integration as outlined by Wolfgang Bosswick and Friedrich Heckman coincide to a large extent with the framework suggested by Ager and Strang. They argue that for immigrants “integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society” (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, p.11). Nevertheless, for the host society, Bosswick and Heckman point out that integration means “opening up institutions and granting equal opportunities to immigrants” (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, p.11).

The approach toward integration proposed in the Handbook on Integration for Policy Makers and Practitioners issued by the European Commission in 2007 did not show a considerable departure from the framework constructed by Ager and Strang. According to this handbook, practitioners and policymakers that are directly involved in the process of immigrants – refugees in our case-integration are in favor of practical approach toward integration that is “focusing on outcomes in terms of social and economic mobility, education, health, housing, social services, and societal participation” (The European Commission 2007, p.8).

Hence it might be argued that the ‘successful’ integration of refugees in the host community requires first, providing them with access to employment, housing, education, and health care. However, this should be accompanied by maintaining the refugees’ social connections with their homeland and with like-ethnic groups within the host community, enhancing their social links with the host community, and establishing connection between them and structures of the state at the host country. Furthermore, an effective integration requires providing the refugees with language acquisition training to enhance their ability to speak the main language of the new community in addition to assuring their safety and stability. Lastly, refugee entitlement of rights within the host country should be emphasized as one of the requirements for a successful integration.

2.2 The General Roles of Minority Media

The roles that minority media typically tend to fulfil have been comprehensively examined in the LR. Dan Caspi and Nelly Elias argue that the first function of minority media is to “facilitate and

accelerate their audiences' adjustment to the new society, serve as a compass therein and a source of information and learning" (Caspi & Elias 2011, p.63). They have pointed out that the second role of minority media is to "maintain the minority's original identity and its affiliation with the former homeland" (Caspi & Elias 2011, p.63).

One might argue that minority media, on the one hand, participates in educating their audiences about the host community and provides them with relevant information to accelerate their adaptation to the new life in the host community while, on the other hand, maintains their audiences' connection with their homeland.

The mission of minority media has been further examined by Andrea Hickerson and Kristin L. Gustafson. They investigated the functions of immigrant press in the US, and the findings of their work underscored two main functions of this press: "The first was to provide civic and cultural explanation. The second was to promote assimilation and/or citizenship" (Hickerson & L. Gustafson 2014, p.10). Additionally, the findings of their work pointed out the linguistic difficulties and the appropriateness of the content to be of the restrictions that limit immigrants' ability to attain information about the culture of the host community from mainstream media "either because those media are in English or do not cover basic information that the immigrant audiences need for daily living" (Hickerson & L. Gustafson 2014, p.10). In this context, Francis Dalisay and Yung-I Liu argued that the use of native-language media by new immigrants in the US does not obstruct their acculturation process and their socialization. They even recommend that "new immigrants not be discouraged from using native-language media" (Dalisay & Liu 2015, p.497).

In this context, three functions of minority media might be emphasized. The first is the role they play in providing the minority -i.e. Syrians in Turkey- with cultural explanation about the host community. The second is their participation in supporting the minority to overcome the linguistic difficulties that hinder their integration in the new community. Last, but not least, is the tendency of minority media to meet information needs of the minority for their day-to-day life in the host community.

It is worth mentioning that K. Viswanath and Pamela Arora underlined a function of minority media that has not received a great deal of attention in the literature. They argued that “an ethnic news medium is likely to act as a community sentinel, identifying threats from the external environment.” (Viswanath & Arora 2000, p.54).

2.3 Minority Media – From the Conventional Outlets to Social Media Platforms

Reviewing the literature of the mission of minority media and the roles they typically tend to play showed that the bulk of the studies on this issue are concentrating on the conventional minority media outlets such as newspapers. However, less attention in the literature is directed toward the potential participation of social media platforms. In this context, it might be argued that, currently, all the functions of minority media that are underscored in the LR can be fulfilled by social media platforms and that is not, anymore, limited to conventional outlets. In fact, Bauckhage has stated that during the past decade social media platforms tore down the barriers for entry so they had the biggest impact on the media industry. Furthermore, , the costs of participating in content creation were going down and the digitization made it easy for almost anybody to create content (text, photo, audio and video) and make it accessible.(Bauckhage, 2014).

Therefore, it can be argued that this ‘digitization’ facilitates the inclusion of minority media in social media platforms, and gives the refugees access to relevant information that helps them in their integration in the host communities at a very low cost and without the need for a complicated institutional framework.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This research inquires into the role of Syrian social media in integrating Syrian refugees in the Turkish community. In the light of reviewing the relevant literature and particularly the work of Ager and Strang, 2008, the research uses the conceptual framework of defining the main domains of integration to derive its global question that is: What of and how the core domains of integration are addressed in the Syrian “minority” social media platforms in Turkey? Specifically, the research question will be: what of/ how the topics of 1) employment, education,

housing, and health care, 2) the social connection, 3) integration facilitators, and 4) rights and citizenship are addressed on the Syrian “minority” social media platforms in Turkey?

To answer this question, the research mainly uses the content analysis technique to examine the online social media originated by Syrians as a minority in Turkey. However, the investigation started by conducting a desk research where theoretical paper and text on the topic were reviewed, and at a later stage the research course involved gathering both qualitative and quantitative data from focus group discussions and Face-to-Face interviews.

3.1 Focus Group Discussions

Four exploratory focus groups were organised to gain insights on the incentives and preferences of using different social media platforms by Syrians in Turkey. The groups followed a discussion guide that aimed at pinpointing the main challenges Syrian refugees encounter in the host country as well as listing specific social media platforms’ names. Each group consisted of 10 participants who were recruited using a screening questionnaire designed in a way that ensures inviting Syrians who a) access the internet on a daily basis and b) have lived in Turkey for at least three months in order to be familiar with issues that concern Syrians. The below table shows groups locations, gender, and dates:

| | Location | Gender | Date |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Shanlurfa | Male | 07-07-2017 |
| 2 | Shanlurfa | Female | 08-07-2017 |
| 3 | Istanbul | Male | 12-07-2017 |
| 4 | Istanbul | Female | 19-07-2017 |

3.2 Face-to-Face Survey

The results of the conducted focus groups served as a general guide for designing and running structured Face-to-Face interviews with 310 Syrians living in Turkey over the time span of 10 days - 23 July to 1 August 2017. In addition to obtaining demographic information, the interviewees were asked about their views of the role and effectiveness of Syrian “minority”

social media and the names of Syrian pages they frequently check. The questionnaire also included filtering questions to ensure that all interviewees have come and lived in Turkey after the 2011 events in Syria. The sample was distributed almost equally between Istanbul (147) and Shanlurfa, (163), the two provinces that host the largest population of Syrian refugees in Turkey according to a report -published online by Turk Press on 12 April 2016⁴- by the Turkish Ministry of Interior Directorate of Immigration. As the target universe has no determined geographical area, house-to-house sampling approach was inapplicable so a convenience sampling method was adopted instead. This method enabled a direct and easy accessibility to interviewees through distributing our enumerators in public sites typically known to have a notable presence of members of the target population. Nonetheless, in order to increase the representativeness of the sample, a strict quota was followed in terms of gender and age. The sample was divided evenly into female and male respondents, and it was built after consulting the results of 2013 Field Survey Results⁵. The sample distribution was as below:

| Location | 15-20 | 21-25 | 26-35 | 36-50 | 50+ | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Istanbul | 14 | 28 | 44 | 50 | 11 | 147 |
| Al-Fateh | 3 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 3 | 33 |
| Esenyurt Square | 2 | 7 | 14 | 16 | 1 | 40 |
| Innovia Residential Compound | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 13 |
| Ümraniye | 4 | 5 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 30 |
| Youssef Pasha | 3 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 31 |
| Shanlurfa | 14 | 27 | 40 | 53 | 29 | 163 |
| Sikorta | 5 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 30 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 1 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 24 |
| Donitche | 1 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 20 |
| Hayati Haran | 4 | 5 | 9 | 18 | 3 | 39 |
| Yawoz Salim | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 13 |
| Bhaghl Bassi | 3 | 5 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 37 |
| Total | 28 | 55 | 84 | 103 | 40 | 310 |

3.3 Content Analysis

⁴ Source: <http://www.turkpress.co/node/20607>

⁵ Source: https://www.afad.gov.tr/upload/Node/3926/xfiles/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-2013_print_12_11_2013_eng.pdf

Results from the desk research, focus group discussions and Face-to-Face interviews were all incorporated to determine the widely used social media platforms/pages by Syrians in Turkey. Content analysis was applied to examine the function of these social media platforms and to assess their contribution to the integration process. Since content analysis is considered a reliable indicator of the role a minority press plays in society (Johansson & Battiston 2014), using it can be a practical tool to underline the functions of the selected Syrian minority social media platforms in connection to the integration of Syrian refugees in the Turkish community.

Initially, all social media platforms were targeted by this research. However, the outcomes of the focus groups and Face-to-Face interviews, the results obtained from Investimate previous research, and the indicators of the preliminary desk research showed that Facebook (Fb) is the primary social media platform used by the Syrians in Turkey. Accordingly, only Fb pages were examined through the content analysis.

Thirty-two Fb pages were sampled for the content analysis. These pages are oriented towards, and mainly serve, the Syrian minority in Turkey. The language that these Fb pages are using is Arabic which is the main language of Syrians. These 32 Facebook pages were selected because other ones are either less active and include outdated posts, or they are in the form of closed Fb groups. Most importantly, the selected Fb pages are the most popular pages amongst Syrians in Turkey as per the outcomes of the focus groups and Face-to-Face interviews.

The first 50 posts published on each one of the selected Fb pages during the period from the 1st until the 26th of June 2017 (or all the posts published during this period in case they were less than 25) were sampled for the analysis. However, the content analysis did not cover the comment section of the sampled posts. Accordingly, the total number of posts included in the content analysis reached 998. The purpose of selecting this specific time frame was to neutralize the impact of holy month of Ramadan, which started on the 27th of May in Turkey. That is because the consumption patterns of social media during Ramadan becomes more oriented towards topics related to greetings, food, and beverage and less representative to the general consumption patterns of social media during different months. The limited number of posts sampled for the content analysis and the exclusion of the comment section are attributed to pragmatic reasons about the availability of resources in terms of time, researchers and budget.

The methodology used to conduct the content analysis of the selected Fb pages includes a directed content analysis that has been utilized benefiting from the elements required to integrate refugees in the host community as indicated in the existing theory covered in the LR. In fact, according to Hsieh & Shannon, 2005 existing theory or research “can provide predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme” (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p.1281). Therefore, the sampled content from the selected Fb pages was coded using the predetermined codes stemmed from the requirements of refugees’ integration covered in the LR review. However, data that could not be coded were identified and analyzed later to determine if they represent a new category or a subcategory of an existing code. Due to the nature of the posts on Fb pages, mainly in terms of their length, it was not applicable that one post could be classified under more than one theme/code. Subsequently, a quantitative content analysis was conducted to construct a frequency table that counts the total number of cases. Each one of the themes has emerged from the total 998 posts that were coded and, accordingly, calculated the percentage of this total number of cases to the total number of posts.

In designing the methodology used to carry-out the content analysis, this paper also benefited from the work of Gerodimos and Justinussen, 2015, Choa, Schweickart and Haase, 2014, and Ngomba, 2016 to highlight the type of content in the selected Fb pages that receives the highest level of attention from the audiences. In this context, Gerodimos and Justinussen argued that “the number of interactions on Fb posts more or less reflects what captures followers’ attention” (Gerodimos & Justinussen 2015, p.118). Moreover, Moonhee Choa, Tiffany Schweickart and Abigail Haase pointed out that Fb entitles the audience to engage with the message of the post “through three different engagement tools, which appear in the bottom of the content: Like, Share, and Comment” (Choa, Schweickart, & Haase 2014, p.565). They further argued that “compared to the other two engagement features, Comment is the highest level of engagement because it requires more effort by the public” (Choa, Schweickart, & Haase 2014, p.565). Following this and mimicking the work of Teke Ngomba 2016, the number of comments on all the sampled posts from the selected Fb pages was recorded. The top 20 commented posts from all the selected Fb pages were examined, and the average number of comments received by each

pointed out sub-theme was calculated and compared to the average number of comments received by all the examined posts to assess the popularity of the topics included in these posts.

4. Findings

The table in the next page shows all the themes pointed out by the quantitative content analysis of the examined posts from the selected pages. The themes are categorized in accordance with the requirement of successful integration as outlined by Ager and Strang, 2008. The table presents these themes in a descending order in terms of their arising frequency on the examined posts. The table also illustrates the percentage of the arising frequency for each theme, and sub-theme, to the total number of the examined posts.

The table indicates that the most frequently arising theme from the examined posts is the theme related to establishing social connections with the Turkish community and maintaining social connections with the Syrian community. This theme accounted for almost 46% of the total number of posts examined. Remarkably, within this theme the arising sub-themes were almost evenly distributed between enhancing social links of the audience with the Turkish community (23.5% of the examined posts) and maintaining the audience’s social connections with their homeland and community within Turkey (21.8% of the examined posts). However, the sub-theme related to establishing connection between the audience and structures of the state in Turkey has slightly arisen representing only 0.3% of the examined posts. It is worth mentioning that the sub-theme of enhancing social links of the audience with the Turkish community included all the posts that provide the audience with news about Turkey; inform the audience about the Turkish culture, traditions, lifestyle, and folklore; in addition to the posts that promote social interaction with the Turkish community.

Table No. 4: Themes Pointed out by the Quantitative Content Analysis of Examined Posts

| Pointed out Themes | Frequency (No. of Posts) | % |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| A. Establishing social connections with the Turkish community and maintaining the social connections with the Syrian community: | 456 | 45.7% |
| 1) Enhancing social links of audiences with the Turkish community. | 235 | 23.5% |
| 2) Maintaining the audience’s social connections with their | 218 | 21.8% |

| | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| homeland and community within Turkey. | | |
| 3) Establishing connection between the audience and structures of the state in Turkey. | 3 | 0.3% |
| B. Facilitating access across the sectors of education, employment, health care, and housing in Turkey: | 213 | 21% |
| 1) Assisting the audience in the area of access to education. | 97 | 9.7% |
| 2) Assisting the audience in the area of access to employment. | 79 | 7.9% |
| 3) Assisting the audience in the area of access to health care. | 33 | 3.3% |
| 4) Assisting the audience in the area of access to housing. | 4 | 0.4% |
| C. Overcoming barriers to establishing social connections within the Turkish community: | 100 | 10% |
| 1) Providing the audience with Turkish language acquisition training. | 54 | 5.4% |
| 2) Assuring the safety and stability of the audience within the Turkish community. | 46 | 4.6% |
| D. Issues related to the citizenship and rights of Syrian people in Turkey: | 71 | 7.1% |
| 1) The entitlement of rights for the audience within Turkey. | 71 | 7.1% |
| Others (not related to the integration process) | 158 | 15.8% |
| Total Number of Examined Posts | 998 | 100% |

The theme connected to facilitating access to the sectors of education, employment, health care, and housing in Turkey was the second most addressed integration-related theme in the sample representing 21% of the examined posts. The sub-theme related to assisting the audience in having access to education emerged mainly within this theme standing for almost 10% of the total examined posts. This was followed by the sub-theme connected to assisting the audience in employment and finding job opportunities accounting for 8% of the total examined posts, and then by the sub-theme concerning assisting the audience in health care issues, with 3.3% of the total examined posts. Nevertheless, assisting the audience in housing was the least addressed sub-theme among all integration-related themes which emerged in 0.4% of the total number of posts selected.

Overcoming barriers to establishing social connections within the Turkish community, including the areas of providing the audience with Turkish language acquisition training, and assuring the safety and stability of Syrians within the host community were not significantly represented in the examined posts. Actually, the sub-themes connected to these two areas accounted for only

5.4% and 4.6% of the total examined posts respectively. Furthermore, the theme covering issues related to citizenship and rights of Syrian people in Turkey was the least emphasized integration-related theme in the sample representing around 7% of the total posts.

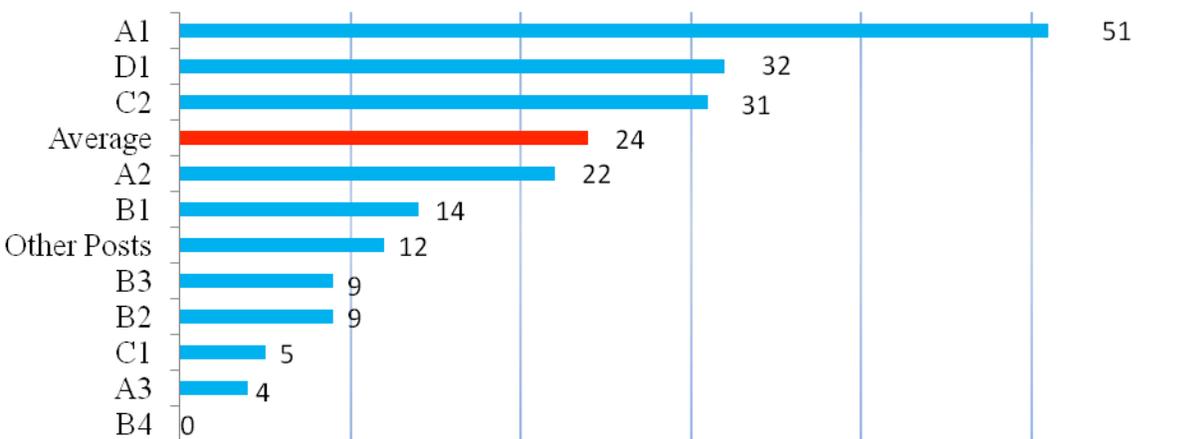
The content analysis of all the examined posts also shows that the top three commented posts are primarily connected to the theme of establishing social connections with the Turkish community and maintaining social connections with the Syrian community. In fact, 60% of the top 20 commented posts are related to the sub-theme of enhancing social links of the audiences with the Turkish community, and 15% is related to the sub-theme of maintaining the audiences social connections with their homeland and community within Turkey. However, the remaining 25% of the top 20 commented posts is related to both the sub-themes on the entitlement of rights for the audiences within Turkey and assuring the safety and stability of them within the Turkish community.

To assess the popularity of the topics included in these posts, the table and chart below illustrate the average number of comments received by each pointed-out sub-theme compared to the average number of comments received by all the examined posts. The detailed popularity analysis is included in Findings Discussion and Analysis below.

Table No. 5: The Average Number of Comments Received by the Pointed Out Themes in the Quantitative Content Analysis of the Examined Posts

| Code | Pointed out Themes | Comments Average | Description |
|------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| A1 | Enhancing the social links of the audience with the Turkish community | 51 | Above average |
| D1 | The entitlement of rights for the audience within Turkey | 32 | |
| C2 | Assuring the safety and stability of the audience within the Turkish community | 31 | |
| All Posts | | 24 | Average |
| A2 | Maintaining the audience social connections with their homeland and community within Turkey | 22 | Below average |
| B1 | Assisting the audience to have access to education | 14 | |
| Other Posts | | 12 | |
| B3 | Assisting the audience to have access to health care | 9 | |
| B2 | Assisting the audience to have access to employment | 9 | |
| C1 | Providing the audience with Turkish language acquisition training | 5 | |
| A3 | Establishing connection between the audience and structures of the state in Turkey | 4 | |
| B4 | Assisting the audience to have access to housing | 0 | |

Figure No. 1: Comments per Post by Theme (Average)



5. Findings Discussion and Analysis

The research findings reveal that 85% of the themes arising from the examined posts are connected to the requirements of successful integration as outlined in the LR while only 15% of these themes are covering areas not related to the integration process.

The findings of this research illustrate that the examined Syrian ‘minority’ Fb pages are playing two main roles in facilitating Syrian refugees’ integration in Turkey as a host community. These two roles correspond to the required elements indicated in the LR.

The first role is that these Fb pages take part in assisting Syrians in Turkey to establish social connections with the Turkish community and maintain their social connections with the Syrian community. In this context, the findings show that almost half of the examined posts are connected to this theme distributed evenly between the sub-themes of enhancing social links of the audiences with the Turkish community and maintaining their social connections with Syrian community in Turkey and their homeland.

Thus the examined Fb pages are assisting Syrian people in Turkey to build social connections with the Turkish community by providing them with news about Turkey; informing them about the Turkish culture, traditions, lifestyle, and folklore; in addition to promoting social interaction with the Turkish community. The effectiveness of the selected Fb pages in relation to this role was partially endorsed by the outcomes of the conducted Face-to-Face interviews, as 40% of the respondents in these interviews agreed that the examined pages are educating Syrians in Turkey about the Turkish community while only 13% agreed that these pages are maintaining social connections with Syrians in Turkey and Syria.

However, the evidence on the popularity and audience engagement in the studied pages related to this role is mixed. In reality, the top three posts in terms of the number of comments that these posts received are addressing topics about enhancing social links with the Turkish community and maintaining social connections with Syria and Syrian community in the host country. Yet, the analysis shows that the average number of comments received by the sub-theme related to enhancing social links of the audiences with the Turkish community is above the average number of comments received by all the examined posts in general. Nevertheless, this number is below

the average regarding the sub-theme of maintaining social connections with homeland and Syrian community within Turkey. Accordingly, the high level of concentration of the former sub-theme in the examined posts matches the level of attention this sub-theme received from the audiences. However, the level of attention that the latter sub-theme received from the audiences does not match the high level of concentration this sub-theme has shown in the examined posts.

The second role is that these Fb pages participate in facilitating the access of Syrian people in Turkey to the sectors of education, employment, health care, and housing. In this regard, the findings indicate that around 21% of the examined posts are related to this theme. Yet, the evidence on the popularity and effectiveness of the selected pages regarding this role is mixed. That is, topics connected to these areas have not received much attention from the audiences given that they are not included amongst the top 20 posts in terms of the number of comments. Additionally, the average number of comments received by all the sub-themes within this theme is below the average number of comments received by all the examined posts in general. Accordingly, the high frequency of this theme in the examined posts does not match the level of attention this theme received from the audiences. Moreover, the percentage of the respondents in the Face-to-Face interviews who agree that the examined Fb pages are assisting them in gaining access to health care and employment reached 21% and 10% respectively. Nevertheless, the respondents who believe that these Fb pages are supporting them concerning housing represented only 7% of the total interviewees. Furthermore, the percentage was even lower (6%) for those who support the statement that these pages are facilitating their access to education.

The findings of this paper further indicate that the contribution of the examined Syrian Fb pages was marginal in other vital elements of the process of integrating refugees in the host community as outlined in the LR. To start with, in the area of overcoming barriers to establishing social connections within the Turkish community, the findings illustrate that only 10% of the examined posts are dedicated to both providing the audience with Turkish language acquisition training and assuring the safety and stability of the audience within the Turkish community. This corresponds with the outcomes of the Face-to-Face interviews as only 12% of the respondents agree that the selected Fb pages are assisting them in learning Turkish language. Furthermore, the average number of comments received by sub-theme connected to providing the audiences

with Turkish language acquisition training is below the average number of comments received by all the examined posts in general. Accordingly, the fewer number of posts of this sub-theme in the examined posts matches the level of attention it received from the audience. The reverse is true for the sub-theme about assuring the safety and stability of the audience within the Turkish community, as the average number of comments on posts of this sub-theme is above the average number of comments received by all the examined posts in general.

Moreover, issues related to citizenship and legal rights of Syrians in Turkey were inadequately covered in the examined posts. This also coincides with the results of the Face-to-Face interviews showing that merely 15% of the respondents agree that the examined Fb pages are providing information on the rights of Syrian people in Turkey. However, the average number of comments received by this sub-theme is above the data average in general. Therefore, the low frequency of this sub-theme in the examined posts does not match the level of attention this sub-theme received.

Moving to another aspect of the assessment, the findings of this paper demonstrate that the indicated roles of the examined Syrian minority Fb pages in Turkey partly correspond with the typical functions of minority media that are underlined in the LR.

To begin with, the LR pointed out that minority media provide their audiences with cultural explanation about the host community to accelerate their adaptation to this new community, and at the same time maintain their audiences' connection with the homeland. The findings of this paper confirm these functions of minority media. In fact, the most frequent theme among the studied posts is the one related to establishing social connections with the Turkish community and maintaining social connections with the Syrian community. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the arising sub-themes within this theme were nearly equally distributed between enhancing the social links of the audience with the Turkish community and maintaining the audiences' social connections with their homeland and community within Turkey. Additionally, the findings endorse the tendency of minority media to meet information needs of the minority for their day-to-day life in the host community, as indicated in the LR. Actually, 21% of the examined posts are on topics in the areas of facilitating the access of Syrians to the sectors of education, employment, health care, and housing in Turkey.

However, the findings indicate that the sampled Fb pages are not playing an active role in providing the audiences with Turkish language acquisition training. Consequently, it might be argued that these pages fall short in fully supporting the Syrian minority in Turkey to overcome the linguistic difficulties that hinder their integration which is considered as one of the main functions of the minority media as outlined in the LR. Furthermore, the role of minority media in warning the minority about threats they might be exposed to in the host community has not received a great deal of attention in the reviewed literature which coincides with findings of the study. This is to say that the sub-theme related to assuring the safety and stability of the audiences within the Turkish community accounted for 4.6% of the total examined posts.

6. Research Shortcomings and Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study might be supplemented through interviewing a representative sample of the initiators and moderators of the examined Fb pages. These interviews can assist in exploring the motive or the agenda behind creating these pages pointing out any kind of support they might be receiving from any party to engage in this process. In Addition, they can help in identifying the type of support required to enhance the role these pages are playing in facilitating refugees' integration process.

For pragmatic reasons related to the availability of project resources in terms of time, researchers and budget, the number of posts sampled for content analysis was limited to 998. For the same reasons, the comments content on these posts were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, it should be pointed out that increasing the number of the examined posts and including the comments in the analysis might indicate additional roles of the selected Fb pages in the area of facilitating the integration of Syrian refugees and migrants in Turkey or in other countries.

The findings show that the evidence varies regarding the popularity and effectiveness of the examined Fb pages about facilitating the access of the Syrian minority in Turkey to the sectors of education, employment, health care, and housing. Consequently, it is recommended for further researches to focus on exploring the reasons behind the variation between the frequency of tackling these topics by the studied pages; the popularity of these topics among audiences and the way the role of these pages in these areas is perceived by the audiences.

As mentioned in the methodology section, the research applied a deductive approach (directed content analysis) benefiting from the elements required to integrate refugees in the host community as indicated in the studied theories. However, adopting an inductive approach for the content analysis might provide further insights on the roles that the examined media platforms play in the area of refugee integration.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, this research indicates that educating the Syrian refugees as minority in Turkey about the country and the local community, and maintaining their connection with Syria are the main roles that the examined Fb pages are playing to facilitate their integration in the new community. The paper shows that the effectiveness of the studied pages in these areas is, to a certain extent, endorsed by the feedback of the audiences through Face-to-Face interviews. Furthermore, the study indicates that the participation of the selected platforms in these areas is relatively popular among their audiences. However, the findings show that these platforms attempt to facilitate the access of Syrians to the sectors of employment, education, health care, and housing. Yet, the effectiveness and popularity of these platforms in the four domains do not seem to be well established. Additionally, the paper demonstrates that the examined pages are moderately contributing in assisting the audiences in learning Turkish language. In fact, the results show that the engagement of the audiences with the posts connected to this is relatively low. Lastly, the study indicates that audiences pay high attention to the topics related to the rights of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and their safety and stability in the country. Yet, the coverage of these issues by the examined pages does not coincide with such remarkable interest.

Appendix 1: List of Examined Facebook Pages

| Link | Page Name | # |
|---|--|----|
| https://www.facebook.com/trkyaganetelard/?hc_ref=SEARCH&fref=nf | تركيا جنة الأرض | 1 |
| https://www.facebook.com/pg/%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-420579944949053/posts/?ref=page_internal | اخبار السوريين في تركيا | 2 |
| https://www.facebook.com/jalia.turkey/ | الجالية الاسطنبولية | 3 |
| https://www.facebook.com/syriancommunityinturkey/ | الجالية السورية في تركيا | 4 |
| https://www.facebook.com/ardoghan.ar/ | الصفحة العربية لرئيس رجب طيب أردوغان | 5 |
| https://www.facebook.com/turkyide.universeteler/ | الطريق الى الجامعات التركية | 6 |
| https://www.facebook.com/ItsTrk/?hc_ref=SEARCH | النجاح في تركيا | 7 |
| https://www.facebook.com/alminha.alturkiyye/ | أخبار المنح التركية | 8 |
| https://www.facebook.com/almuhajirinturkey/ | أخبار تركيا العاجلة | 9 |
| https://www.facebook.com/SyriansInTurkey/ | تجمع السوريين في تركيا | 10 |
| https://www.facebook.com/syria.kirikhan/ | تجمع السوريين في كركخان تركيا الرسمي Kırıkhan'da Topluluğu Suriyeliler | 11 |
| https://www.facebook.com/taalam.alturki/?ref=br_rs | تعلم التركية ببساطة | 12 |
| https://www.facebook.com/hussamorfali/ | حسام اورفلي | 13 |
| https://www.facebook.com/alr7anya/ | خدمات سوريين تركيا الريحانية | 14 |
| https://www.facebook.com/groups/695869343801163/ | خدمات علمية في تركيا يوز | 15 |
| https://www.facebook.com/Dalel.alsoreen/?ref=br_rs | دليل السوريين في تركيا | 16 |
| https://www.facebook.com/Daleelk.in.urfa/ | دليلك في اورفا | 17 |
| https://www.facebook.com/groups/Dubarah.Turkey/?source_id=564780280216692 | دوبارة تركيا | 18 |
| https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofSyriansinTurkey/ | رابطة السوريين بتركيا | 19 |
| https://www.facebook.com/groups/472050599638895/?ref=br_rs | سوريون في اسينيورث | 20 |
| https://www.facebook.com/alabbsali/ | سوريون في شانلي اورفا Şanlıurfa | 21 |
| https://www.facebook.com/سوريين في اسطنبول 831137613591302/ | سوريين في اسطنبول | 22 |
| https://www.facebook.com/enab.baladi/ | عنب بلدي | 23 |
| https://www.facebook.com/gherbetna/ | غربتنا | 24 |
| https://www.facebook.com/JOBS4SYRIANINTURKEY | فرص عمل للسوريين في تركيا | 25 |
| https://www.facebook.com/NersisAkob/ | قصص هيكل صار معي بتركيا | 26 |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----|
| https://www.facebook.com/groups/108130039769541/ | مشفى سوريا الالكتروني | 27 |
| https://www.facebook.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84-295972613940092/ | موقع القنصلية السورية | 28 |
| https://www.facebook.com/وظائف للسوريين و العرب في 1564202113823618 تركيا/?ref=br_rs | وظائف للسوريين و العرب في تركيا | 29 |
| https://www.facebook.com/yusuf90.06/ | يوسف الملا | 30 |
| https://www.facebook.com/turkvearab/ | يوميات السوريين في تركيا | 31 |
| https://www.facebook.com/%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-1480382352217462/?ref=br_rs | يوميات سوري في تركيا | 32 |

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