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THE ROLE OF ONLINE NEWS IN DEMOCRACY IN THE CONTEXT OF HATE SPEECH: AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

PHD THESIS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS : Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDA : Critical discourse analysis
CMC : Computer-mediated technology
DARPA : Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
ECHR : European Convention of Human Rights
ECRI : European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EJN : Ethical Journalism Network
HIV : Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTML : Hyper Text Markup Language
ICCPR : International Covenant on Civil and Political Right
ICT : Information and communication technology
IFJ : International Federation of Journalists
LGBT : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NCP : Network Control Protocol
NGO : Non-governmental organization
NWICO : New World Information and Communication Order
OECD : Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE : Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SRI : Stanford Research Institute
UCC : User-created content
UDHR : Universal Declaration of Human Rights
www : World Wide Web

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RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif principal de cette étude de thèse est d'examiner le rôle des nouvelles en ligne dans la démocratie dans le contexte du discours de haine. A cet égard, la problématique de recherche de cette étude a été développée comme suit: Les nouvelles en ligne offrent-elles une alternative à l'utilisation des droits démocratiques pour les victimes du discours de haine? La détermination du contexte de l'étude comme discours haineux provient du fait que le discours de haine de certains groupes soumis à des discours haineux et influencés par lui, et dans ce sens, contraints de renoncer à leurs droits d'exprimer leur voix, leur parole et leur participation à la vie sociale et politique qui constituent les composantes essentielles de la démocratie, est un obstacle à l'utilisation des droits démocratiques. Sur cette base, l'hypothèse essentielle de l'étude est que les victimes de discours de haine peuvent bénéficier des nouvelles en ligne dans le contexte de la reprise de leurs droits de l'expression de leur voie, de la parole et de leur participation à la vie sociale et politique.

Le discours de haine rejette les droits de certains groupes de la société en les blessant, les retirant de l'humanité, les harcelant, les menaçant, dégradant leur réputation, les humiliant et les sacrifiant, et favorise l'insensibilité et la cruauté envers ces groupes. En d'autres termes, le discours de haine est basé sur l'exclusion et la dévaluation de certains groupes dans la société et représente une hiérarchie systémique.

Cette hiérarchie systémique est fondée sur l'idéologie qui représente l'idéologie dominante, et les médias jouent un rôle important dans la diffusion de ce discours. Le discours de haine dans ce sens est une pratique discursive qui sert les intérêts de l'idéologie dominante à travers le discours des médias. En particulier, les médias de nouvelles jouent un rôle important dans la dissémination du discours de haine parce que les nouvelles sont considérées comme une représentation de la vie réelle. Qu'ils soient traditionnels ou numériques, les médias encouragent, promeuvent et légitiment la haine envers certains groupes de la société plutôt que de promouvoir la compréhension interculturelle en assumant un rôle dans la lutte contre la discrimination.

La démocratie exige que les médias soient largement disponibles et accessibles, reflètent la nature pluraliste de la communauté, ne soient pas dominés et contrôlés par certains groupes d'intérêt, fournissent aux citoyens l'information nécessaire pour prendre des décisions éclairées et fournissent un instrument de débat public. L'évaluation des médias traditionnels dans ce sens révèle qu'ils ne peuvent pas remplir ce rôle dans la démocratie. En ce sens, il est estimé que les informations

en ligne fournissent un outil non contrôlé par un groupe ayant des attributs technologiques tels que influence, participation, hypertextualité, multicentricité et diversité, offrent aux citoyens un accès plus rapide et plus facile, fournissent diverses informations aux citoyens et rendent le débat public possible.

A cet égard, la présente étude examine si les nouvelles en ligne offrent ces possibilités aux victimes de discours de haine. Les victimes de discours de haine sont définis comme des individus qui s'identifient comme membres d'un des groupes spécifiques exposés, étant objet au/de discours de haine ou affectés par le discours de haine sur la base de caractéristiques telles que le sexe, la race, la religion, l'origine ethnique, la couleur, l'origine nationale, l'orientation sexuelle, le handicap ou l'état de santé. Afin de mener une analyse complète et détaillée, la présente étude se concentre sur un seul des groupes mentionnés, à savoir les personnes vivant avec le VIH.

A cet égard, le discours de haine pour les personnes séropositives dans les nouvelles en ligne avant l'évaluation du rôle des nouvelles en ligne dans la démocratie est exemplifié. En conséquence, les informations provenant de trois sites d'information en ligne différents entre le 1er janvier 2016 et le 31 décembre 2016 ont été analysées par la méthode d'analyse du discours critique de van Dijk. L'examen des nouvelles en ligne en termes de discours haineux consiste la base de la deuxième phase de l'étude, qui vise à examiner les opinions des personnes séropositives sur le discours de haine dans les nouvelles en ligne ainsi que les avantages que ces nouvelles fournissent pour l'utilisation des droits démocratiques. Dans ce sens, des entretiens approfondis ont été menés avec 10 personnes séropositives et on est axé sur leurs points de vue à propos d'autres implications démocratiques telles que la consommation de nouvelles, l'accès, la participation, la production de contenu et la liberté d'expression, le débat public et la censure.

L'une des principales conclusions de l'analyse du discours critique est qu'il n'y a pas de discours de haine explicite dans les nouvelles. En d'autres termes, il n'y a aucune expression de sentiments de haine directe dans les nouvelles. Cependant, il existe des expressions qui fournissent une idéologie affectant les attitudes, les pensées et les croyances sur les personnes séropositives et qui soutiennent, défendent et légitiment l'intolérance et les préjugés. En ce sens, les nouvelles étudiées produisent des attitudes préjudiciables ainsi que renforcent le discours existant sur la discrimination et la haine envers les personnes vivant avec le VIH.

La rétrospective utilisée de nouvelles renforce souvent les croyances et les attitudes basées sur la désinformation et la connaissance sur le VIH / SIDA. Le VIH / SIDA est présenté comme une menace pour la société, ce qui renforce la distinction entre “nous” et “eux” parce que cela signifie qu'ils (les individus séropositifs) sont une menace pour nous (société). Cette distinction devient également évidente dans le sujet des nouvelles. Ceux qui vivent avec le VIH ne sont pas l'objet des nouvelles, mais ils ne sont que le traitement du contenu de l'information. En ce sens, il est

possible de dire que les nouvelles “nous” offrent des faits sur les “autres”. Cette approche produit et encourage à la fois les stigmates, les stéréotypes et les préjugés contre les personnes séropositives, ce qui légitime l'aliénation et la stigmatisation des personnes vivant avec le VIH et provoque l'émergence de discours de haine.

Le discours des personnes séropositives sur le fait que les nouvelles en ligne favorisent et propagent les préjugés, la stigmatisation et la discrimination à leur encontre ainsi que sur l’indication qu’il existe une utilisation incorrecte de fausses déclarations, de désinformation et de la terminologie dans le contenu des nouvelles, démontrent que les résultats obtenus à partir de l'analyse du discours critique et des entretiens approfondis sont cohérents. Malgré le fait que le discours de haine contient toutes sortes d'expressions qui encouragent, disséminent, défendent ou légitiment les attitudes discriminatoires, menaçantes, condamnantes et préjudiciables, les personnes séropositives n'identifient pas cela comme un discours haineux et indiquent que ce discours haineux est internalisé et légitimé par les victimes. Il est expliqué par la théorie légitimation du système que ces victimes de discours haineux ont adopté l'idée que les préjugés et les attitudes négatives liées au VIH / SIDA représentent des valeurs sociales, et par conséquent, ils normalisent le discours de haine.

En termes de contenu, à la fois l'analyse du discours critique et l'analyse des entretiens approfondis révèlent que le contenu des nouvelles sur le VIH / SIDA ne fournit pas l'information nécessaire et suffisante. Etant donné que les nouvelles sont une source d'information qui contribue à la formation de citoyens conscients, les nouvelles sur le VIH / SIDA ne réussissent pas à fournir des informations complètes sur le sujet. Mais même si le contenu des nouvelles en ligne est inadéquat, les nouvelles en ligne offrent des opportunités pour la démocratie avec ses caractéristiques technologiques. Ces opportunités sont principalement liées à la consommation et à l'accès aux informations.

De ce point de vue, l’Internet offre des possibilités d'accès faciles et supprime les frontières géographiques, car les nouvelles provenant de différents sites Web et applications en ligne dans différents pays peuvent être suivies rapidement et clairement. Cependant, ces opportunités peuvent mener à l'inégalité de l'information, car tout le monde n'a pas les compétences et les outils pour consommer des nouvelles en ligne. C'est également un problème que les sites d'information en ligne turcs sont limités à la fois en termes de qualité et de quantité, parce que les gens sont principalement informés sur les nouvelles sur le VIH / SIDA.

En ce qui concerne la participation, les sites d'information en ligne permettent aux individus séropositifs d'avoir leur mot à dire sur les nouvelles qu'ils vont consommer et d'interagir avec d'autres utilisateurs à un certain niveau en lisant les commentaires des autres dans la section des commentaires; mais ne leur donnent pas un rôle dans les processus de production de nouvelles. A cet égard, la plateforme en ligne offre un accès rapide et un accès aux personnes séropositives, mais elle est limitée en termes d'interaction démocratique. En outre, la production de contenu se

limite aux blogs et à la rédaction de nouvelles en ligne, et ceux-ci ne sont pas journalistiques. La seule déduction démocratique en ce sens est le rôle de l'organisme de vérification dans lequel les séropositifs, qui publient des commentaires, publient des courriels à l'éditeur et partagent des nouvelles avec d'autres pour révéler de fausses informations dans le contenu des nouvelles.

En ce qui concerne d'autres implications démocratiques, le seul endroit où une discussion peut avoir lieu est la section des commentaires des sites d'information. Et compte tenu de la nature des commentaires, il semble peu probable une discussion rationnelle sur les sites d'information en ligne parce que les utilisateurs ne sont pas destinés à parvenir à un résultat, la participation active des utilisateurs est rare, il y a des opinions exprimées au lieu d'un dialogue démocratique entre les utilisateurs, et la participation est la plupart du temps anonymes. De plus, le faits que les utilisateurs ne peuvent pas utiliser pleinement le droit à la liberté d'expression et que leurs commentaires soient bloqués dans la section des commentaires, conduisent au fait que les sites d'information en ligne sont considérés comme un moyen d'améliorer les conditions démocratiques. En conséquence, les nouvelles en ligne l'interaction avec des fonctionnalités telles que l'interactivité, l'hypertextualité, la rapidité, l'espace, la diversité et multi-centrage, offrent aux victimes de discours haineux un outil pratique pour le droit à l'information qui est le fondement de la démocratie; mais ne répondent pas aux attentes de l'utilisation émancipatrice des droits démocratiques pour s'exprimer, parler et participer à la vie sociale et politique.

En conséquence, le discours de haine est un problème pour les idéaux démocratiques, et l'Internet avec ses caractéristiques technologiques facilite la production et la diffusion du discours de haine. Malgré cela, Internet offre des opportunités pour combattre le discours de haine, et les nouvelles en ligne ont le potentiel d'être utilisées comme un outil important dans cette lutte. Tout d'abord, les nouvelles en ligne avec des fonctionnalités de vitesse et de zone devraient fournir un accès facile à plus de contenu de nouvelles, mais ce contenu doit contenir des informations valides et fiables. Deuxièmement, les possibilités de participation et de production de contenu devraient être élargies grâce à l'interaction, et les utilisateurs de sites d'information en ligne devraient faire partie des processus de production de nouvelles. Troisièmement, avec sa structure multi-centrée, il devrait fournir un environnement dans lequel les citoyens peuvent exprimer leurs opinions sans censure et entendre les autres. Enfin, les nouvelles en ligne devraient promouvoir la compréhension mutuelle et le bien-être social. Cependant, dans ces conditions, les nouvelles en ligne peuvent jouer un rôle important pour améliorer les conditions démocratiques, et ces objectifs ne peuvent être atteints que grâce à des pratiques journalistiques éthiques.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. In this regard, the research question of study is generated as follows: Does online news provide an alternative medium for the victims of hate speech in terms of their ability to exercise their democratic rights? Determining the context of the study to be hate speech is based on the fact that hate speech is considered as an obstacle for the enjoyment of democratic rights by certain groups, who are exposed to and affected by hate speech and forced to renounce their rights to be heard, to speak, and to participate in social and political life, which are compulsory components of democracy. On the basis of this, the main hypothesis is that victims of hate speech can benefit from online news in terms of reclaiming their rights to be heard, to speak and to participate in social and political life.

Hate speech in a society denies the rights of certain groups by aiming to injure, dehumanize, harass, intimidate, debase, degrade, and victimize these groups, which encourages insensitivity and brutality against them. In other words, hate speech is based on exclusion and devaluation of certain groups in society, which represents a systemic hierarchy.

This systemic hierarchy is constructed on the basis of discourse that represents the dominant ideology and media plays an important role in the dissemination of this discourse. In this sense, hate speech is a discursive practice that serves the benefits of the dominant ideology, which is endorsed through the discourse of media. Especially, news media plays an important role in the dissemination of hate speech because news is considered as the representation of real life. Whether it is traditional or digital, news media promotes, popularizes and justifies hate towards certain groups in society; whereas it should play a role in combating discrimination and in promoting intercultural understanding. This is the only way how media can fulfill its responsibilities that are required for a viable democracy.

Democracy necessitates media to be widely available and accessible; reflect the pluralistic nature of society; not be dominated or controlled by certain interest groups; provide necessary information for citizens to make informed decisions; and provide the means for public debate. Evaluation of traditional media reveals that it fails to perform this role in democracy. In this sense, online news is considered to provide a medium that is not controlled by one group; to offer faster and more convenient access for citizens; to present information for citizens in a diversified manner; and to enable public debate through the technological features of interactivity, participation, hypertexuality, polycentrality, and multiplicity.

In this respect, this study examines online news in the sense that whether it provides these opportunities for hate speech victims. Victims of hate speech is defined as any individual, who defines himself/herself as a member of a certain group that is exposed or subjected to, and affected by hate speech on the basis of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, health condition and other protected characteristics. In order to make an extensive and thorough analysis, this study focuses on only one of those groups, namely people living with HIV.

In this regard, hate speech against HIV positive people in online news is demonstrated before evaluating the role of online news in democracy. Accordingly, news items that take place on three online news websites in the time period between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016 are analyzed by adopting the method of critical discourse analysis suggested by van Dijk. Analyzing online news in terms of hate speech provides the basis for the second stage of research, which aims to explore the perspectives of people living with HIV towards hate speech in online news and its benefits for exercising democratic rights. In this direction, 10 in-depth interviews are conducted with HIV positive people by focusing on their views about news consumption, access, participation, content creation, and other democratic implications such as freedom of expression, public debate and censorship.

One of the main findings of critical discourse analysis is that hate speech is not found in an explicit manner in analyzed news items, which means that news do not contain direct expressions of the emotion of hate. However, there are expressions that promote, defend or justify intolerance and prejudices, which present an ideology that influences attitudes, ideas and beliefs about HIV positive people. In this sense, analyzed news both creates prejudicial attitudes and reinforces already existing discrimination and hate speech against people living with HIV.

Rhetorical features strengthen the existing beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, which are mostly based on misconceptions and incorrect information. HIV/AIDS is described as a threat for society, which reinforces the distinction of “us” and “them” because it implies that “they” (HIV positive people) are a threat for “us” (the society). This distinction becomes apparent also in the use of agent news actors, where people living with HIV are not treated as subjects of the news but as mere contents of information. In this sense, it can be said that news items present facts and information about “others” for “us”. This approach of the news both creates and promotes stigmas, stereotypes and prejudices against HIV positive people, which justifies their marginalization and stigmatization in society and causes the formation of hate speech.

Findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews are in accordance with the findings of critical discourse analysis, as HIV positive people claim that online news promotes and popularizes prejudices, stigmatization and discrimination against them

and that online news's content involves misrepresentations, misinformation, and incorrect use of terminology. Even though hate speech encompasses all types of expressions that promote, popularize, defend or justify discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes, HIV positive people do not describe this as hate speech, which points to the fact that hate speech is internalized and justified by its victims. This is explained by system justification theory where hate speech victims adopt the idea that prejudices and negative attitudes about HIV/AIDS represent social values, which results in the normalization of hate speech.

In terms of content, both critical discourse analysis and analysis of in-depth interviews reveal that online news content do not provide necessary and sufficient information about HIV/AIDS. Given the fact that news provides a source of knowledge that helps the creation of informed citizens, online news about HIV/AIDS fails to present comprehensive information on the subject matter. Although online news content is found to be insufficient, there are certain aspects where online news, with its technological features, provides opportunities in terms of democratic implications. These opportunities mostly concern news consumption and access.

In this regard, the features of the Internet provide easy access opportunities and eliminate geographical limitations, where news from other countries can be followed on various websites and online applications in a fast and open manner. However, these opportunities may cause information inequality because not everyone is equipped with necessary skills and tools to consume news online. Moreover, Turkish online news sites are limited both in terms of quantity and quality, which represents a problem because people receive information about HIV/AIDS mostly from the news.

Regarding participation, online news sites enable HIV positive people to control what news they consume and interact with other users to a certain degree, where they can perceive the opinions of other people in comments sections, but it does not grant them a part in news production process. In this direction, online platform offers HIV positive people faster access and the ability to seek information; however its interactivity feature is limited in a democratic sense. Moreover, content production is limited to writing in blogs and commenting on online news, which are not done within the scope of journalism. The only democratic implication in this sense is the role HIV positive people undertake as a public fact-checking body, where they reveal misinformation about news content by leaving a comment, sending an e-mail to news editor, or sharing news items with others by acting as secondary gatekeepers through deciding what news they want to disseminate further.

As for other democratic implications, the only space available for a discussion to take place is the comments section of news sites. And when the characteristics of comments are taken into consideration, a rational debate does not seem to be feasible in online news websites on the basis that users do not aim to come to a conclusion; that active contribution of users is rare; that there is not a democratic dialogue between users but only expressed opinions; and that participation is mostly

anonymous. In addition, the facts that users are unable to practice their right to freedom of expression in its full potential and their contributions are blocked in comments sections prevent online news sites to be considered as a tool for enhancing democratic conditions. All in all, through its characteristics of interactivity, hypertexuality, speed, space, multiplicity and polycentrality, online news provide a more convenient means for hate speech victims to be informed, which is an essential element of democracy; nevertheless, it does not live up to its expectations where democratic rights to be heard, to speak and to participate in social and political life can be exercised in a liberating manner.

In conclusion, hate speech stands as a problem for democratic ideals and with its technological features, the Internet makes it easier for hate speech to be produced and disseminated. Nevertheless, it is again the opportunities of the Internet that provides a chance for battling against hate speech; and online news has the potential to be used as an important tool in this battle. First of all, with its features of speed and space, online news can provide easy access to more news content as long as this content should consist of valid and reliable information. Secondly, participation and content production opportunities should be expanded through the feature of interactivity, where users of online news sites can become a part of news production process. Thirdly, with its polycentric structure, it should provide a milieu, where citizens can express their opinions and hear what others have to say without any censorship. Finally, online news should promote mutual understanding and social tranquility. Only then it is possible to assign an important role to online news in enhancing democratic conditions and the attainment of these objectives is possible only through ethical journalism practices.

ÖZET

Bu tez çalışmasının temel amacı çevrimiçi haberlerin demokrasideki rolünü nefret söylemi bağlamında incelemektir. Bu doğrultuda, çalışmanın araştırma sorunsalı şu şekilde geliştirilmiştir: Çevrimiçi haberler, nefret söylemi mağdurları için demokratik haklarını kullanabilme anlamında bir alternatif sunuyor mu? Çalışmanın bağlamının nefret söylemi olarak belirlenmesi, nefret söylemine maruz kalan ve bundan etkilenen, ve bu doğrultuda demokrasinin zorunlu bileşenleri olan sesini duyurma, konuşma ve toplumsal ve politik yaşama katılım haklarından feragat etmek zorunda bırakılan bazı grupların demokratik hakların kullanımında nefret söyleminin bir engel teşkil etmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Buna dayanarak, çalışmanın temel hipotezi nefret söylemi mağdurlarının çevrimiçi haberlerden sesini duyurma, konuşma ve toplumsal ve politik yaşama katılım haklarını geri kazanmaları bağlamında faydalanabildikleridir.

Nefret söylemi, toplumda belli grupların haklarını onları inciterek, insanlıktan çıkararak, taciz ederek, tehdit ederek, itibarını düşürerek, aşağılayarak ve kurbanlaştırarak reddetmekte ve bu gruplara yönelik anlayışsızlığı ve gaddarlığı teşvik etmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, nefret söylemi toplumdaki belli grupların dışlanması ve değersizleştirilmesine dayanmaktadır ve bu sistemik bir hiyerarşiyi temsil etmektedir.

Bu sistemik hiyerarşi baskın ideolojiyi temsil eden söyleme dayanarak kurulmaktadır ve medya bu söylemin yaygınlaştırılmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu anlamda nefret söylemi, medyanın söylemi aracılığıyla baskın ideolojinin çıkarlarına hizmet eden söylemsel bir pratiktir. Özellikle haber medyası nefret söyleminin yaygınlaştırılmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır çünkü haberler gerçek yaşamın temsili olarak düşünülmektedir. Gerek geleneksel gerekse dijital olsun, haber medyası ayrımcılıkla mücadelede rol üstlenerek kültürlerarası anlayışı desteklemek yerine toplumda belli gruplara yönelik nefreti teşvik etmekte, yaygınlaştırmakta ve meşru kılmaktadır.

Demokrasi, medyanın yaygın biçimde kullanılabilir ve ulaşılabilir olmasını, toplumun çoğulcu yapısını yansıtmasını, belli çıkar grupları tarafından tahakküm ve kontrol edilmemesini, yurttaşların bilinçli karar verebilmesi için gerekli bilgiyi sunmasını ve kamusal müzakere için bir araç sağlamasını gerektirmektedir. Geleneksel medyanın bu anlamda değerlendirilmesi, demokrasideki bu rolünü yerine getiremediğini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu anlamda çevrimiçi haberlerin etkiletişim, katılım, hipermetinsellik, çok merkezlilik ve çok çeşitlilik gibi teknolojiye bağlı özellikleri ile bir grup tarafından kontrol edilmeyen bir araç sağladığı, yurttaşlara

daha hızlı ve kolay erişim imkanı sunduğu, yurttaşlar için çeşitli bilgiler sağladığı ve kamusal müzakereyi mümkün kıldığı düşünülmektedir.

Bu hususta, mevcut çalışma çevrimiçi haberlerin nefret söylemi mağdurları için bu olanakları sağlayıp sağlamadığını incelemektedir. Nefret söylemi mağdurları, kendini toplumsal cinsiyet, ırk, din, etnik köken, renk, ulusal köken, cinsel yönelim, engellilik ya da sağlık durumu gibi özellikler temelinde nefret söylemine maruz kalan, konu edilen ya da nefret söyleminden etkilenen belirli gruplardan birinin üyesi olarak tanımlayan bireyler olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Kapsamlı ve ayrıntılı bir analiz yapabilmek adına mevcut çalışma bahsedilen gruplardan sadece bir tanesine, yani HIV ile yaşayan bireylere odaklanmaktadır.

Bu doğrultuda, çevrimiçi haberlerin demokrasideki rolü değerlendirilmeden önce çevrimiçi haberlerde yer alan HIV pozitif bireylere yönelik nefret söylemi örneklendirilmiştir. Buna bağlı olarak 1 Ocak 2016 ve 31 Aralık 2016 tarihleri arasında üç farklı çevrimiçi haber sitesinde yer alan haberler van Dijk tarafından önerilen eleştirel söylem analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Çevrimiçi haberlerin nefret söylemi bakımından incelenmesi, HIV pozitif bireylerin çevrimiçi haberlerdeki nefret söylemi hakkındaki görüşlerini ve bu haberlerin demokratik haklarını kullanmada sağladığı faydaları incelemeyi amaçlayan araştırmanın ikinci aşaması için temel oluşturmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda 10 HIV pozitif birey ile derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ve haber tüketimi, erişim, katılım, içerik üretimi ve ifade özgürlüğü, kamusal müzakere ve sansür gibi diğer demokratik çıkarımlar hakkındaki görüşlerine odaklanılmıştır.

Eleştirel söylem analizinin temel bulgularından biri incelenen haberlerde açık bir şekilde nefret söyleminin bulunmamasıdır. Diğer bir deyişle, haberlerde doğrudan nefret duygusunu içeren ifadeler bulunmamaktadır. Ancak HIV pozitif kişilerle ilgili tutum, düşünce ve inançları etkileyen bir ideoloji sunan, hoşgörüsüzlük ve önyargıları destekleyen, savunan ve meşru kılan ifadeler mevcuttur. Bu anlamda incelenen haberler hem önyargılı tutumları üretmekte hem de HIV ile yaşayanlara yönelik var olan ayrımcılık ve nefret söylemini pekiştirmektedir.

Kullanılan haber retoriği, çoğunlukla HIV/AIDS ile ilgili yanlış kanı ve bilgilere dayanan inanç ve tutumları güçlendirmektedir. HIV/AIDS toplum için bir tehdit olarak tasvir edilmekte ve bu "biz" ve "onlar" ayrımını pekiştirmektedir çünkü onların (HIV pozitif bireylerin) bizim (toplum) için tehdit oluşturduğu anlamı verilmektedir. Bu ayrım aynı zamanda haberin öznesinde de belirgin hale gelmektedir. HIV ile yaşayanlar haberin öznesi değil de sadece bilgi içeriği muamelesi görmektedir. Bu anlamda haberlerin "diğerleri" hakkında "bize" gerçekleri sunduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Haberlerin bu yaklaşımı, HIV pozitif kişilere karşı damgaları, kalıp yargıları ve önyargıları hem üretmekte hem de teşvik etmektedir ve bu HIV ile yaşayanların ötekileştirilmesini ve damgalanmasını meşru kılmakta ve nefret söyleminin oluşmasına sebebiyet vermektedir.

HIV pozitif bireylerin çevrimiçi haberlerin kendilerine karşı önyargıları, damgalamayı ve ayrımcılığı teşvik ettiğini ve yaygınlaştırdığını söylemesi ve haber içeriklerinde yanlış temsil, yanlış bilgi ve yanlış terminoloji kullanımının olduğunu belirtmesi, eleştirel söylem analizi ile derinlemesine görüşmelerin analizinden elde edilen bulguların tutarlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Nefret söyleminin ayrımcı, tehdit edici, kınayıcı ve önyargılı tutumları teşvik eden, yaygınlaştıran, savunan ya da meşrulaştıran her türlü ifadeyi kapsamasına rağmen HIV pozitif bireyler bunu nefret söylemi olarak tanımlamamaktadır ve bu nefret söyleminin, mağdurları tarafından içselleştirildiğine ve meşrulaştırıldığına işaret etmektedir. Bu nefret söylemi mağdurlarının HIV/AIDS ile ilgili önyargı ve olumsuz tutumların toplumsal değerleri temsil ettiği düşüncesini benimsedikleri ve bunun sonucu olarak nefret söylemini normalleştirdikleri sistemin meşrulaştırılması kuramı ile açıklanmaktadır.

İçerik konusunda, hem eleştirel söylem analizi hem de derinlemesine görüşmelerin analizi, HIV/AIDS ile ilgili haber içeriğinin gerekli ve yeterli bilgiyi sağlamadığını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Haberlerin bilinçli yurttaşların oluşumuna katkı sağlayan bir bilgi kaynağı olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, HIV/AIDS ile ilgili haberler, konu ile ilgili kapsamlı bilgi sunma hakkında başarılı değildir. Ancak çevrimiçi haber içerikleri yetersiz bulunsa bile, teknolojik özellikleriyle çevrimiçi haberler demokrasi için bazı fırsatlar sağlamaktadır. Bu fırsatlar çoğunlukla haber tüketimi ve erişim ile ilgilidir.

Bu açıdan internet, kolay erişim fırsatları sunmakta ve coğrafi sınırları ortadan kaldırmaktadır çünkü farklı ülkelerdeki farklı web sitelerinden ve çevrimiçi uygulamalardan haberler hızlı ve açık bir şekilde takip edilebilmektedir. Ancak bu fırsatlar enformasyon eşitsizliğine yol açabilmektedir çünkü herkes haberleri çevrimiçi tüketebilmek için gerekli beceri ve araçlara sahip değildir. Ayrıca Türkçe çevrimiçi haber sitelerinin hem nitelik hem de nicelik bakımında sınırlı olması bir sorun teşkil etmektedir çünkü insanlar HIV/AIDS ile ilgili bilgilerini çoğunlukla haberlerden almaktadır.

Katılım konusunda ise çevrimiçi haber siteleri HIV pozitif bireylerin hangi haberleri tüketeceği konusunda söz sahibi olmalarına ve yorumlar bölümünde diğer insanların görüşlerini okuyarak diğer kullanıcılarla belli bir derecede etkileşime girmelerine olanak sağlamaktadır; ancak onlara haber üretim süreçlerinde bir rol vermemektedir. Bu doğrultuda çevrimiçi platform, HIV pozitif bireylere hızlı erişim ve bilgiye ulaşma olanağı sağlamakta, ancak demokratik anlamda bir etkileşim sağlama açısından kısıtlı kalmaktadır. Ayrıca içerik üretimi bloglara ve çevrimiçi haberlere yorum yazma ile sınırlıdır ve bunlar gazetecilik kapsamında yapılmamaktadır. Bu anlamdaki tek demokratik çıkarım, haber içeriğindeki yanlış bilgiyi ortaya çıkarmak için yorum yazan, editöre e-posta gönderen ve diğerleriyle haberi paylaşan HIV pozitiflerin üstlendiği doğrulama organı rolüdür.

Diğer demokratik çıkarımlar konusunda ise, bir tartışmanın yer alabileceği tek alan haber sitelerinin yorum bölümüdür. Ve yorumların nitelikleri göz önüne

alındığında, çevrimiçi haber sitelerinde rasyonel bir tartışma mümkün gözükmemektedir çünkü kullanıcılar bir sonuca varmayı amaçlamamaktadır, kullanıcıların aktif katılımı nadirdir, kullanıcılar arasında demokratik bir diyalogdan ziyade ifade edilen görüşler yer almaktadır, ve katılım çoğunlukla anonimdir. Ek olarak, kullanıcıların ifade özgürlüğü hakkını tam anlamıyla kullanamaması ve yorum bölümündeki katkılarının engellenmesi, çevrimiçi haber sitelerinin demokratik koşulları geliştirecek bir araç olarak görülmesinin önüne geçmektedir. Neticede etkileşim, hipermetinsellik, hız, alan, çok çeşitlilik ve çok merkezlilik gibi özellikleriyle çevrimiçi haberler, nefret söylemi mağdurlarının, demokrasinin temelinde yer alan bilgi edinme hakkı için kullanışlı bir araç sunmaktadır; ancak sesini duyurma, konuşma ve toplumsal ve politik yaşama katılma hakkındaki demokratik hakların özgürleştirici bir biçimde kullanılması konusunda beklentileri karşılamamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, nefret söylemi demokratik idealler için bir sorun teşkil etmektedir ve teknolojik özellikleriyle internet nefret söyleminin üretilmesini ve yaygınlaştırılmasını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Buna rağmen internetin olanakları, nefret söylemi ile mücadele için bir fırsat sunmaktadır ve çevrimiçi haberler bu mücadelede önemli bir araç olarak kullanılma potansiyeline sahiptir. İlk olarak hız ve alan özellikleriyle çevrimiçi haberler, daha fazla haber içeriğine kolay erişim sağlamalıdır ancak bu içeriğin geçerli ve güvenilir bilgi barındırması gerekir. İkinci olarak, etkiletişim özelliği sayesinde katılım ve içerik üretim olanakları genişletilmelidir ve çevrimiçi haber sitelerinin kullanıcıları, haber üretim süreçlerinin bir parçası haline getirilmelidir. Üçüncü olarak, çok merkezli yapısıyla yurttaşların sansüre uğramadan görüşlerini ifade edebildiği ve diğerlerini duyabildiği bir ortam sunmalıdır. Son olarak, çevrimiçi haberler karşılıklı anlayışı ve toplumsal huzuru teşvik etmelidir. Ancak bu koşullarda çevrimiçi haberlere, demokratik koşulları iyileştirmek için önemli bir rol verilebilir ve bu hedefler ancak etik gazetecilik uygulamalarıyla gerçekleştirilebilir.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of democracy is constructed on the basis of two principles of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control. This collectivity and equality can only be attained by acknowledging the pluralistic and diverse structure of society. Democracy necessities equal participation of its citizens and any notion that interrupts this participation cannot comply with democratic ideals. When the rights of people to be heard, to speak and to participate in political, artistic and social life are denied, they become more vulnerable to bigotry, prejudice and marginalization. This denial of rights mostly emerges on the basis of a pluralistic society, where those who are defined to be different from the identity of majority are forced to renounce their right to participate in social and political life.

In this direction, hate speech emerges as one of the most important issues of modern pluralistic societies because it reduces certain groups' rights and causes conflict and division in a society, which respectively endangers civil rights guaranteed by democracy. Basically, it poses a threat for fundamental human rights. When hate speech is evaluated in relation to democracy, it is seen that hate speech denies certain groups to have a right to equal civil treatment and aims to diminish their deliberative participation; it seeks to intimidate and exclude certain groups from enjoying their democratic rights; and it glorifies injustices, devalues human worth and encourages crimes.

In this sense, hate speech is considered as a dimension of racism, and accordingly, has always existed (Keyman, 2013). Although racism and hate speech are interrelated concepts and they are similar in terms of their social construction, it should be mentioned that hate speech can be treated as an umbrella term, which encompasses a wider range of group characteristics including race, gender, ethnicity,

religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, disability and other arbitrarily defined characteristics.

From a general perspective, hate speech consists of any type of expression grounded on bias and discrimination, and it is the use of discourse as a tool for attacking a person or a group on the basis of the aforementioned group characteristics. Hate speech represents an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which entails a systemic hierarchy among groups of a society. The conception of organizing the relations between different groups of the society in a hierarchical and hegemonic way constitutes the primary reason of discrimination. On the basis of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, hate speech is shaped. Explained broadly, stereotypes define a person not based on his/her individual personality traits, but rather on the actual or perceived group characteristics that person belongs to. On grounds of these stereotypes, prejudices are shaped, which create negative mental images. When prejudice turns into action, discrimination occurs; and as the last chain of this sequence, hate speech emerges. The target groups of hate speech are intended to be injured, dehumanized, harassed, intimidated, debased, degraded and victimized; and this encourages insensitivity and brutality against them. Moreover, these groups are condemned and marginalized as the 'other'. And media plays a role in circulating hate speech; and by reflecting stereotypes and prejudices repeatedly, it naturalizes them. As a milieu where hate speech is naturalized and legitimized, media, in a sense, opens the way to hate crimes by encouraging bias, intolerance and hostility.

In fact, hate speech, as a concept, has started to be discussed in Turkey after the murder of chief editor of Agos Newspaper, Hrant Dink on 19 January 2009. Dink was murdered because he was an Armenian journalist who was not reluctant to express his thoughts and assertions on the subject of Armenian Question; and he was pointed as a target by nationalist and racist circles and some state institutions. And it can be argued that media had an immense role in both creating and disseminating hate speech directed at Dink.

In order to explain the political grounds of hate speech in Turkey, it can be said that "hate speech and its political manifestation discrimination are social phenomena

that are deeply engraved in social life"[1] (Tahmaz, 2012:189). Hate speech and discrimination against minorities, people with different ethnicities, beliefs and cultural identities are introduced as common knowledge. It is commonly shared that the phenomenon of discrimination in Turkey is based on the republic's foundation ideology: being Muslim-Sunni and ethnically Turk are the main elements of constructing the nation state (Göregenli, 2013a; Tahmaz, 2012; Somay, 2004).

Nationalism and discrimination emerges widely and almost automatically in every aspect of society; however this creates an obstacle for the enjoyment of individual and collective rights. Democratization of Turkey depends on the redemption from hate speech by battling against it (Tahmaz, 2012). It is important to mention that the battle against hate speech has a multidimensional structure; and for this reason, all social structures should be revised beginning with law, media and education. Hate speech cannot be the problem of only those who may suffer from it, but "it should be the primary aim and responsibility of every will who wishes for a viable world for all" (Alğan and Şensever, 2010:5).

In this regard, every society needs to embark upon a journey, where the main purpose is to diminish hate speech and discrimination and to expand the possibility of every member to enjoy their democratic rights. A similar kind of purpose applies to the practice of democracy, as well. On a conceptual level, if the government of a state is accountable to the people through election to public office, if all adults have an equal right to vote and to be elected, and if basic human rights are legally guaranteed, that state can be called democratic. Nevertheless, the two principles of popular control and political equality are not exercised in its full potential in any state. Because of this, democratization is a never-ending process; and democrats try to extend the realization of democratic principles (Beetham and Boyle, 2009). It is this idea that fosters the search for tools that can enhance democracy; and efforts to improve media and its opportunities for democracy can be considered as a part of this search.

In its traditional sense, media is considered to have several responsibilities for the existence of a healthy democracy. In this regard, media is expected to inform the

[1] All translations of quotations in Turkish belong to the author.

public about political issues and express the problems of the public; to act as a watchdog by monitoring the government; and to provide the necessary means for public debate. In order for media to perform these democratic tasks, it should be independent and not be dominated by government or powerful private interests. Nevertheless, any evaluation of media ownership structures would reveal that media is subjected to both political and economical constraints.

All in all, the pivotal role of media in democracy is providing information for citizens because democracy requires informed citizens; and it can develop if citizens have equal and open access to different information sources. As MacBride and his colleagues assert in the report named *Many Voices, One World*, true democratization can be realized through multiple information sources, a two-way flow between participants, and increased participation. At this point, the Internet appears to provide the means for these democratic constituents. With its efficiency, capacity, interactivity and freedom from time-space constraints, the Internet is considered to have democratizing effects for citizens in terms of obtaining information, engaging in deliberation, and participating in decision-making.

This approach reflects the perspective of technological determinism view, which refers to emancipating effects of information technologies. In this regard, the Internet is thought to provide a medium where the amount of and access to information is increased, which in turn expands the opportunities for public participation in democracy. On the other hand, the critique of technological determinism entails that technology is socially constructed and controlled; and information technologies such as the Internet can only have a reinforcing effect on the status quo. According to this perspective, the Internet causes information aristocracy by sacrificing people with insufficient equipment and education; creates digital tyrants; and maximizes surveillance practices.

In this sense, evaluating the role of the Internet in democracy requires careful consideration. Although the Internet provides an opportunity for citizens to be better informed, it does not guarantee informed citizens because being able to access an excessive amount of information does not necessarily result in informed citizens. In this regard, the existence of information does not entail an enhancement of

democracy. Moreover, even if the Internet makes it possible for citizens to communicate with each other in an easier manner, online debates do not cause collective decision-making. Nevertheless, it is not right to assert that the Internet does not contain various opportunities for democracies. All in all, "instead of considering the Internet to be a democratization tool by itself, it is suitable to say that it will find its meaning in a general democratization process" (Timisi, 2003:30).

Arguing that media's main responsibility in democracy is informing citizens and that the Internet can be of good use for this task leads to news media in the online environment. News in general is considered as an essential element of democracy because it provides the means for process of information gathering, deliberation, and action; and with its technological features, online news is considered to be even more fruitful for democracy because of its interactive nature, its complex content in terms of volume and variety, and its opportunities for easy access. In this regard, it is thought to be important to examine the role of online news in democracy; and this is what this thesis basically sets out to do.

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. Determining the context of the study to be hate speech is based on the fact that hate speech is considered as an obstacle for the enjoyment of democratic rights by certain groups; and based on literature on the subject matter, it is assumed that these groups, who are exposed to and affected by hate speech, are forced to renounce their rights to be heard, to speak, and to participate in social and political life, which are compulsory components of democracy. In this direction, the research question of this study is developed as follows: Does online news provide an alternative medium for the victims of hate speech in terms of their ability to exercise their democratic rights?

Hate speech is defined as "bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived characteristics" (Cohen-Almagor, 2011:1) including gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation and other protected characteristics. In this sense, defining target groups of hate speech has an extensive and complex structure, which requires attention on a detailed level for each and

every one of them. On the basis of this, it is determined to narrow the scope of study to only one of these characteristics by taking Turkey's criminal codes on hate crime into consideration. The issue of hate crimes became an important part of Turkey's agenda beginning with the Zirve Publishing House massacre, murder of Priest Santoro and especially the murder of Hrant Dink. Following these hate crimes, various NGOs (non-governmental organization) and scholars have conducted studies in order to fight against hate crime and hate speech, as well as raise awareness on the subject; and the inclusion of hate crimes in the latest democratization package shows that these studies are very important.

On September 13th, 2013 the Prime Minister at the time Erdoğan explained the democratization package in detail, which has been a long-discussed issue in Turkey. The package includes various changes along with regulations for hate crimes. In accordance with these alterations, it has been decided that crimes committed with a motivation of hatred will receive an increased penalty. On March 2nd, 2014, Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved the clause on hate crimes and discrimination to be included in Turkish Criminal Code. Accordingly, the title of the Article 122 was amended as "Hatred and Discrimination", which contains a specific penalty-enhancement provision on the ground of hatred based on differences of language, race, nationality, color, gender, disability, political view, philosophical belief, religion or sect. Nevertheless, the amendments made in the article do not contain all of the characteristics mentioned in the Law Draft on Hate Crimes suggested by the Platform for Hate Crimes Legislation Campaign or in the definition set out by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

In this regard, groups that are left out of the amended Article 122 of the Criminal Code are groups of identity or belonging defined on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and health condition. The reason for choosing regulations about hate crime as a reference point is based on the idea that hate speech is a prerequisite of hate crime and that hate speech directed at any identity group matters. There are various studies in literature that demonstrate hate speech against group characteristics based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation. However, studies regarding hate speech produced on the basis of health condition are limited in number. Although hate speech based on diseases

contains various health conditions, the one that stands out the most in terms of hate speech is HIV/AIDS. People living with HIV experience discrimination, stigmatization, marginalization, and hate speech both in media and in daily life. On the basis of these, the main area of research is determined to be hate speech against HIV positive people.

With this research area in mind, the research method of the thesis is developed, which consists of a two-dimensional structure. The first one focuses on the examination of online news sites in terms of hate speech towards HIV positive people; and the second one aims to understand how people living with HIV utilizes online news sites in terms of exercising their democratic rights. In order to demonstrate existing hate speech, online news items about HIV/AIDS in three most visited news sites are analyzed by adopting the critical discourse analysis method suggested by van Dijk. For the purposes of understanding the role of online news in democracy, in-depth interviews are conducted with HIV positive people in order to explore how and to what extend online news is utilized by target groups of hate speech. In this regard, a research framework is developed consisting of patterns of news consumption, participation, and content production; issues related to access; and other democratic implications including public debate and freedom of expression. Through this framework, it is thought to be possible to understand and explain how online news can be beneficial in terms of enhancing democratic ideals.

Due to the qualitative and exploratory nature of this study, the research question of the thesis is generated on the basis of the literature about the trilogy of relationships between the concepts of democracy, hate speech, and online news. The structure of the thesis is shaped on the basis of this trilogy. In this regard, a review of the literature on the concepts of hate speech and online news is provided in terms of their relation to democracy. After explaining hate speech and other related concepts, media's part in the production and dissemination of hate speech is evaluated. In relation to this, the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press are explained, as well as legal regulations in Turkey that apply to the restriction of hate speech. As another section, hate crime is defined and distinguished from hate speech; and on the basis of these, a discussion on the relationship between hate speech and democracy is provided.

The second section of the literature review firstly presents an understanding of the responsibilities of media in a democratic state in order to ground a discussion on the Internet's and especially online news' role in democracy. In this regard, the Internet in general, and online news in specific are examined with their historical, technological, and economical features for democratic implications. Finally, the online environment is evaluated in the context of hate speech, with its risks and benefits it harbors for democratic ideals.

Following the literature review, the methodology of the thesis is explained in detail. In this direction the approach to critical discourse analysis is elaborated in addition to the sampling and data collection methods for analysis of online news items. As the second stage of research, qualitative research approach is adopted in order to have a comprehensive understanding of online news' role in democracy. Accordingly, the sampling plan of research and the determined data collection method, which is in-depth interviews, are explained. And the developed research framework is elaborated, which guides the analysis of in-depth interviews.

As the fourth chapter of the thesis, the findings of the research are presented in two sections. Firstly findings acquired from critical discourse analysis of online news items are explained and hate speech against people living with HIV is examined by giving salient examples from the news on the basis of van Dijk's model. Secondly, findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews are provided for each category of the research framework in addition to the perspectives of respondents about hate speech in online news with theoretical implications.

The last chapter of the thesis summarizes the main findings of the research and provides a discussion on the relationship between democracy, hate speech and online news. As concluding remarks, it is argued how online news can be beneficial in the battle against hate speech by focusing on its technological features and certain guidelines for ethical journalism practices are provided. Last but not least, the limitations of the study are explained; and on the basis of the limitations, directions for further research are suggested.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter of the thesis presents a review of the literature in relation to the research aim, which is to examine the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. In this direction, it is thought to be important firstly to understand the concept of hate speech and its constituents. In the first section of this chapter, various definitions of the concept hate speech are given, including the definitions attributed by scholars, NGOs and governmental institutions. Following the definitions of hate speech, the concepts of discrimination, prejudice, stereotype and social stigma are explained by examining their relation with each other, as well as with hate speech. Thirdly, the reasons behind the legitimization of discrimination are mentioned briefly on the basis of social-psychological and cognitive theories in order to demonstrate how discrimination is actualized and justified in society. Discrimination and hate speech reproduces and maintains discriminatory social relations through the use of discourse; therefore, the concept of discourse is defined in brief.

As another section, hate speech's relation to media is discussed in terms of its use for disseminating hate speech, followed by several studies that demonstrate hate speech in media both in Turkey and other countries. In order to understand the restrictions that consequences of hate speech necessitates, the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press are explained through international and regional human rights instruments, and legal regulations in Turkey that apply to the restriction of hate speech. In relation to legal regulations about hate speech, the term hate crime is defined and distinguished from hate speech. Last but not least, hate speech is evaluated on the basis of its relation to democracy.

The second section of the literature review concerns online news. First of all, the role of media in democracy is elaborated in order to ground a discussion on the Internet's and especially online news' role in democracy. In this regard, democracy as a concept is examined in relation to media; and how media plays an essential role

in democracy is evaluated. When media's function of informing the public about political issues is taken into account, it performs as a tool that creates informed citizens, which is a required element of democracy. Following the relationship between media and democracy, the Internet in general is examined with its democratic implications due to the idea that the Internet provides opportunities for public to participate in democracy, proclaim their voice, and have access to all kinds of information.

As another section, the questions of whether and to what extent online news helps improving democratic conditions are tried to be answered, considering news' role in democracy and its development within the digital age. In this regard, characteristics of the Internet that are prominent in terms of news production are examined, namely speed and space, multiplicity and polycentrality, interactivity and participation, followed by a discussion about ownership issues in online news websites.

In order to have a better understanding of online news and its role in democracy, an overview of online news in its historical context is provided. In this regard, origins of the Internet technology is explained in addition to the development of online news from historical, technological, and economical perspectives. Finally, hate speech in the online environment is evaluated by comparing the risks and benefits it contains in terms of democratic ideals.

2.1. Hate Speech

Hate speech consists of statements that are grounded on bias and discrimination, and it is the use of discourse as a tool for attacking a person or a group on the basis of their group characteristics like race, gender, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. In a broader meaning, hate speech is an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which represents a systemic hierarchy among groups of a society; and it is revealed as the mental and ideological background of hate crime, which is the most violent way of discrimination.

2.1.1. Concepts and Definitions

2.1.1.1. Defining Hate Speech

Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers Recommendation (97) 20 defines hate speech as "all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin" (Weber, 2009:3). The concept of hate speech can be further explained as encompassing a multiplicity of situations including incitement of racial hatred, incitement to hatred on religious grounds and to hatred based on intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism. This definition of hate speech can be evaluated as to encompass race, nationality, ethnicity and religion. The Recommendation basically focuses on hate speech towards groups characterized on the basis of the idea that they constitute a minority. However, the concept of hate speech has a more comprehensive structure than just to include expressions that aim to incite hatred on the basis of race, religion, nationality and ethnicity.

Even though the Recommendation (97) 20 does not include it, homophobic speech can be considered as a category of hate speech, as well (Weber, 2009). Hate speech on a general framework can be defined as statements that are founded on bias and discrimination like racism, sexism and homophobia. In other words, hate speech is the use of discourse as a tool for attacking race, religion, ethnic identity and sexual orientation (Smolla, 1990). Accordingly, Binark and Çomu (2012) defines six kinds of hate speech which includes different contexts of this type of discourse: political hate speech, hate speech against women, against foreigners and immigrants, against disabled people and diverse diseases, hate speech based on sexual identity, and religious belief and sect; and they explain the term hate speech as all types of expression popularizing, promoting, defending or justifying hate which results from intolerance and is fed by prejudices. Similarly, Hrant Dink Foundation, the executer NGO of Media Watch on Hate Speech Project, asserts that prejudices, racism, xenophobia, partiality, discrimination, sexism and homophobia underlie hate speech.

In this sense, hate speech exceeds the limits of race, nationality, ethnicity and religion; and it involves gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, political beliefs, disability, and diverse diseases. In general, discourse based on discrimination and intolerance can be evaluated as hate speech. A comprehensive definition of the term is given by Cohen-Almagor (2011:1-2):

> *Hate speech is defined as bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived innate characteristics. It expresses discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and/or prejudicial attitudes toward those characteristics, which include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.*

Moreover, Cohen-Almagor (2011) underlines that target groups are intended to be injured, dehumanized, harassed, intimidated, debased, degraded and victimized by hate speech; and insensitivity and brutality against them are encouraged. Similarly, Göregenli (2013b) defines hate speech as an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which represents a systemic hierarchy among groups of a society; and it is revealed as the mental and ideological background of hate crime, which is the most violent way of discrimination. Hate speech is nourished by negative prejudiced emotions and attitudes; however, it is considered as insufficient to explain any hate speech on the basis of a personal emotion, namely 'hatred'. This attitude equalizes the target group of hate speech with the offender and reduces hate speech to miscommunication. Nevertheless, construction of hate speech depends on control of power and is only possible for the possessor of power (Göregenli, 2013b). From a different perspective, hate speech is said to be used for double victimization (Cohen-Almagor, 2011), where the speakers with power portray themselves as being under attack, misunderstood, marginalized and delegitimized by powerful forces, and the solution to their problem is the victimization of the target group. In other words, hate speech is legitimized by presenting the speakers as victims.

In this regard, hate speech is not only a discourse practice based on discrimination and intolerance, but it is an important constituent of social hierarchy. It can be said that through hate speech, the groups that possess power in society

constitute the idea of ‘the others’, and then use hate speech again to repress them. As a matter of fact, it can be said that the only group in society that is able to produce discourse based on hatred is the group, which holds power because it is the only group that is able to make their voices heard. In this sense, hate speech can be interpreted as discourse that is used by the majority of the society to suppress the minorities; however, this perspective requires a second thought because hate speech based on gender, for instance, is not generated by the majority of the society but by the group that possesses power in social hierarchy.

It is not easy to determine what can be considered as hate speech. Overall, “hate speech is malicious speech that is intended to victimize and dehumanize its target, often (but not always) vulnerable minorities” (Cohen-Almagor, 2011:2). At this point, a distinction needs to be made between hate speech and incitement: if a statement incites violence against a target group, it falls under the definition of incitement, which can be framed as harmful speech that is directly linked to harmful action. Even though hate speech seems to be more moderate than incitement, it can be equally damaging (Cohen-Almagor, 2011), for that it can provide the mental and ideological background of hate crime (Göregenli, 2013b).

In terms of incitement, Susan Benesch, the director of Dangerous Speech Project, suggests certain guidelines for monitoring speech and evaluating its dangerousness, which is the capacity to catalyze violence by one group against another. Before elaborating on the guidelines, the term dangerous speech should be defined. Studying on the link between incitement and genocide, and genocide prevention efforts in general, Benesch (2014) suggests that hateful speech can cause harm directly to members of the targeted group or indirectly by motivating the audience to think and act against the group in question. According to the author, hate speech is common in many societies, which do not carry the risk of inciting genocide; and some hate speech does not increase the risk of violence but causes emotional or psychological damage; therefore, speech that is considered as hate speech does not always reveal the risk of mass violence or genocide (Benesch, 2012a, 2014). At this point dangerous speech is defined as “an act of speech, which has a reasonable chance of catalyzing or amplifying violence by one group against another, given the circumstances in which it was made or disseminated” (Benesch,

2012a:2). In law, incitement is speech that intends to provoke another person to commit a crime; therefore, dangerous speech can be explained as incitement to mass violence because inflammatory speech underlies outbreaks of mass violence.

This distinction between hate speech and dangerous speech is important because it corresponds to the relation of speech to criminal act. Although hate speech has political, social and psychological consequences, the conceptualization of dangerous speech underlines the role of linguistic practices in mass violence. This is not to say that hate speech is undermined and that it does not have criminal consequences. All in all, hate speech encompasses dangerous speech. However, by distinguishing dangerous speech, it is possible to detect discursive practices that involve a chance of catalyzing violence against certain groups. Moreover, this distinction may be helpful to determine what types of expressions can be protected by the right to freedom of expression.

The suggested guidelines for monitoring and evaluating dangerous speech include five factors or variables. It should be mentioned that dangerousness of speech can be estimated with reference to these five factors, some or all of which may contribute to dangerousness. There may be other factors that affect the dangerousness of speech but the ones listed below are considered to be the most relevant ones (Benesch, 2012a, b, 2014):

- *The speaker*: speaker's authority, power or influence over the audience is important, as well as, his/her popularity among the target audience.
- *The audience*: variables based on audience that is most likely to react to the speech include who the audience is, the fearfulness of the audience, possession of means or capacity to commit violence, characterization of excessive respect for authority. Moreover, speech directed primarily at members of the speaker's own group is more likely to be dangerous.
- *The speech act*: the speech that calls its audience to violence, describes the victims-to-be as other than human, asserts that the audience faces danger from the victim group, contains phrases or coded language that has a loaded meaning, and echoes previous similar messages increases the dangerousness.

- *Socio-historical context*: previous conflicts between relevant groups, recent outbreaks of violence caused by hate speech, and presence of other risk factors for mass violence play a part in the dangerousness of speech.
- *Mode of transmission*: speech can be more influential when transmitted in a way that would reinforce its capacity to persuade, when frequently repeated, and when the audience does not have access to alternate views or sources of information.

It can be said that the most dangerous speech act is the one where all five factors or variables are maximized. As Benesch (2014) mentions, hate speech is a much larger category that encompasses dangerous speech, which can be measured, countered or diminished by reliable identification through these guidelines. It can be said that dangerous speech is related to genocide, mass violence and hate crime in general; and the focus on dangerous speech may diminish the risk of mass violence.

Similar to Benesch's guidelines, Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), with the direction of Aiden White, developed a five-point test for journalists concerning the potential impact of words and images, which can lead to acts of journalism that encourage hatred and violence. The five-point test of speech advises journalists on asking questions in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and information, and placing what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context (EJN, 2014):

- *The position or the status of the speaker*: the context in which a speech is made and the status and reputation of the speaker should be examined.
- *The reach of speech*: the frequency, extent and dissemination of speech should be considered in terms of determining whether it is part of a deliberate strategy to engender hostility towards others.
- *The objectives of the speech*: the speech should be evaluated on whether there is a deliberate intention to attack or diminish the human rights of individuals or groups, and whether such speech is subject to criminal sanctions. The benefits of the speech to the speaker and the impact upon the victims of the speech should be taken into account.

- *The content and form of speech*: whether the speech is provocative, in what form it is made, and the style in which it is delivered should be judged.
- *The economic, social and political climate*: by taking into account the public atmosphere at the time the speech is being made, it should be evaluated whether expressions are fair, fact-based and reasonable in the circumstances.

EJN (2014) calls journalists to be careful in terms of hate speech. According to the Network, context where there are patterns of discrimination against ethnic and other groups should be recognized. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the impact on people immediately affected by the speech, absorbance of the speech in conditions of relative security, and the negatively affected group by the speech.

Benesch focuses directly on speech that may catalyze any mass violence; whereas EJN draws attention to the balance between journalists' duty to tell the truth and a fundamental principle of journalism, which is to minimize harm. Comparing the two guidelines, the former is for monitoring and evaluating speech that may cause harm; where the latter is for minimalizing the effects of journalism practices in the furtherance of hate speech, which again, may cause harm. Both guidelines share prominent factors that disseminate hate; and these factors can be summarized as the speaker, the audience, purpose and content of the speech, context and public atmosphere at the time of speech, and how the speech is transmitted. It can be said that these factors provide an understanding how hate speech cultivates discrimination and affects its victims.

From a more general perspective, the rights of people to be heard, to speak and to participate in political, artistic and social life are possible with the attainment of equality. When certain groups are denied public participation and voice, their issues become invisible, and they become more vulnerable to bigotry, prejudice and marginalization (ARTICLE 19, 2009), and targeted groups or individuals are forced to renounce their right to participate in social and political life, which is "a sine qua non for democracy" (nefretsoylemi.org). Hate speech that reduces a certain group's right is not a legitimate form of political discourse and it does not sustain democratic ideals. These types of destructive messages cause conflict and division in a society

without respecting the individual rights of its members. “Unrestrained bias foments disunity and endangers civil liberties” (Cohen-Almagor, 2011: 20).

As mentioned above, hate speech expresses discriminatory, hostile and prejudicial attitudes toward a person or a group of people on the basis of intolerance. In order to have a better understanding of hate speech, its constituents or premises should be explained.

2.1.1.2. Discrimination, Prejudice, Stereotype and Social Stigma

As Binark and Çomu (2012) mentions, “stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are different from the identities constructed as ‘us/someone like us’ all play a role in the formation of hate speech.” To begin with, discrimination is a process that rises with negative attitudes and behavior based on prejudice towards certain groups or group members. Because of prejudice, members of different groups prefer to keep their physical or social distance from each other; therefore, prejudice and discrimination are closely linked concepts. It is possible to say that prejudice becomes discrimination when it turns into action (Allport, 1954). In order to elaborate, stereotyping can be added to the concept as a part of people’s reactions to others that differ from their own group. On the basis of these three components of category-based reactions to others, it can be said that stereotyping is the cognitive, prejudice is the affective and discrimination is the behavioral component (Fiske, 1998).

Formation of prejudice and discrimination requires a hierarchical organization of social groups and strata on the basis of their certain qualities, in addition to a cognitive realization of this hierarchy. In other words, the positioning of these groups in this hierarchical organization of the society as lower and disadvantaged causes discrimination, and it becomes more apparent in accordance with the strength of hierarchy and structure of discourse about power (Göregenli, 2013a). Moreover, Fiske (1998) defends the thesis that prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination are partly automatic and socially pragmatic, which is also responsive to social structure.

In this regard, discrimination is shaped within social structures that represent a systemic hierarchy. With its relation to prejudice and stereotypes, discrimination occurs as part of power relations within society, where certain attributes are considered as a disadvantage in an arbitrary manner. The arbitrariness of this hierarchy lies within the distinction between 'us' and 'others', where others constitute the groups that do or do not have certain characteristics shared with the constructed 'us' and these characteristics are determined arbitrarily. All in all, discrimination is a violation of the idea that humans are equal.

Prohibition of discrimination on a legal dimension is based on an abstract principle that 'all men are created equal.' However, modern law fails to prevent discrimination on the basis of this principle because it is not sufficient to give humans right to be equal; they also need the power to exercise that right. Furthermore, it needs to be accepted that humans are different in terms of their various qualities - like race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and physical appearance - and unequal in terms of their social status (Göregenli, 2013a). As a result of this inequality, discrimination serves the formation of a dismissive structure among human relations. "Above all, discrimination is a humanitarian problem that has mental sources and reasons and that behaviorally appears in relationships between humans" (Göregenli, 2013a: 25).

Besides discrimination, prejudice, stereotype and stigmas in general are considered as constituents of hate speech. In general, prejudice and stereotype are concepts related to each other and it can be said that their roles underlie discrimination in a society. Prejudice can be defined as negative attitudes and ideas against other people not on the basis of their personal existence but their belonging to certain groups. Stereotypes can be described as pre-established images, impressions and attributions associated with certain objects or groups that fill in the information gap in people's minds, and therefore enable them to make easier decisions. These images serve as real properties or characteristics of objects in the world. It should be mentioned that not all stereotypes are negative. It can be said that negative ones are affective in the formation of prejudice.

Stereotypes and prejudices come forth as parts of the cognitive process of social categorization, which affects people's comprehension of the social world. People use physical or social distinctions like race, gender, religious belief or ethnicity in order to categorize information about others. The process of categorization organizes individuals' knowledge about their own and other groups. On the basis of this categorization, Göregenli (2013a) sees the formation of prejudice as inevitable. These distinctions used in categorization cause certain attributes to be related to stereotypes, and this relationship is called stigma. Basically, stigma points to linking a person to undesirable characteristics on the basis of certain attributes. As the inspirer of research on the subject asserts, stigma can be defined as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" which reduces "a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963:3).

Link and Phelan (2001) suggest a conceptualization of the term stigma, which summarizes a general understanding of the process of discrimination. According to the authors, stigma exists when five interrelated components converge. The first one is distinguishing and labeling human differences. The second is linking labeled people to negative stereotypes by dominant cultural beliefs. The third component is the separation of 'us' from 'them' by placing labeled people in distinct categories. In the fourth component, labeled people experience discrimination and status loss. And the last component is about access to social, economic and political power, which allows all the other components to unfold (Link and Phelan, 2001).

On a social level, stereotypes create and protect group ideologies that explain and legitimize various social actions. They serve to distinguish certain groups from others either in a positive or a negative way. However, while enabling the comprehension of the world to be easier and making the social environment familiar, stereotypes can be said to lead up to prejudice. The reason for this is that the process of forming stereotypes distinctly increases the level of in-group favoritism and discrimination against out-groups. The distinction of 'us and them' on a cognitive level justifies any behavior in favor of the in-group, which strengthens the borders between groups and creates discrimination. This intergroup behavior can be explained with social identity theory.

Social identity theory's roots can be founded in Tajfel (1982) and Tajfel and Turner (1986) and can be summarized as "that people identify with and value their in-group, thereby derogating the out-group, carries both cognitive (categorization) and motivational (self-esteem) foundation" (Fiske, 2000:303). Fiske (2000) also mentions that Turner's (1987) self-categorization theory, as social identity theory's heir, eliminates the motivational aspects and rather focuses on the cognitive ones. The process of category-based information is seen as sufficient for the foundation of prejudice. As proof for this view, Fiske (2000:304) overviews the literature on the subject matter and summarizes as follows:

> *People accentuate differences between categories and minimize differences within categories, ... People tag other people by race, gender, and age, so they confuse people within groups and differentiate them between groups ... people view categorized groups as homogeneous ... and they privilege category-confirming information in memory ... as well as category-confirming covariation in judgment ... People's category-based behavior elicits confirming behavior from stereotyped targets. The complexity of social content overwhelms the limited human mind, which then employs a number of simplifying strategies.*

According to Reicher's (2004) approach to social identity, the foundation of intergroup relations consists of how people categorize themselves, whom they compare themselves to, how they categorize the out-group and define the in-group, as well as how people construct the others as a problematic in terms of issues that are important to their in-group. It can be said that how people see themselves and others, when they see the others as enemy, and what is fair or acceptable in terms of dealing with this enemy are related to the process of social identification (Göregenli, 2013a).

This approach of social identity explains discrimination on the basis of social, cultural and political context. As Fiske (1998, 2000) mentions, social categorization is taken to be more salient than individual differences in terms of discrimination; and contact and interactions within social context explain discrimination. Moreover, the distinction is made on a collective level where the comparison is made not between a group member 'I' and an outsider 'you', but rather as 'us' versus 'them'.

As another approach to explaining stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, more individualistic theories can be elaborated, which include authoritarian personality theory, subtle racism based on essentialism, and dissociation model. To begin with, Adorno et al.'s theory of authoritarian personality is developed as a result of research on anti-Semitism after the Second World War. This theory explains the submission of individuals to an authority as merely a personality trait. In addition to submission to authority, it includes adherence to middle-class conventions and aggression against those with an unconventional life style. According to this theory, out-groups are inferior and threatening, where authorities are idealized; therefore, prejudice is revealed against the out-groups. This type of prejudice on the basis of cognitive structure is named as ethnocentrism, which is the perspective of claiming one's own group as central to others and therefore superior (Göregenli, 2013a; Fiske 1998).

Subtle racism based on essentialism can be explained as forming prejudices depending on stereotypes that are associated with a group's so thought 'essence'. In a social context, essentialism can be defined as describing certain group characteristics like gender, race and ethnicity as fixed properties (Mikkola, 2008). In other words, properties that define a certain group are taken to be ontological rather than arbitrary. In terms of discrimination, some characteristics that are thought to be the 'essence' of a certain group are associated with not just one member of the group but every single one of them, therefore making the categorization of the group easier; however, this kind of essentialist group approach provides the ground for racism (Göregenli, 2013a).

Compared to subtle racism, dissociation model emphasizes a more conscious effort of individuals to prevent prejudice. On the basis of Devine's theory, Fiske (1998) explains the model as people dissociating between culturally learned stereotypes and personal beliefs, which develop later than cultural knowledge. To further elaborate, the result of dissociation leads prejudiced people to have standards that prohibit excessive prejudiced responses; however, this dissociation may also result in personal conflict where the out-group again becomes a target for discrimination (Fiske, 1998).

Even these theories and models suggest a more individualistic approach to the emergence of discrimination, the concept cannot be separated from its social constraints. All in all, discrimination occurs on a collective level, which is based on group differences rather than individual ones; and even the individual acts of discrimination are fed by attitudes and beliefs that are socially constructed. Moreover, although consequences of discrimination may have effects on an individual level, it is a phenomenon rooted in interactions within social, cultural, and political context. Basically, it is the separation of 'us' and 'them'.

Overall, discrimination - and the other related concepts of stigma, stereotype and prejudice – reflects an anonymous ideology of intergroup relations, which is legitimized both by its victims and people who practice discrimination. Although discrimination is used as a tool by the higher ranks of social hierarchy, majority that legitimizes and normalizes such practices becomes the reason why discrimination is widespread and considered 'normal'. In this context, it is important to expand how and why discrimination is legitimized.

2.1.1.3. Understanding Discrimination

Understanding the reasons behind the legitimization of discrimination reveals why discrimination is practiced very widely and almost automatically in societies. Moreover, it raises awareness of the fact that discrimination is not just a problem for 'others' but a fundamental social issue. In addition, understanding how discrimination practices are actualized and justified helps raising awareness of this legitimization, which is the most important component of the battle against discrimination (Göregenli, 2012).

On the basis of literature, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination can be analyzed based on two levels, namely individual and contextual (Fiske, 1998). On an individual level, prejudice depends on individual psychological conflict, which is a conflict between individual's personal desires and beliefs and socially learned responses; and personality factors, which can be motivated by social psychological factors such as socioeconomic status or perceived norms. On a contextual level, it

can be said that discrimination becomes apparent on the basis of social categorization that is driven by context (Allport, 1954). In this approach, social categorization is taken to be more salient than individual differences in terms of discrimination; and contact and interactions within social context explains discrimination (Fiske, 1998).

All of these theories and models express how discrimination is shaped on an individual or a contextual level. Accordingly, none of these approaches can be isolated from social, cultural, historical or political aspects of a society, and it is essential to reveal why discrimination is founded. Moreover, the importance of understanding discrimination lies within understanding why dominant groups tend to discriminate against 'others'; but furthermore, it may reveal the important aspects of how victims of discrimination justify the consequences they face.

It is possible to explain the legitimization of discrimination through social psychological processes where large groups of a society embrace discrimination as justified social norm. Even when discrimination has significantly negative impacts like depriving oneself from their most basic human rights, it is commonly believed that the victim deserves these results on the basis of his/her actions and preferences. This process basically devalues any victims of discrimination, reduces a social phenomenon to an individualistic one, and makes it harder for victims to claim their basic rights (Göregenli, 2012). In this framework, different approaches can be elaborated including the just world hypothesis, social dominance, system justification and delegitimization.

The just world hypothesis, theorized by Lerner (1980), represents a cognitive assumption that people's actions and their consequences are consistent. It can be explained as the belief that a certain universal force restores balance where the consequences people face are deserved and morally fair. It is thought that certain behaviors and socially determined conditions have appropriate consequences, where this belief functions as a contract with the universe that people's lives can be influenced in a predictable way. Although the belief in a just world may cause psychological relief for individuals, it may also result in blaming the victims for their sufferings. In fact, Lerner's research is influenced by this observation that victims are thought to deserve the consequences they face (Lerner, 1980). Moreover, the victims

themselves may think that their behavior or attribute justifies their problems. In terms of discrimination, the belief in a just world causes the derogation and the accusation of the victim (Lerner and Montada, 1998). Furthermore, the tendency to ignore the suffering of victims is considered as a strategy for individuals to sustain their belief in a just world (Göregenli, 2012). It is important for the purposes of this study to mention that there are sociopolitical correlates of just world belief where the victims' level of belief is lower because the powerless groups of the society usually have experiences that the world is not just (see Calhoun and Cann, 1994; Hunt, 2000; Furnham, 1993)[2].

Similar to the belief in a just world, system justification theory "refers to the psychological process whereby an individual perceives, understands, and explains an existing situation or arrangement with the result that the situation or arrangement is maintained" (Jost and Banaji, 1994:10). As a different perspective from the just world hypothesis, the authors suggest that existing social conditions are preserved in spite of any psychological or material harm they entail for the victims, and many stereotypes serve to preserving the status quo. In addition, system justification theory does not entail a universal contract for individuals to feel in control of their environments (Jost and Hunyady, 2002). As the founders of the theory, Jost and Banaji explain the concept of system as "social arrangements such as those found in families, institutions, organizations, social groups, governments, and nature;" and they explain system justification as "the psychological process whereby prevailing conditions, be they social, political, economic, sexual, or legal, are accepted, explained, and justified simply because they exist" (1994: 11). In accordance with the theory, there is a motive where people justify and rationalize their experiences and encounters, so that social arrangements seem fair, legitimate, natural and inevitable (Jost and Hunyady, 2002). In this framework, members of any disadvantaged groups may have a stronger motive to avoid uncertainty and threat; and therefore may be more likely to justify the system (Göregenli, 2012).

[2] Calhoun, L., and Cann, A. (1994). "Differences in assumptions about a just world: ethnicity and point of view." *Journal of Social Psychology*, 134, 765–770.; Hunt, M. (2000). ''Status, religion, and the belief in a just world: comparing African Americans, Latinos, and Whites.'' *Social Science Quarterly*, 81, 325–343.; Furnham, A. (1993). "Just world beliefs in twelve societies." *Journal of Social Psychology*, 133, 317–329.

Different from the just world hypothesis and system justification theory, social dominance theory focuses on intergroup relations. The theory formulated by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), emphasizes the maintenance of hierarchy of social groups. In this regard, higher ranked groups possess most of the tools that represent power, privilege and status compared to the lower groups of the social hierarchy. As social dominance theory argues, there is a "trimorphic structure of group-based social hierarchy," and "societies producing stable economic surplus contain these three qualitatively distinct systems of hierarchy" (Pratto, Sidanius and Levin, 2006:273): the first one is age where the adults are more powerful than children; the second is gender where men are ranked higher than women in terms of both power and status; and the last one is arbitrary set which is based on socially constructed groups on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, region, skin color, clan, caste, lineage, tribe, minimal groups, or any other group distinction that the human mind is capable of constructing.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) argue that the psychology of group dominance expresses itself in a form they call social dominance orientation. Individuals with this orientation "express general support for the domination of certain socially constructed groups over other socially constructed groups, regardless of the manner in which these groups are defined" (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999:61). In terms of discrimination, the authors assert that dominant groups should feel more comfortable with group inequality because they are usually treated better than subordinates. Moreover, social standards are defined by societies in a way to benefit members of dominant groups, which reaffirms the welfare of dominant groups (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). According to the theory, group-based social hierarchy is produced by the effects of discrimination which is coordinated to favor dominant groups over subordinate ones by "legitimizing myths" or in other words, "societal, consensually shared social ideologies" (Pratto, et al., 2006: 275). The inequality of groups, as the authors claim, is not just the result of discrimination against subordinates by the dominants, but rather, the inequality is restored by decisions and behaviors of individuals shaped legitimizing myths, namely consensually held values, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and cultural ideologies.

For a different social psychological approach to discrimination, Bar-Tal's (1990) delegitimization concept should be explained in order to have a better understanding of how discrimination is justified. Göregenli (2012) sees delegitimization as a crucial part of research on moral outcasting. Delegitimization is defined as categorization of certain groups into "extreme negative social categories, which are excluded from human groups that are considered as acting within the limits of acceptable norms and/or values" (Bar-Tal, 1990:66). In this framework, there are five contents listed that are utilized for delegitimization. The first one is dehumanization where certain groups are categorized as possessing inhuman traits. The second one consists of extremely negative trait categorization where labels that are evaluated as unacceptable in a society are used. The third one is outcasting where certain groups are categorized as violators of social norms. These groups are associated with group categories such as murderers or psychopaths, and therefore excluded from the system. The fourth is related to use of political labels, which includes categorization into political groups that are unacceptable by the society. These categorized political groups vary based on the basic values of a society; examples include Nazis, communists or fascists as they are considered a danger to certain societies. The last one is group comparison, where delegitimizing a group with associating it with another group with negative connotations (Bar-Tal, 1990). Moral outcasting of any group by delegitimization entails that the members of that group are less humans or inhuman, which makes it easier to justify any discrimination against these groups.

These theories and concepts of social psychology reveal different ways how people form and justify discrimination. All of these approaches depend on social, cultural, historical and political aspects of a society, and it is essential to understand discrimination in order to be aware of what causes discrimination in the first place.

What reproduces and maintains hegemonic and discriminatory social relations like sexism, racism or ageism that lead to the marginalization of certain social groups is thought to be discourse (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003). Put differently, discourse contributes to the dominance of one group over another; therefore, it is essential to understand discourse's role in discrimination.

2.1.1.4. Discourse and Language

Discourse comes forth as both the social practice of discrimination and the main source for people's discriminative beliefs and ideas (van Dijk, 2000). From a more general perspective, it can be said that "discourse is both socially constituted and socially constitutive" (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003: 246). People's perceptions of the world are articulated and shaped through discourse. As a social practice, discourse constructs and gives meaning to group belongings and intergroup relations. Therefore, an analysis of discourse in a society reveals how group belongings are pictured through the ideological background of this discourse (Göregenli, 2013b).

Discourse is said to be the organized use of language. According to Sözen (1999), discourse is meta-action; and it consists of processes regarding language practices that turn into action through the exchange of ideology, knowledge, dialogue, expression, negotiation and power. She expresses that discourse is related to all aspects of social life including social, political, cultural and economical. In accordance with this comprehensive understanding of discourse, Foucault's approach to the concept is "broad, macro-sociological and historical in its scope" (Olsson, 2010:65).

From a general perspective, Foucault explains discourse as the specialized language developed by a particular community at a particular time rather than as a conversation between individuals. In the conception of discourse, the term is explained as a network of relationships between individuals, texts, ideas and institutions, where each of them affects others and the dynamics of discourse as a whole. It can be mentioned that any discourse is closely linked to its specific socio-historical context and cannot be separated from it (Rabinow, 1984).

In a more specific sense, "discourse is social ideology that is coded in language" (İnceoğlu and Sözeri, 2012:23); and the use of language has a very important role in the produced discourse. As language is seen as the representation of cognitive processes and a communication tool, discourse is the concept where language is constructed and maintained through social interactions. Similar to discourse's dependency on its social, ideological and historical contexts, language

cannot be divorced from the aforementioned contexts, as well. Paktin (2015) emphasizes Bakhtin's views on language in order to explain language's dependency on context. The idea of Bakhtin that communication is diologic carries the understanding of language, which stratifies and diversifies within the relation of time and space (Paktin, 2015). In his essays regarding philosophy of language, Bakhtin underlines that language is socio-ideological and not passive (1981:271-272):

> *At any moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word, but also […] into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth […] this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing.*

The term heteroglossia in Bakhtin's work refers to the peculiar interaction between the two fundamentals of communication, namely the more or less fixed system of transcription and the particular context in which the utterance is made. "This context can refract, add to, or, in some cases, even substract from the amount and kind of meaning the utterance may be said to have when it is conceived only as a systematic manifestation independent of context" (Bakhtin, 1981: intro xx). In other words, language cannot be singular and independent of context.

With Bakhtin's views on diologism in mind, Paktin (2015) criticizes the slogan "one state, one nation, one flag, one language" stressing that one language actually implies "one ideology" and "one world-view" (Paktin, 2015:317). This singularity suppresses the dynamics of heteroglossia and tries to keep any thought within the boundaries of that 'one language'. Once again, it can be said that language, like discourse, is socio-ideological where it both affects and is affected by the context it is used. Similarly, within the boundaries of critical discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk explains that by examining the role of language, its use and discourse on reproduction of inequality, social and political analysis can be made; and he suggests to "focus on the unique access of elites to public discourse, and hence on their role in the discursive management of public mind" (van Dijk, 1993: 280).

Keeping in mind that discourse shapes and articulates people's knowledge of the world, it is important to mention that knowledge and power are closely related concepts. As Foucault emphasizes, "power produces knowledge"; "power and knowledge directly imply one another"; and "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1977:27). It is argued that every socially constructed discourse that becomes dominant serves as a framework, which builds, legitimizes and gives consent to hegemony, defines 'wrong', 'good, and 'bad' as social concepts, and sets those concepts as ideological notions. This ideology encompasses social categories with its own values, therefore defines 'normal' (Çınar, 2013). In this perspective, ideology can be defined as "shared social representations that have specific social functions for groups (van Dijk, 1998:191). From a social psychology perspective, discourse is thought as a social practice where group belongings and intergroup relations are constructed, defined and legitimized through discourse itself, which reveals any ideological background it depends on (Göregenli, 2013b). All in all, discourse is not a closed system because it forms part of a broader network of power relations (Foucault, 1978).

Discourse cannot be separated from its context; therefore, understanding the roots of any discourse depends on the evaluation of its context. As van Dijk (2010) asserts, if discourse is purposed to control the mind, context should be controlled beforehand. In a traditional and socio-linguistic manner, context is explained as "something that people refer to as something social [… context] refers to everything that has to do with the social situation, and that situation is the context" (van Dijk, 2010: 14). However, van Dijk (2010) emphasizes that the important thing is how people represent the context in their mind and how they interpret it. Therefore, context does not stand for an objective social situation that influences discourse, but rather for the way people subjectively represent it. It can be said that "the context is not objective, i.e. if it is not an objective social situation but a subjective mental model for the situation, any kind of interpretation would be different for each person" (van Dijk, 2010:15).

Perception and interpretation of any discourse are dependent on mental models of individuals. These subjective mental models are personal and depend on individuals' ideology or their earlier experience. An individual with no personal experience in a matter is influenced by, for example reading a newspaper; and if the news reports are negative each time, the accumulated mental model forms an 'attitude'. Once the attitude is formed, every single text about the subject matter is interpreted as negative and this results in 'generalizations'. If the generalization is about immigrants or minorities, for instance, the created mental models of a negative attitude results in 'racist ideology' (van Dijk, 2010). In other words, van Dijk (2010) explains that if the context is controlled – as in who can speak – and topics are decided – as in what can be written about – people's mental models are created on the basis of these already biased texts. And if there is no other information, no contra-ideology or no contra-discourse, the accumulation of discourses results in a negative attitude about the subject matter in general. In order to summarize this process, van Dijk asserts (2010:27):

> *Attitudes will be generalized and become ideologies. This means that if you want to control the minds of people, what you need to do is controlling the context and then the discourse on all kinds of levels. Once you control the discourse, you also have a way of controlling the mental model of people. Once you control the mental model of people, you also indirectly control the attitudes and ideologies, and that is how power and power abuse is being reproduced in society.*

Discourse becomes important for its relation with people's minds. It is the mind that shapes ideologies; and ideologies shape attitudes, behaviors and discursive practices. Analysis of discourse reveals social power relations. That is why discourse comes forth as a form of knowledge that unveils relations of knowledge, ideology and power. The most important argument about discourse is that language is not meaningful in-it-self but the meaning can be found in concrete forms of social practices (Sözen, 1999). Within these power relations, discourse reproduces and maintains hegemonic and discriminatory social relations, therefore understanding its role for hate speech becomes vital. All in all, it is important to mention that although discrimination in general serves the purposes of dominant classes to create and

maintain social hierarchy, it is the majority, which usually consists of victims, who conform to this discriminative hierarchy (Göregenli, 2012).

Discrimination is not only related to discursive practices, but it actually depends on them. Discrimination emerges on the basis of power relations within society, where the groups with a higher rank on social hierarchy apply discriminative practices on groups with a lower rank. Needles to say, this hierarchy is socially constructed and discourse has an important role in its construction. Given the fact that discourse itself is a concept that both shapes and is shaped by society, it serves as a framework, which defines what is considered to be normal. What dominant discourse sets out to be normal, for instance, is being a heterosexual, powerful, white, and healthy male. In this framework, any individual who does not fit into this description faces the risk of being discriminated and marginalized.

Discourse and power are two inseparable concepts; and hate speech occurs as a type of discourse that power holders enforce on others within power relations. In this sense, hate speech serves the purposes of the dominant ideology by using language to suppress any group that can be defined as the other.

It can be said that hate speech is formed on the basis of lingual practices which includes the use of rude, tough, provocative, cursive, mocking, underestimating, extraordinary, offensive, discriminatory, angry and labeling words. The main reason for this sort of lingual practices can be said to be marginalizing, which is based on defining others based on the definition of ‘I’ and ‘us’. When ‘us’ is defined as Turkish, male, heterosexual, Muslim and Sunni, the definition of others becomes clear (Somay, 2004). As a discursive manipulation, ‘our good things’ and ‘their bad things’ are emphasized as parts of ideological discourse (İnceoğlu, 2013). Furthermore, use of language as part of propaganda or today’s nationalist discourse, becomes an important tool for any kind of prejudice and discrimination (Göregenli, 2013a). All in all, people’s perceptions of the world are articulated and shaped through discourse. As a social practice, discourse constructs and gives meaning to group belongings and intergroup relations.

As a closely related concept to hate speech, “new racism” reveals itself as a contemporary type of discrimination, which is argued to be different from racism in its ‘old’ sense. In accordance with nationalism, new racism includes not only the race or ethnicities of people but goes beyond these elements. As a comprehensive nationalism, it constructs what is acceptable in terms of all humanistic categories including religion, politics and sexual orientation (Çınar, 2013). This new racism defines itself as democratic and respectable, and denies that it is racism. According to it, minorities are not considered biologically inferior but culturally different with certain ‘deficiencies’ and “pathologies that need to be corrected of course” (van Dijk, 2000:34). The role of discourse becomes substantial for new racism because of its subtle and symbolic nature; they appear to be mere talk and seem to be insignificant compared to the violence and forceful segregation of ‘old’ racism. However, they may be more affective to marginalize and exclude people because they appear to be ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ (van Dijk, 2000).

Through discursive practices, discrimination and hate speech find their way in reproducing and also maintaining discriminatory social relations. As mentioned above, discourse is both the social practice of discrimination and the main source for people’s discriminative beliefs and ideas. As a social practice, discourse articulates people’s perceptions of the world. At this point, the role of media becomes of particular importance for that it mediates concepts and values that cause discrimination through discourse.

2.1.2. Hate Speech and Media

The use of lingual practices and the milieu where such practices are popularized are very important for hate speech (Binark and Çomu, 2012). Accordingly, the role of media should be discussed for dissemination of hate speech. Maigret (2011) mentions that media content that includes hate speech serves to suppress the variety of ideas in a society. This can be considered to cause certain views and groups to feel ‘unwanted’ and silent their own voices. In this way, hate speech used in media becomes a tool to suppress different life styles, ideas and views which monotypes the society. It can be said that this result of hate speech causing

certain groups to feel invisible and suppressed is in accordance with Noelle-Neumann's theory of spiral of silence.

According to the social responsibility theory, which is defined by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1963) as one of the four theories of the press, media should be forced to be responsible through self-regulation. Within bounds of this responsibility, press should give actual and comprehensive information of quotidian events, treat all sides equally, represent every person and group in society, present social aims and values, and provide a comprehensive information access to public. Nevertheless, according to the report presented by Hutchins Commission[3] yet in 1947, the press is not fulfilling their responsibilities; and in this report, social responsibility theory finds its roots. Instead of mediating hegemonic ideologies through discourse, press should understand they are accountable to public; and instead of promoting negative statements, press should convert conflict into argument. It can be said that today's understanding of mass communication is not that different from the observations submitted by the Hutchins Commission. Press, which prefers to present the extraordinary and sensational rather than real and important, becomes a tool for power and profit for many media owner[4]. At this point, it is important to mention that media is a place where the elite groups produce and circulate any text that serves them to maintain the discriminating status quo (Çınar, 2013), therefore gives a chance for dominant ideology to be the common one.

Ideologies that are endorsed through the discourse of media influence social representations of attitudes, ideas and beliefs toward certain groups on an individual level. In other words, they shape social cognition of individuals. In this perspective, media becomes the source for internalization of both discourse and the dominant ideology that constructs that discourse.

According to van Dijk (1988a), news can be defined as a kind of discourse, as well, which is relational, categorical and the most important takes place as header; and information, generalizations, contrasts, explanations, and functional connections,

[3] Hutchins Commission's official name was Commission on Freedom of the Press, and the president of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins, led the commission.
[4] For further information about international media ownership structures, see İnceoğlu Y.G. (2010). *Uluslararası Medya*. Istanbul: Der Yayınları.

which are temporal, causal and conditional, are profoundly used in news discourse. Furthermore, van Dijk (1988b) emphasizes the importance of details of news content in treating a subject and argues that these details are constructed through high-level abstract information, personalities and characteristics of actors about general events and actions, conditions and consequences of actions, and descriptions of time, space and situations. Accordingly, İnceoğlu and Sözeri (2012) explain that journalists and news reporters' relations with news sources as the spokesmen of the government and the elite, news' attitude and presentation, and quotes and titles constitute the key elements of news discourse's meaning and ideology.

In this way, news in the media actually mediates concepts and values of the dominant ideology by constructing discourse; and it contributes to the production of intolerance, bias and even hatred towards groups that are marginalized in society by being a reference point for social representations.

In the process of reconstruction of social reality, social representations become affective in development of social identities. It is through social representations that individuals construct an order to define the material world around them, and social representations make communication easier. What Moscovici defines as social representations consist of "a network of concepts and images tied together in various ways according to the interactions between the persons and media that serve to establish communication" (1988:222). As the author argues, these representations enable getting familiarized with strangeness. As a cognitive process, social representations serve to the categorization and commodification of anything unknown to a certain group member, and it makes the unfamiliar, part of that group's discourse. As for the media's role, most of 'strange' and 'new' things are constructed through media with their social representations. At this point, it is important to mention that media usually does not reflect the perspectives of underprivileged groups, but rather politicians, governments and opinion leaders' construction of social representations (Göregenli, 2013b; Çınar, 2013); therefore, any social representation of 'new' on the media serves to benefit the dominant ideology.

With a similar perspective, Downing and Husband (2005) assert that media has a role in defining intergroup relations as it provides an ideological context for race

and ethnicity. This context is constructed through images, stereotypes and framing. Images are related to media construction where certain races and ethnicities are represented in accordance with the dominant ideology. Stereotypes, on the other hand, suggest the perception of public and their way of thinking. And through framing, something of importance may be excluded from the media or a specific detail may be focused on, especially on the news. These context providers of the media serve to create a specific representation of 'others' and these representations may consist of discriminative discourse towards members of certain race and ethnicities.

This discriminative discourse in media is not limited to race and ethnicities. Any notion that is not a part of the dominant ideology is represented in the media as the notions of others. This approach becomes salient if something new is presented because the only way to describe an unfamiliar notion is through familiar ones. Therefore, when a situation about a disease is explained for instance, it is constructed through the comparison of ill and healthy.

It is important to mention that media has an important role not only in presenting unfamiliar notions but also in reinforcing already existing discrimination and hate speech in a society. Especially news plays this part because they are considered as the representation of real life and therefore more reliable (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988a). News provides a source for the world outside of most people experience by themselves. As the so thought majority is presented in the news as society's main identity, and the 'outsiders' of this identity are represented accordingly, it is evident for people to establish their knowledge of these excluded groups on the basis of the information they receive from the news. Furthermore, it is much more likely for stereotypes and prejudices about certain groups to turn into knowledge and judgment if they are represented in the news compared to any other media tool because as mentioned above, news are considered to reflect real life (Çınar, 2013).

According to Çelenk (2010), discrimination on media is limited because it does not go any further than reinforcing the distinction of 'us' and 'them'; nevertheless, the consequences of media's discrimination may go beyond this limitation. The

author explains that media's discrimination is basically representational because certain groups are excluded from, or in other words not represented in media. However, even though media representations do not directly cause physical or emotional damage on the basis of discrimination, they may actually lay the ground for, or in other words, mediate them. Moreover, discrimination in media may reach large masses because of fast and extensive circulation. In general, discrimination on media is related to the lack of representation, under representation or misrepresentation, and stereotyping certain groups. As Çelenk (2010) indicates, media may discriminate disadvantaged groups by ignoring them, by providing limited representation, and by stereotyping them on the basis of prejudices.

According to these studies, media actually promotes discrimination and becomes a mediator for hate speech; whereas, as explained by ARTICLE 19's (2009) Camden Principles - which was developed in collaboration with a panel of international human rights legal scholars and experts - media should play a role in combating discrimination and in promoting intercultural understanding. Accordingly, media should report in a factual manner and bring acts of discrimination to the attention of public; be careful about furthering negative stereotypes; avoid unnecessary references to group characteristics; raise awareness of negative outcomes of discrimination; and report on variety of groups and communities in order to give them a voice. Moreover, media should foster a better understanding of different communities and their issues.

In addition, ARTICLE 19's (2009) Camden Principles list several steps that the media should take, as moral and social responsibility, to minimalize hate speech and ensure the right to be heard and the right to speak. First of all, their workforces should be diverse and representative of society; secondly, they should address all groups' issues of concern; thirdly, they should not represent communities as if they are uniform but give voice to multiple sources within different communities; and finally they should be bound to meet ethical standards in terms of information provision.

In terms of news and journalism, non-discrimination is a fundamental principle for them to be conducted ethically; and forms of hate speech that intends to degrade,

intimidate or incite violence or prejudicial action against people, whether individual or collective, should be guarded against by the media. According to article seven of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Code of Principles, "the journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins" (White, 2008:131).

Even though media is advised by scholars and NGOs to operate ethically in terms of disseminating hate speech, there are many examples of both the production and the mediation of hate speech in media. Various instances of this can be evaluated for the purposes of this study.

2.1.2.1. Examples of Hate Speech in Media

Studies in literature show that stereotypical, essentialist and racist statements that constitute hate speech arise when there is a perceived threat to national identities (Göregenli, 2013b). Bishop and Jaworski (2003) examine the press reportage on the football game between Germany and England during Euro 2000 in a set of 12 British newspapers with the methodological approach of critical discourse analysis. The authors argue that nationalist discourse regarding the game is formulated by three main strategies, namely separation, conflict and typification. Separation is realized in the rhetoric of 'us' and 'them' in constructing the nation and the national reader. It is demonstrated that the use of words like 'us', 'we' and 'our' enable readers to claim full membership and belonging within the national collective. The second strategy of conflict is achieved through the use of military metaphors and imagery related to the war history between the two nations. The last strategy of typification is made manifest through stereotypes, representing the nation as timeless and homogeneous. In this way, "the press reproduce and maintain hegemonic social relations, and in- and outgroup distinctions" (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003:243).

Another research carried out in Turkey reveals similar results by illustrating expressions of hate in traditional and new media prior to and after football matches where tension and violence were observed (Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013). Findings of the

research include examples like “Israel is smacked in the face with Ottoman slap”, “football is a man’s game” or “barbaric Rum attacked”. As it can be seen from the findings, use of slang words, sexist discourse and banal nationalism turn into hate speech in media (Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013). With a similar analysis of football media in Turkey, Talimciler (2012) explains this kind of hate speech in sports with the construction of a binary of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Construction of a collective identity is possible through constructing other collective identities, and in doing so, identity is shaped ‘as opposed’ to others. In terms of football, Talimciler (2012) indicates that it is not enough to have a stadium full of fans; the fans need an opposing side to compare themselves to, in order to show how much they love their team. “The rival team’s fans are ‘them’ and they are inferior; whereas ‘our team’s’ fans are fascinating” (Talimcililer, 2012:260).

Altheide (2007) examines newspapers about the attacks of 9/11 in United States. As the findings of the study indicate, the attack is portrayed as terrorist action accompanied by patriotic discourse. According to the author “terrorism discourse was part of a general context involving the discourse of fear, which was mainly associated with crime, as well as nearly three decades of negative reporting and imagery about the Middle East, and Iraq in particular” (Altheide, 2007: 303). As it is explained by the aouthor, this contributed to the dehumanization of the enemy, including civilians killed by US troops. The enemy was portrayed as barbaric gunmen in the analyzed newspapers, which served to perceive Muslims as a real threat and moreover, to expand domestic social control of politicians (Altheide, 2007). Because the targeted group of Muslims is reflected as a threat to social security, the audience of the newspapers legitimizes this accusation in accordance with nationalist discourse.

In terms of nationalist discourse in media, Demir and Zeydanlıoğlu’s (2010) research on the representation of Iraqi Kurds in the Turkish media during the 2003 Iraq War, illustrates the stigmatization of Iraqi Kurds on the basis of Turkey’s internal issues with its own Kurdish population. Aiming to understand the role of nationalism and media in the reproduction of orientalist notions, the analysis of the research reveals that the Iraqi Kurds are represented as ‘plotters’, ‘conspirators’, ‘looters’, ‘tribal’ and ‘feudal’. Moreover, it is shown that the discourse of the

analyzed newspaper deploys “an Orientalist binary of us and them” by emphasizing “the tribalness of the Iraqi Kurds as opposed to the unitary-nation-state-hood of the Turks” (Demir and Zeydanlıoğlu, 2010:13-14).

Another study that focuses on discriminatory discourse in newspapers emphasizes a more subtle and covert but no less dangerous form of racism (Teo, 2000). According to the study, discourse of newspapers can be used as an instrument to exert ideological dominance by systemic ‘othering’ and stereotyping of ethnic groups by the majority. Teo (2000) argues that this sort of discriminatory discourse in news both reflect and reinforce marginalization and otherization. In line with van Dijk’s (2000) theory of new(s) racism, Teo demonstrates that the practice of this new racism causes people to “speak or act in such a way that distances themselves from the ethnic minority, engaging in discursive strategies that blame the victims for their circumstances on their social, economic and even cultural disadvantage” (2000:8). As another research about subtle discriminatory practices in media, Erjavec (2001) aims to analyze how news reports work to legitimize discrimination against the Roma, who are considered as a marginalized group in Slovenia. The author demonstrates that the Roma are subject to overt and covert discriminatory discourse in the media in three different ways, namely representing them with racist statements, defining them as a homogeneous outgroup, and not giving the Roma a voice in the news. Overall, journalists “selectively (mis)use information to construct a one-sided interpretation of the situation, which they legitimated using sources from the political elite, discourse of difference with colonization of common-sense language, without including minority voices and with the strategies of denial of discriminatory discourse” (Erjavec, 2001:725)

It is possible to describe these discriminatory nationalist practices as part of banal nationalism, which is defined by Billig (1995) as unnoticed, routine practices, ideological habits, beliefs and representations that constitute the daily reproduction of established nations. Billig (1995) asserts that there is a constant but unnoticed flagging of nationhood, which is not oppressive, violent or racist like nationalism but rather patriotic; and in doing so, he explains that nationalism is naturalized as a human need for identity and belonging. In this respect, Billig (1995) conducts a case study, which examines British daily newspapers and illustrates how they address

their readers as members of the nation. According to the author, newspapers "employ a routine 'deixis', which is continually pointing to the national homeland as the home of the readers" (Billig, 1995:11). Replicating Billig's analysis, Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000) conduct a survey of 38 Turkish daily newspapers demonstrating how nationhood is flagged in the press. The authors focus on themes, which have a higher priority on the Turkish political agenda at the time, including religion, Cyprus, internal – external enemies, cultural distinctiveness, economy and sports. Their results explain that in every theme, there are both overt and covert flaggings of nationhood. Banal nationalism refers to unnoticed and familiar forms of nationalism that lie beneath the routines of social life, which serve as constant reminders of nationhood. As Yumul and Özkırımlı conclude, "the media perhaps plays the most remarkable part in the daily reproduction of nationhood … It does so by using a deixis of homeland and nation-making, by flagging banal signs of nationhood, by quoting the nationalist utterances of politicians and others" (2000: 801). On the basis of these studies, it can be said that any messages that implicitly nurture and praise national identities are as effective as the ones that explicitly flag nationhood.

Other than nationalist discourse of newspapers, Kaos GL (Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Researches and Solidarity Association) (2012) puts forth a media watch regarding homophobic and transphobic discourse. They analyze 190 national, regional and local newspapers in Turkey, scanning every report that includes key words like gay, lesbian, transsexual, transvestite, homosexual, bisexual, queer, sexual orientation, sexual preference and sexual identity. Analyzing a total number of 3645 news, the results show that only 226 of the news give voice to LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) individuals; 743 of them are sensitive to human rights; and 990 hold a positive attitude towards homosexuality. However, the report include that these positive news consist of press releases, works and events of LGBT community, and that the rest of the news fall under negative categories. These negative categories of news are interpreted as follows: "LGBT individuals are presented as sexual objects; LGBT individuals and events are criminalized; homosexual stereotypes are nourished; news discourse is homophobic; violence against LGBT individuals are legitimized; LGBT individuals are caricaturized; degrading photos and images of victims are used; stereotypes are cultivated by images; wrong words are used; hate speech is disseminated; and homosexuality is

used to discriminate other groups" (Kaos GL, 2012:302). As Kaos GL's study reveals, the news regarding LGBT embark on a negative attitude and promote homophobic discourse.

In a similar way, Ördek (2012) mentions examples of hate speech in Turkish media about trans individuals. He asserts that it is possible to observe discourse promoting prejudice and hate in media, which incite society against trans individuals by reflecting them as immoral and sexually deviant. According to the author, more often than not, phrases like "terror of transvestites" and "transvestites are street walking" are used in the media causing trans individuals' exclusion and marginalization. Ördek gives an example of a newspaper title covering a symposium on sex labor and human rights, which reads "They bring the West's diseases to Turkey", and he interprets this report to picture trans individuals as immoral (Ördek, 2012:313).

As a more general study, Media Watch on Hate Speech Project (nefretsoylemi.org) reveals the use of biased, prejudiced and discriminatory language in Turkish media. The project is based on watching approximately 1000 local and all national newspapers in terms of hate speech mainly based on ethnicity and religious identity, as well as sexism and homophobia. All news articles are monitored, and the ones containing hate speech elements are categorized in line with the characteristics of their discourse. On the basis of scientific studies, the project sets out four different categories (nefretsoylemi.org):

- *Exaggeration / Attribution / Distortion: Any discourse that features the elements of negative generalization, distortion, exaggeration or negative attribution targeting a community or a person based on a specific incident is considered under this category.*
- *Blasphemy / Insult / Degradation: Any discourse that contains direct swearing, insult or denigration (e.g. use of words such as treacherous, dog, mud-blood etc.) falls under this category.*
- *Enmity / War Discourse: Any discourse that includes hostile, war-mongering expressions about a community is classified under this category.*

- *Use of Inherent Identity as an element of Hate or Humiliation / Symbolization: This category has been created for discourses that use various aspects of one's inherent identity as an element of hate, humiliation or symbolization.*

The reports[5] of the media watch emphasize that there is a considerable increase in the number of instances of hate speech. In a recent study, Çınar *et al.* (2015) demonstrates various instances of discriminatory language in newspapers and show how these news articles are problematic and how they could be corrected. They monitor six mainstream newspapers for three months and analyze different categories of discriminatory language including sexist discourse against women, racist, homophobic or ethnocentric discourse, political discrimination, discrimination on the basis of age and class.

Overall, provocative and discriminatory language used in the news reproduces and strengthens stereotypes and mediates the increase of hostility and discrimination in society. Although there are universal and national principles of journalism and code of ethics for some media organizations, it is seen that these principles are violated very often. As mentioned above, hate speech in the media promotes prejudice against vulnerable groups and disturbs social tranquility. As a consequence, targeted groups or individuals are forced to renounce their right to participate in social and political life, which is a compulsory element of democracy.

2.1.3. Hate Speech and Freedom of Expression

The reconciliation of right to participate in social and political life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or right to be free from discrimination with the right to freedom of speech can become a source of problems because they are all fundamental elements of a democratic society. The European Court of Human Rights has guaranteed freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as one of the essential foundations of this democratic society. Unlike the right to freedom of thought, right to freedom of expression is not considered as an absolute right, and it is subjected to certain

[5] The reports of Media Watch on Hate Speech can be accessed via nefretsoylemi.org

restrictions as set out in Article 10(2) of the Convention in order to protect the rights of others. It is emphasized by the European Court that "tolerance and respect for the equal dignity of all human beings constitute the foundations of a democratic, pluralistic society" (Weber, 2009:2). Therefore, the risk of conflict between freedom of expression and the interdiction of discrimination arises, where the right to freedom of expression is used to incite hatred.

It is important to underline that there is a dividing line between what constitutes as hate speech and are not covered by freedom of expression, and what can be tolerated in a democratic society. In order to understand the right to freedom of expression and its possible restrictions, international and regional humans rights instruments can be mentioned as laid out by ARTICLE 19 (2012).

2.1.3.1. International and Regional Human Rights Instruments

Freedom of expression is guaranteed in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted in 1948. Although UDHR does not specify certain forms of expression to be prohibited, article 7 provides for protection against discrimination and incitement to discrimination; and article 29 recognizes that it may be legitimate to secure certain limitations in order to respect the rights and freedoms of others. It can be said that both article 7 and 29 limit the scope of article 19. As the legal force of the rights contained in the UDHR, which was not strictly binding on states, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1976. Like the article 19 of UDHR, article 19 of ICCPR protects freedom of opinion and expression, and it guarantees freedom to seek and receive information. Different than the UDHR, article 19(3) of the Covenant sets out the test for assessing the legitimacy of restrictions on freedom of expression. Accordingly, "any restrictions must be provided by law, must pursue a legitimate aim and must conform to the strict tests of necessity and proportionality" (ARTICLE 19, 2012:10).

Setting limitation on freedom of expression, article 20(2) of the ICCPR proposes that states should be obliged to ban any speech that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; however, Human Rights Committee

underlines that any laws implementing the provisions of article 20(2) must be confined within the limits on restrictions to freedom of expression set out in article 19(3) (ARTICLE 19, 2012). As another international instrument, article 4(a) of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) – different than article 20(2) of ICCPR – requires states to declare a set of four expressive conducts as an offense punishable by law. Aforementioned expressive conducts include "all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred; incitement to racial discrimination; all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another color or ethnic origin; and any assistance with racist activities, including the financing of them" (ARTICLE 19, 2012:13). The right to freedom of opinion and expression is guaranteed in article 5(viii) of the ICERD in relation to all conduct described in article 4(a).

Going back to the European Convention on Human Rights as a regional instrument, right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in article 10 of the Convention. Even though the ECHR does not oblige states to prohibit expression, the European Court of Human Rights recognizes that it must be necessary to restrict certain forms of expression, "which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance (including religious intolerance), provided that formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties imposed are proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued" (ARTICLE 19, 2012:14). According to another regional instrument, the American Convention on Human Rights, freedom of expression is protected under article 13, which sets a positive obligation on states to make an offence punishable by law if it is any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred. Last but not least, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights guarantees the right to freedom of expression and information with no provisions regarding incitement; nevertheless, the Charter states that all the rights should be non-discriminatory in terms of their enjoyment by people (ARTICLE 19, 2012). Overall, the grounds on which freedom of expression may be limited can be summarized as follows (Carver, 2015:13):

- *To protect the rights or reputations of others;*
- *National security;*
- *Ordre public (which means not only public order, but also general public welfare;*

- *Public health or morals;*
- *Territorial integrity or public safety;*
- *Confidentiality of information received in confidence;*
- *Authority and impartiality of the judiciary.*

2.1.3.2. Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press

The right to freedom of expression is thought to be vital for the functioning of a democratic society. It serves both to ensure an open flow of ideas and hold authorities to account. In this respect, it can be mentioned that article 19 of the UDHR contains freedom to seek, receive and impart information, which makes freedom of information inseparable from freedom of expression. United Nations General Assembly, in its very first session, confirms that "freedom of information is a fundamental human right and […] the touchstone of all of the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated" (Carver, 2015:11).

The role of media is of particular importance for both freedom of expression and freedom of information. The European Court of Human Rights stresses that the press has a task of imparting information and ideas, which corresponds to the public's right to receive them. Without these rights to freedom, press would be deprived of its vital role of 'public watchdog'. It can be concluded that violation of freedom of the press results in not only violating the right to freedom of expression of the journalists, but also the public's right to receive information.

Within the scope of freedom of expression, freedom of the press stands as an important component; nevertheless, some restrictions to this freedom can be implemented in terms of hate speech. Article 10 of ECHR accepts the possibility of licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises; however, the European Court rejects the idea of the state's role in prior restraint (Carver, 2015). Licensing of the media can only be applied to ensure the fair distribution of access to media. Furthermore, any restraints of freedom of the press, as set out by article 19 of the ICCPR, must be provided by law, must pursue a legitimate aim and must be necessary and proportional.

According tor ECHR, freedom of expression carries certain responsibilities with it; that is why intervention of this right in certain circumstances is thought to be possible. Especially media should be bound to these responsibilities while exercising this right because media organs carry the risk of being used as a tool for dissemination of hate speech and incitement of violence. According to Karan (2013), the European Court of Human Rights approaches hate speech in a precise manner in order to ensure the proportionality of related measures and support freedom of the press. In this direction, a statement that contains hatred should be evaluated on the basis of whether it is represented to aid and promote hate speech or just as a part of news analysis. In this perspective, it is crucial to distinguish the generator of hate speech and the publisher of it in terms of public disclosure.

2.1.3.3. Hate Speech and Legal Regulations

Weber (2009) expresses that it is hard to determine whether a statement is hate speech for that it is not always abreacted through hatred, and that hate speech should be separated from statements that can be considered as the use of right to freedom of speech. On the basis of international and regional instruments on human rights, it is seen that right to freedom of expression can be subjected to restrictions and limitations when it borders the violation of rights of others. In accordance, hate speech becomes one of these borderlines where freedom of expression can be tested and restricted. For legal regulations on the subject matter, there are many European countries that acknowledge hate speech and regulate the concept in their penal codes. Cohen-Almagor (2011:1-2) cites different countries' definitions of hate speech, which shows that the subject is treated within the boundaries of legal regulations:

> *Denmark defines hate speech as publicly making statements that threaten, ridicule, or hold in contempt a group due to race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, faith, or sexual orientation (Danish Penal Code, Straffeloven, section 266 B). The Dutch Penal Code, Article 137c, holds: "He who publicly, orally, in writing or graphically, intentionally expresses himself insultingly regarding a group of people because of their race, their religion or their life philosophy, their heterosexual or homosexual orientation or their physical, psychological or mental disability, shall be punished by imprisonment of no more than a year*

or a monetary penalty of the third category." In Iceland, Article 233 of the Penal Code states: "Anyone who in a ridiculing, slanderous, insulting, threatening or any other manner publicly assaults a person or a group of people on the basis of their nationality, skin color, race, religion or sexual orientation, shall be fined or jailed for up to 2 years." Norway prohibits hate speech, defined as "publicly making statements that threaten or ridicule someone or that incite hatred, persecution or contempt for someone due to their skin color, ethnic origin, homosexual life style or orientation or, religion or philosophy of life" (Norwegian Penal Code, Straffeloven, section 135a). Sweden prohibits hate speech, and defines it as "publicly making statements that threaten or express disrespect for an ethnic group or similar group regarding their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, faith or sexual orientation" (Swedish Penal Code, Brottsbalken, Chapter 18, section 8).

When Turkey's laws and regulations are reviewed, hate speech does not come across as an acknowledged and regulated concept (Karan, 2013); however, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) submits reports that criticizes Turkey regarding hate speech.[6] In ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on National Legislation to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, it is recommended to the governments of member states "to enact legislation against racism and racial discrimination, if such legislation does not already exist or is incomplete" (ECRI, 2003:4).

Although the Constitution of Turkey does not contain such legislation, freedom of expression is subjected to restrictions under article 13, which regulates restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms, and article 14, which regulates prohibition of abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms. Furthermore, article 26, concerning freedom of expression and dissemination of thought, specifies purposes that may restrict these freedoms. Even though these articles do not directly address legislation against racism, they can be interpreted for the restriction of the right to freedom of speech in line with instruments of human rights.

[6] ECRI's reports on Turkey can be accessed via http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Turkey/Turkey_CBC_en.asp

ECRI's Recommendation No. 7 also specifies acts that should be penalized by criminal law if committed intentionally. These acts related to hate speech include public incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination, public insults and defamation or threats against a person or a grouping of persons on the grounds of their race, color, language, religion, nationality, or national or ethnic origin; public expression of an ideology with a racist aim; and many other racial discrimination acts (ECRI, 2003).

In accordance with this recommendation, but not based on it, there are two articles in Turkish Criminal Code that can be applicable for crimes regarding hate speech. The first one is article 125 of the Criminal Code regarding defamation, which may coincide with hate speech in certain cases. Article 125 predicts the punishment of acts with the intention to harm the honor, reputation or dignity of another person. Clause 3, sub clauses b and c explain that punishment of the offense is increased if committed "due to disclosure, change or to attempt to spread religious, social, philosophical belief, opinion and convictions and to obey the orders and restriction of the one's religion; and by mentioning sacred values in view of the religion with which a person is connected." This clause emphasizes defamation on the basis of one's group identity; therefore, it can be evaluated within the scope of hate speech against one's religion and beliefs (Karan, 2013). It is also important to underline that the fourth clause of the article predicts increase of punishment if the offense is committed through press and use of any publication organs, which can be interpreted as referring to the responsibilities of the press regarding dissemination of hate speech.

The second article that guides treatment of hate speech is article 216 of the Turkish Criminal Code, which regards offences of provoking people to be rancorous and hostile. The first clause of the article states that any act that "openly provokes a group of people belonging to different social class, religion, race, sect, or coming from another origin, to be rancorous or hostile against another group" is punishable with imprisonment " in case of such act causes risk from the aspect of public safety". This clause of the article is criticized that if a risk of disturbing public safety does not occur, then the act is not considered as an offense. Even though the clause protects

freedom of speech, it does not encompass regulations for hate speech (Parlar and Hatipoğlu, 2008 cited in Karan, 2013).

The second clause of article 216 regulates punishment of humiliating another person on the basis of different social class, religion, race, sect or coming from another origin. This clause is more applicable to offences of hate speech because it does not require the disturbance of public safety, as the first clause, and the victim of the offence is considered as a group with certain qualities (Parlar and Hatipoğlu, 2008 cited in Karan, 2013). The last clause of the article again searches for a risk for public peace in terms of openly disrespecting the religious beliefs of a group. For this clause to be affective, the offence needs to be aimed at religious beliefs and not individuals. Through evaluating the results of cases related to article 216, Karan (2013) concludes that this article does not serve to protection of minority groups from hate speech.

It can be inferred from these that legal regulations in Turkey are not sufficient to prevent, combat or punish hate speech because of several reasons. First of all, both articles of the Constitution and the Criminal Code are incomprehensive for they exclude actual or innate characteristics of groups like gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual identity and sexual orientation as victims of hate speech. Secondly, they neither correspond to the recommendation of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance; nor they reflect a comprehensive understanding of human rights framed by international instruments. And finally, as ECRI's reports show, hate speech is still an occurring problem in Turkey, and legal regulations are not utilized to protect disadvantaged groups from hate speech (Karan, 2010).

From a different perspective, there are views suggesting total respect for freedom of expression by underlining that restrictions of this freedom does not solve the actual problems beneath the production of hate speech. As mentioned above, "respect for freedom of expression and equality has a crucial role to play in ensuring democracy and sustainable human development, and in promoting international peace and security" (ARTICLE 19, 2009:1). The underlying social roots of prejudice of which hate speech is symptomatic and which undermine the right to equality is not addressed by prohibition or censorship of problematic issues (ARTICLE 19, 2012).

Accordingly, İnceoğlu (2013) claims that just because hate speech may incite hate crimes, it does not entail that every hate speech results in hate crime. Any legal regulation on discriminative statements endangers the right to freedom of expression. As the author asserts, "hate speech should be monitored and reported. The most effective method in democracies is decoding" (İnceoğlu, 2010:43). Moreover, to raise awareness, campaigns against hate speech should be organized; experiences of victims should be reported; and education and consciousness levels of people who work in legal forces and media should be raised (İnceoğlu, 2013).

Regarding the prohibition of hate speech and incitement, organization of ARTICLE 19 (2012) suggests that all incitement cases should be assessed under a robust and uniform incitement test. The six elements of the test in sum, which should be reviewed for all incitement cases, are as follows (ARTICLE 19, 2012:27):

1. *Context of the expression;*
2. *Speaker/proponent of the expression;*
3. *Intent of the speaker/proponent of the expression to incite to discrimination, hostility or violence;*
4. *Content of the expression;*
5. *Extent and magnitude of the expression (including its public nature, its audience and means of dissemination);*
6. *Likelihood of the advocated action occurring, including its imminence.*

According to the organization, these elements are considered to be essential for ensuring confinement of incitement to hatred as an offence, so that freedom of expression can be protected. It can be added that this test proposed by ARTICLE 19, coincides with Benesch's (2014) guidelines for detecting dangerous speech and Ethical Journalism Network's (2014) five-point test of speech, as explained above.

As Benesch (2014) summarizes, it is possible to attain two essential goals through following these guidelines and tests of speech. The first one is diminishing the risks induced by hate speech, and the second is protecting freedom of expression;

and attaining these goals becomes possible by narrowing down and confining the concept of hate speech.

2.1.4. Hate Speech and Hate Crimes

Speaking of the aspect of criminal offence regarding hate speech, it is important to distinguish the term from hate crimes even though the two are interrelated concepts. Hate speech is defined as an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which represents a systemic hierarchy among groups of a society; and it is revealed as the mental and ideological background of hate crime, which is the most violent way of discrimination (Göregenli, 2013b). According to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), hate crimes include any criminal offense committed with a bias motive or intolerance on the basis of race, color, ethnicity or nationality, religion, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disabilities and other protected characteristics (OSCE/ODIHR, 2009).

What sets hate crimes apart from other crimes is explained in four reasons (OSCE/ODIHR, 2009): First of all, they basically violate the ideal of equality between members of society, which is constantly reiterated in human rights documents. Secondly, hate crimes have significant psychological impacts on their victims as they feel injured, vulnerable and unable to change the characteristic that made them victims. Thirdly, the community that shares the victims' characteristics may feel at risk of future attack. Finally, serious security and public order problems may appear because of hate crimes. It holds the potential to cause social division and civil unrest. Overall, hate crimes affect the social order of societies and therefore are social and political.

On the basis of news in the media and data from non-governmental organizations, Göregenli (2013b) summarizes that victims of hate crimes usually become the target of crime on the basis of their sexual orientation, ethnicity and religious beliefs. The author also lists several examples of hate crimes in Turkey that were committed in recent years: on April 1, 2005, International Protestant Church in Ankara received a threat letter and tried to be burned down with a Molotov cocktail;

on February 5, 2006, Andrea Santoro, the priest of Santa Maria Italian Church in Trabzon, was shot to death; on January 19, 2007, Hrant Dink was killed in front of the building of the newspaper Agos where he was chief editor; on June 18, 2008, Kurdish workers were attacked and one was injured with the reasoning of disturbing their neighbors in Gebze; in January 2010, Roman citizens in Manisa Selendi experienced a lynch attempt and they were forced to emigrate to another district; and in July 2013, a trans woman named Gaye was found dead in her apartment later to be found out that she was a victim of hate crime. In general, it can be said that it is not the individuals' personal traits that are attacked but rather their collective social identities.

In order for hate speech to be considered as hate crime, the speech itself needs to include prohibited content as a crime. There are laws that criminalize speech because of its particular content. Speech may be penalized because it incites hatred or is insulting about certain groups; in other cases, speech that denigrates a person's or nation's honor or dignity is prohibited; and speech may be restricted on specific historical subjects such as Holocaust denial. Even if the speech consists of bias motive and or content, it is not a crime if it does not include a criminal offense. However, it is important to mention that any racist or biased speech, or sources that suggest bias or prejudice, may constitute evidence of motive of the related crime (OSCE/ODIHR, 2009).

Although they are interrelated, hate speech, hate crime and discrimination are different from each other on conceptual and legal dimensions. Unlike hate crime, in the violation of laws of discrimination, the act is considered as discriminative regardless of the intentionality or targeting of a certain group, while a hate crime is committed on the basis of prejudice or intolerance. Furthermore, discrimination involves a comparison and different treatment based on this comparison; and a reasonable cause is not required for discrimination, while hate speech does not have the factors of comparison and different treatment (Karan, 2013).

From a general perspective, hate crime, hate speech and discrimination are interrelated concepts where they make it easier for others to occur and they trigger one another. Or in a more structural sense, hate speech is revealed as the mental and

ideological background of hate crime; and hate crime is a violent way of discrimination.

2.1.5. Hate Speech and Democracy

Returning to a more general framework, it can be said that the rights of people to be heard, to speak and to participate in political, artistic and social life are possible with the attainment of equality. As mentioned above, when certain groups are denied public participation and voice, their issues become invisible, and they become more vulnerable to bigotry, prejudice and marginalization (ARTICLE 19, 2009), and targeted groups or individuals are forced to renounce their right to participate in social and political life, which is "a sine qua non for democracy" (nefretsoylemi.org). Hate speech that reduces a certain group's rights cannot be considered as a legitimate form of political discourse and it does not correspond to democratic ideals. These types of destructive messages cause conflict and division in a society without respecting the individual rights of its members, which respectively endangers civil rights guaranteed by democracy.

When hate speech in media is evaluated, as discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, it is seen that provocative and discriminatory language used in the news reproduces and strengthens stereotypes and mediates the increase of hostility and discrimination in society. And in general, hate speech in the media promotes prejudice against vulnerable groups and disturbs social tranquility. As a consequence, targeted groups or individuals are forced to renounce their right to participate in social and political life, which is a compulsory element of democracy.

Discussing the causes and consequences of hate speech in democracy, raises the question of whether freedom of expression should be an absolute right. In terms of the relationship between hate speech and freedom of expression, international and regional human rights instruments and various legal regulations are discussed in the section on Hate Speech and Freedom of Expression. In this section, it is aimed to explain the two concepts' relationship in the context of democracy.

Democracy "presupposes that each individual is free to think as he or she wishes and to hold his or her own ideas, opinions and general philosophy of life" (Beetham and Boyle, 2009:49). Along with this freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of expression lies within the essence of democracy. Taking into consideration that each citizen has a voice equally entitled to be heard, freedom of speech is an essential human right if each citizen is to have the opportunity to be heard (Beetham and Boyle, 2009). Moreover, freedom of expression is considered to be required for democracy in order for citizens to participate effectively in political life. Accordingly, citizens need freedom of expression both to make their views known and to be able to hear the voices of other citizens. "Free expression means not just that you have a right to be heard. It also means that you have a right to hear what others have to say" (Dahl, 1998:96). In addition, free expression or freedom of speech is necessary for citizens to acquire an enlightened understanding of political debates and maintain a capacity to influence the agenda of government decisions. In Dahl's (1998:96) words, "silent citizens may be perfect subjects for an authoritarian ruler; they would be a disaster for a democracy."

Besides the right to speak or to be heard and the right to hear what others have to say, international standards on freedom of speech also concern the right to seek and to receive information and ideas of all kinds, through any media regardless of frontiers. Accordingly, Beetham and Boyle summarizes that media needs to be independent for the right to seek and receive information (2009:49-50):

> *The mass media should be independent of government control and – within clear rules established to protect individuals' reputation and privacy – free to inform citizens, to criticize the government and to stimulate all manner of debate on policy choices. The Internet should also be free from government or corporate interference and accessible to all.*

After explaining that the rights that follow freedom of expression constitute the essence of democracy, the authors also mention that these freedoms carry certain responsibilities with them. For instance, while enjoying the right to freedom of expression, one should not gratuitously offend religious or other sensibilities,

especially when the offended group constitutes a minority or a marginalized group (Beetham and Boyle, 2009).

It goes without saying that the protection of freedom of expression is essential for a democracy committed to personal autonomy and political pluralism; regarding hate speech however, it needs to be argued whether imposition of restrictions on speech is diminishing democratic values. Discussing the place of racist speech in the context of the First Amendment[7] to the United States Constitution, Robert Post (1991:322) argues "racist speech is and ought to be immune from regulation within public discourse" by underlining that speech is essential for personal self-determination and for deliberative development of public opinion. Moreover, self-determination is necessary for democratic discourse and decision-making; however, it is argued that the personal autonomy aspect of the First Amendment needs to be balanced against competing democratic values. It can be said that Post (1991) correctly emphasizes democracy's obligation to respect self-assertion; but while doing so, he does not consider individual interest to be free from reasonably anticipated risks caused by inflammatory speech (Tsesis, 2009). Tsesis (2009:499-500) summarizes these risk and their implications as follows:

> *Hate speakers tend to intimidate targeted groups from participation in the deliberative process. Diminished political participation because of safety concerns, in turn, stymies policy and legislative debates. Discriminatory assertions are meant to stymie the depth of pluralistic speech. Demeaning stereotypes can delegitimize the opinions of disfavored groups […] In a pluralistic society, where clashes of interests among equals are unavoidable, reconciling them often requires weighing competing concerns. Speech, like any other individual right, sometimes has to give way to other democratic values, such as equality. Self-assertion is not an absolute trump against egalitarian decision-making.*

[7] The First Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits the making of any law respecting an establishment of religion, impending the free exercise of religion, abridging the freedom of speech, infringing on the freedom of the press, interfering with the right to assemble, or prohibiting the petitioning for a governmental redress of grievances.

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, hate speech usually depends on stereotypes by aiming to trigger hostile behavior toward certain groups. When hate speech involves supremacist and menacing statements, targeted groups are denied to have a legitimate right to equal civil treatment and equally participate in democracy. Statements that are meant to hurt individuals on the basis of their race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or any other group characteristic, have an important social impact. Aside from dangerous speech, any kind of hate speech relies on a form of self-expression that aims to diminish the deliberative participation of certain groups of the population by glorifying injustices, by devaluing human worth and by encouraging crimes. It can be said that this kind of statements are not innocent, abstract ideas nor solely defamatory statements; they usually seek to intimidate and exclude certain groups from enjoying their democratic rights.

There is no regulation on possessing negative emotions or thoughts (Beetham and Boyle, 2009); however, Tsesis (2009:511-512) argues, "speech that is substantially likely to cause discriminatory harm, especially violence, can be regulated without infringing on the fundamental principles of democracy". Scholars who share a similar view to Tsesis, indicate that hate speech violates basic values and principles of democracy. Hate propaganda, for instance, is thought to be instrumental for racist and ethnocentric groups to gain political office, in addition to spreading aggression and enmity (Kretzmer, 1987).

In addition, hate speech is considered to be much more than merely offensive. It increases social discord and promotes disunity by producing mental and emotional distress in the target group. This distress includes feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, vulnerability, inferiority, inadequacy, and personal degradation (Battaglia, 1991). "A democracy is a quilt of individuals sown together by principles and laws. Each person adds color and contributes to its overall pattern. When propagandists undo the threads that bind all the separate parts, the entire network of public safety loosens" (Tsesis, 2009:513). Because hate speech is more than offensive words, it may threaten its listeners, and it aids organizing social groups that espouse discriminatory ideologies rather than democratic ones.

Furthermore, hate speech is considered to pose a long-term threat to the social well being of a democracy. That is to say, the long-term consequences of hate speech are different from its immediate threats. Even though an inflammatory statement may not cause an immediate breach of peace, popular prejudices may become ordinary parts of public discourse over time (Sumner, 2004). Discussing the role of prejudice, Allport (1954) argues that prolonged and intense verbal hostility precedes a riot by giving the example of the discriminatory Nurnberg Laws passed by the Hitler regime, which was preceded by seventy years of political anti-Semitism of the verbal order. At this point, it is important to mention that not all hate speech turns into social violence; however, it features this possibility of discrimination and hate crime.

Last but least, hate speech is considered to be antidemocratic because it basically denies certain classes of persons have the rights of conscience, freedom of expression, religion, culture and intimacy (Heyman, 1996). When Robert Post's (1991) argument that hate speech, or racist speech in his words, should be immune from regulation is reconsidered in the context of democratic rights and values, it can be seen that hate speech easily diminishes other people's democratic rights. After addressing legal regulation in different countries, Tsesis summarizes, as his concluding remarks, how hate speech serves anti-democratic purposes (2009:531-532):

> *International norms and the penal codes of numerous countries demonstrate the broad consensus that inciting others to hatred is threatening and inconducive to dialogue. Democracies around the world generally recognize that the value of preserving human rights supersedes bigots' self-determined desire to spread destructive messages. Countries that have examined the legitimacy of hate speech regulations in a democracy, the very analysis that Robert Post advocated, have found that they can protect people's self-determinative right of expression without adhering to free speech absolutism. Free speech is essential to collective decision-making; however, when hate speech places reasonable people in fear for their well-being or advocates discriminatory conduct it undermines the very collective autonomy Post espouses.*

Although the purpose of this thesis is not to argue that speech should be regulated, it can be said that legal approaches to the issue tend to defend that hate speech should not be protected with the democratic right to freedom of expression because targeted groups of hate speech are denied to have a legitimate right to equal civil treatment and equally participate in democracy; because it aims to diminish the deliberative participation of certain groups of the population; because it glorifies injustices, devalues human worth and encourages crimes; because it usually seeks to intimidate and exclude certain groups from enjoying their democratic rights; because it increases social discord and promotes disunity by producing mental and emotional distress in the target group; because it poses a long-term threat to the social well being of a democracy; and overall, because hate speech is antidemocratic for that it denies the rights of certain groups.

Given that hate speech has this kind of drastic effect on democratic ideals, it is necessary to battle against it; however, legal constraints cannot provide an absolute solution for this problem. Instead, battling against hate speech on a social and cultural level can be much more effective because the important component of this battle is changing the mindset of society. It is not sufficient to prevent individuals to put their negative thoughts into words through legal restrictions. The necessary action is finding a way to reduce prejudices and stereotypes that cause people to produce hate speech in the first place.

2.2. Online News

When mass media is evaluated in political and social contexts, it is possible to say that the use of communication technologies is determined in accordance with political priorities. The important thing is not the technology itself, but rather how and by whom it is being used. Politically or socially, mass media does not yield positive or negative consequences by itself; the use of media tools for political priorities within power relations causes these consequences (Timisi, 2003). As an alternative option for media, Internet comes forth as containing opportunities for a more civil and liberal communication. Accordingly, it is argued that the online media emphasizes commonwealth of the public, commitment to ethical codes and an understanding of responsible journalism (Köse, 2007).

As early as in 1993, Rheingold anticipates that the Internet will provide a milieu where an understanding of participatory democracy can be possible, and "this technology can be used for humanitarian purposes" (Rheingold, 2000:276). In accordance with this early prediction, it can be said that news sites and digital journalism practices, which benefit from new communication technologies, may appear as an alternative to traditional media in terms of democratic and reliable journalism practices (Tuğla, 2014).

Media has multiple functions in democracies. It both informs the public about political issues and expresses the problems of the public. Democracy requires informed citizens because it can only develop through equal and open access of its citizens to different sources of information (Keane, 1999). Moreover, it is essential for pluralistic democracies to sustain a media with different ownership structures because freedom of thought depends on the opportunity to disseminate different views and ideas (Kışlalı, 2006). Especially with the development of the Internet, it is thought that the public sphere has expanded because the Internet makes it easier for marginal thoughts to be heard and opposing views to debate with each other; and because of the Internet, citizens are becoming a part of political discussions as well as controlling the politicians (Atikkan and Tunç, 2011).

As mentioned above, Internet is thought to provide opportunities for public to participate in democracy, proclaim their voice, and have access to all kinds of information. On the basis of these, online news can be evaluated as an alternative to traditional media for that it offers the commonwealth of the public, commitment to ethical codes and an understanding of responsible journalism. In this direction, evaluating the relationship between media and democracy is thought to be grounding a discussion on the Internet's and especially online news' role in democracy and how they can be interpreted in terms of hate speech.

2.2.1. Media and Democracy

Media has a vital role in democracies because of the idea that it makes the concept of informed citizen possible; it represents the issues of the public as a whole;

it acts as a watchdog, and it provides the means necessary for public debate. The relation of media and democracy can be explained by a premise that is set forth by the European Commission (Oreja, et al., 1998:9):

> *[…] a modern democratic society cannot exist without communication media which are widely available and accessible; reflect the pluralistic nature of such a society and are not dominated by any one viewpoint or controlled by any one interest group; make available the information necessary for citizens to make informed choices about their lives and their communities; provide the means whereby the public debate which underpins free and democratic societies can take place, means that the market will not necessarily deliver on its own.*

In general, democracy means "rule by the people or popular power" (Nordenstreng, 2000:31). David Held (1996) provides a guide for the history of ideas concerning democracy; and his prospects of the concept are based on two models, namely "democratic autonomy" and "cosmopolitan democracy". The model of democratic autonomy evaluates contemporary democracy in the context of a nation state; and cosmopolitan democracy deals with the extension of democracy to regional and global levels. By mentioning that Held's models contain "surprisingly little" about the mass media as elements of democracy, Nordenstreng (2000:32) further analyzes the models in terms of the relationship between media and democracy. Accordingly, democratic autonomy requires "open availability of information to help ensure informed decisions in public affairs" so that people possess the ability to deliberate, judge, choose and act upon different courses of action (Held, 1996:324).

This reasoning can also be found in Robert Dahl's criteria for democratic process. By listing five standards, Dahl (1998) explains that effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of agenda, and inclusion of adults establish the requirements for democratic process. As Nordenstreng (2000) mentions, the criteria of "enlightened understanding" depends on journalism and mass communication, which cites "within reasonable limits as to time, each member must have equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their likely consequences" (Dahl, 1998:37). As mentioned above, this

becomes possible in democracies through journalism and mass communication practices.

Even though media is thought to provide a channel for government propaganda in every type of political system, in a democracy, it has other important functions, which are "to investigate government, to inform the public, to provide a forum for political debate, and to act as a channel for public opinion and popular pressure to reach government" (Beetham and Boyle, 2009: 21). Accordingly, media play a vital role of 'public watchdog' with its investigative and informative functions where it imparts information about governments. Furthermore, media provides a forum for public debate, where public figures can be interrogated and ordinary citizens can participate.

It is important to mention that "the media can only perform these key democratic tasks if they are properly independent, and not dominated either by government itself or by powerful private interests" (Beetham and Boyle, 2009:23). However, theories on the relation of democracy and the media are not feasible at all times. For instance, accompanying the understanding of the free market that goes along with democracies, the rise in publishing costs alone gives control of the press to capitalist entrepreneurs (Curran, 2005). It can be said that there is a contradiction between theory and practice for democracy including media's pivotal role. Anthony Giddens (1999) explains this contradiction with what he refers to as "the paradox of democracy". Accordingly, the mature democracies in most Western countries are supposed to be copied by the rest of the world, and in fact, democracy is spreading over the world. Nevertheless, citizens in democratic countries are apparently disillusioned with democratic government. They do not trust politicians; less people turn out to vote; and more people claim that they are uninterested in parliamentary politics. This constitutes the paradox of democracy, and the media cannot be left out of this equation:

> *The media, particularly television, have a double relation to democracy. On the one hand, the emergence of a global information society is a powerful democratizing force. Yet television, and the other media, tend to destroy the very public space of dialogue they open up, through a relentless trivializing,*

> *and personalizing, of political issues. Moreover, the growth of giant multinational media corporations means that unelected business tycoons can hold enormous power (Giddens, 1999).*

On the basis of this, it can be said that even though the media is considered as an essential element of democracy, it is again the media that cause the loss of trust in political systems. Similar to Giddens, McChesney (2008) puts forth a paradox of rich media and poor democracy, asserting that the corporate media system is considered to be democratic in itself; however the very issue of who controls the media and for what purposes is not a part of political debate. According to the author, due to media and communication's extreme importance in society, "the subject of how the media are controlled, structured, and subsidized should be at the center of democratic debate" (McChesney, 2008: 427).

As another critical evaluation of the relationship between media and democracy, Keane (1999) argues that even though deregulation (removal of state censorship and legal regulations on media) is supported for freedom of the press in democracies, the accompanying concept of market liberalism carries political censorship and censorship by the market within itself. Moreover, 'market freedom' cannot be equated with independence from all forms of power (Curran, 2002). On the basis of this, it is suggested that democratic media should not be used for the benefit of political or economical power, but for public interest. According to Keane (1999), the most advantageous aspect of democracy is providing the right for its citizens to make judgments and reevaluating those judgments; and this becomes possible through media. Moreover, the extent of freedom of the press should always remain as a discussion topic in democratic societies because a society, which is numbed by capital or political authority and freed from discussions of freedom of expression, is either "in its death bed or dead" (Keane, 1999:175).

In this regard, it can be said that a democracy without free press is not possible. However, theory on media's role and its implementation can be contradictory. It is argued that the press should be independent and freedom of the press should always be exercised but it is important to understand what this independence entails. In theory, freedom of the press implies freedom from government or the dominant

group in society. Media should be free from political or governmental interference; nevertheless, this may cause other types of limitations. In this sense, even if media is freed from the state, it is bound by economical constraints. This is apparent in today's media, where institutions are obliged to act in accordance with economical concerns. Because of this, media's pivotal role in serving the public good takes a secondary place. Moreover, instead of being a public watchdog, the press becomes an advocate for the government, again with economical concerns.

As mentioned above, one of media's vital roles is to provide information for citizens to make informed decisions about their lives and their communities (Oreja et al., 1998). In this regard, Nordenstreng (2000) approaches this role in terms of what is required for the media in democracy by focusing on four aspects, namely elections, openness, knowledge and/or conversation, and citizen's responsibilities.

For elections, it can be said that media monitoring should be a natural part of election supervising. In terms of openness, the author explains that "an open society […] means above all diversity and pluralism of media content, both in terms of the variety of topics and voices brought to the public sphere and in terms of the viewpoints and values displayed" (Nordenstreng, 2000:40). Moreover, democratic values necessitate equal attention to all identifiable positions in society causing open diversity in media coverage. Regarding knowledge and conversation, the author mentions the Dewey-Lippman debate, where the role of media is argued. The two differing views are about whether the media should provide citizens with reliable information or serve as platforms of conversation between citizens. It can be said that rational debate is brought to the understanding of media's role in democracy by a Habermasian mode of thinking in addition to post-modern and communitarian streams of thought where conversation is considered as more important than knowledge. On the other hand, there are those who refuse that conversation is the basis of democracy claiming that "an overworked and ill-disciplined news media spelled the demise of popular sovereignty, or at least of its founding fiction of well-informed public" (Peters, 1999:103 cited in Nordenstreng, 2000:42). This debate enriches the discussions on the role of media in democracy by leading to "a philosophical examination of the kind of information which is being transmitted in news and other media messages" (Nordenstreng, 2000:42-43). As for citizen's

responsibilities, the author emphasizes that democratic theory places responsibility on citizens to be interested and engaged in politics, and that media is a tool for informing citizens. It can be asserted that media's role in informing citizens is based on the assumption that citizens are interested in politics; however, the paradoxes of democracy, as indicated above, show that this is not the case in Western democracies, where people are disillusioned with democratic procedures and that the media actually contribute to this malaise of democracy. In terms of this challenge, Nordenstreng (2000) suggests that both citizens and media should become more responsible and begin to enforce democracy.

Evaluating journalism's and journalists' role in the relationship of media and democracy, Carpentier (2003) mentions that journalism is considered to have the role of distributing information, which enables citizens to exercise control over the state. Within the limits of this role of distributing information, journalists are also thought to fulfill a controlling function, which in literature is called watchdog or the fourth estate, where they reveal the dysfunctions of state and market to citizens. However, as Carpentier (2003:152) emphasizes, "journalists and media organizations are not situated outside ideology and will influence and be influenced by the ideologies, which circulate in society at a given time and space." That is why, journalism practices should not be considered to be neutral in an absolute sense, for that ideology, in some cases, renders the 'watchdog' into a 'lapdog' or even a 'guard dog' (Watson, 2003:105 cited in Carpentier, 2003:152; Curran, 2002). Moreover, it can be stated that neutrality of journalists should not be interpreted as a detachment from community. On the contrary, "neutrality does not apply when universal values – such as peace, democracy, human rights, (gender and racial) equality, (social) progress, and national liberation – are at stake" (Carpentier, 2003:153). Overall, journalism should defend and promote democracy and its values; and in doing so, journalism practices should function as a way of truthtelling, rather than storytelling.

When these views on the role of media in democracy are considered, the common ground seems to be the pivotal role of providing information for citizens. Accordingly, democratic mechanisms and free press guarantee different interest groups to consider different options and make well-informed decisions for themselves. This reasoning is based on the idea that democracy requires informed

citizens; and it can develop if citizens have equal and open access to different information sources. Even though media's role of informing citizens is essential for a functioning democracy, there are other aspects of this important role that requires consideration.

In accordance with the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), the right to communicate transcends the traditional Western right to be informed (Carpentier, 2003). Yet in 1980, MacBride asserts – in the report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, named *Many Voices, One World* – that "communication […] is a matter of human rights. But it is increasingly interpreted as the right to communicate, going beyond the right to receive communication or to be given information" (MacBride, 1980:172). This view of the right to communicate is a crucial element of democratization of communication, which calls for increasing accessibility for and participation of non-professionals. Community media movement, for example, is based on the idea that journalistic tasks should not be taken on exclusively by media professionals or the media elite, but by members of the community, where an anti-elitist discourse is to be considered crucial (Carpentier, 2003). The report by MacBride and his colleagues, which still remains valid today, puts forth the idea of true democratization of communication (1980:173-174):

> *Without a two-way flow between participants in the process, without the existence of multiple information sources permitting wider selection, without more opportunity for each individual to reach decisions based on a broad awareness of divergent facts and viewpoints, without increased participation by readers, viewers and listeners in the decision-making and programming activities of the media – true democratization will not become a reality.*

On the basis of these, it can be said that democracy loses its significance if various political parties are not accompanied by different and independent ownership structures of the media, which entitles citizens to their right to freedom of thought and its dissemination.

In this understanding of the liberal approach to free media, communication technologies are considered as an inseparable component of the ideal formation of a democratic society. Benjamin Barber (1998) suggests six practical strategies that would support a strong democratic civil society, which the first two consist of "enlarging and reinforcing public spaces" and "fostering civic uses of new telecommunications and information technologies" (1998:75). The author specifically underlines the use of Internet as an information technology, which creates a civic domain that has the potential benefit for democracy, civic culture and education.

As early as 1998, Barber emphasizes the use of the Internet as a potential means for effective participation: "The World Wide Web was, in its conception and compared to traditional broadcast media, a remarkably promising means for point-to-point lateral communication among citizens and for genuine interactivity (users not merely passively receiving information, but participating in retrieving and creating it)" (1998:81). It can be argued that Barber's prediction is valid today, where the Internet provides the means for democratic constituents – suggested by MacBride and his colleagues – of multiple information sources, a two-way flow between participants, and increased participation.

2.2.2. The Internet and Democracy

When the Internet is evaluated as a part of communication technologies, it can be thought that it enables public space to expand and diversify by allowing marginal voices to be heard and opposing ones to engage with each other. In this regard, the Internet is considered as a tool that encourages active political citizenship; and this announces the Internet to be "the new third sphere of free public deliberation, untainted by state or commerce" (Tambini, 1999:306). Yet in 1994, Bonaga (1994, cited in Tambini, 1999) predicted that the new communication and information technologies would revolutionize democracy and the economy by making a major impact on democracy and development, and by stretching the horizons of citizenship.

The roots of the understanding that Internet carries the potential of enhancing democracy lie within the concept of information society. Accordingly,

communication technologies enforce an increase in the amount of information, which in turn improves participatory citizenship necessary for democracy. The approach of information society presupposes that changes in communication technologies create new participation channels; and this participation is formed around a more democratized communication and an extended public sphere. Regarding the increased amount of information, it can be said that more citizens will have access to it through different communication channels; nevertheless, it is not feasible to conclude that informed society or a participatory form of citizenship exists because of it.

At this point, the Internet is considered as the communication milieu of a global system where it mediates a new type of citizenship. According to Rheingold (2000), Internet meets the criteria necessary for public sphere, through open access, voluntary participation, and public opinion formed through rational discussion. Furthermore, Fernback (1997) emphasizes that the equalitarian and democratic use of Internet indicates collectivity of society. With a similar perspective, Kellner (1995, cited in Timisi, 2003) suggests that in modern societies, computer-mediated communication technologies play an important role in democratization and transformation and expansion of public sphere. However, Timisi (2003) points out that there is not sufficient data to define the Internet as the new center of public sphere. According to the author, Internet – ideally - carries the potential to host a rational discussion among citizens; but due to lack of visible identities, which is an essential criterion for public sphere, the Internet fails to offer the 'ultimate' public sphere (Timisi, 2003). Nonetheless, as Kellner (1995, cited in Timisi, 2003) mentions, computer-mediated technologies are considered to be potentially more democratic and empowering compared to traditional, one-way communication technologies because they offer a medium, which enables and promotes democratic debates.

It can be said that the Internet does not live up to its expectations, where it provides a definitive public sphere, where voluntary participants form public opinion through rational discussion with the opportunity of open access. Conceptually, the Internet maintains this possibility; however, in practice, this possibility is not actualized so far. First of all, the idea of voluntary participation is difficult to attain

because the ability to participate does not entail that citizens want to participate in democratic debate. Second of all, formation of public opinion on the Internet assumes that citizens engage in a democratic dialogue, which generates rational discussion but observing any kind of participation in the online environment reveals that a dialogue between participants does not occur. Finally, the notion of open access is debatable. The Internet is open for everyone to access in theory; nonetheless, not every citizen has the skills or the means to attain this kind of access. This is not to say that the Internet is an impractical tool for democracy for that it still provides more opportunities for democratic implications compared to traditional media.

Based on its efficiency, capacity, interactivity and freedom from time-space constraints, the potential of the Internet and new media to democratize political communication was noticed in early research. Tambini (1999) explains these efficiencies in several factors. First of all, interactivity comes from institutionalizing citizens' right to reply, to select information, and to communicate directly. Secondly, citizens can seek the information of their interests rather than what journalists and editors present. Thirdly, new media offer faster access to more information, improved search and storage functions. "In terms of democratic communication all the improved efficiency functions apparently remove potential barriers to participation because they reduce the cost – in time and money – of taking part" (Tambini, 1999:311).

In an attempt to understand how the Internet in its early days affects democracy, Hacker and van Dijk (2000) adopt the term digital democracy and argue whether the Internet enhances democratic conditions. According to the authors, digital democracy refers to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in all kinds of media for purposes of enhancing political democracy or the participation of citizens in democratic communication. In this regard, the term digital democracy is explained as "a collection of attempts to practice democracy without the limits of time, space and other physical conditions, using ICT, or CMC instead, as an addition, not a replacement for traditional 'analogue' political practices" (Hacker and van Dijk,

2000:1). Regarding the democratizing effects of the Internet, ICT and CMC, there are numerous claims in academia listed by Hacker and van Dijk (2000:4):

1. *ICT increases the scale and speed of providing information. This helps create more informed citizens;*
2. *Political participation is made easier and certain obstacles like apathy, shyness, disabilities, time, etc. can be lessened;*
3. *CMC creates new ways of organizing with subject-specific groups for discussions, cheap distribution costs, etc.;*
4. *The Net allows new political communities to arise free from state intervention;*
5. *A hierarchical political system becomes more horizontal by increasing political CMC;*
6. *Citizens will have more voice in creating agendas for government;*
7. *CMC will help remove distorting mediators like journalists, representatives and parties;*
8. *Politics will be able to respond more directly to citizen concerns as ICT and CMC enable a kind of political marketing research; and*
9. *ICT and CMC will help resolve the problems of representative democracy such as territorial bases of constituencies, etc.*

It can be said that early research on the Internet was hopeful about its role in digital democracy. As a matter of fact, digital democracy claims predate the development of the Internet. Earlier communication tools – radio and television in particular – were envisioned as tools for emancipating and enlightening the masses. In a general sense, their aspiration was "to contribute to the awareness and engagement of citizens in community action and development" (Jankowski and van Selm, 2000:150). But with the dawn of the Internet, it was thought that a participatory citizenship as in the Ancient Greek Democracy was attainable because it provides a medium different from its predecessors by exceeding constraints of time and space and by allowing individual-to-individual and individual-to-group communication (Timisi, 2003). During the first half of the 1990s, Rheingold (2000) emphasized the potential of electronic networks – or in his terms, virtual communities – may enable users to challenge the conventional hierarchies of the

system and encourage citizens to get involved in the political process. Similar proclamations emphasize this technology for that it improves access to information. In addition to the issue of access, it offers an opportunity of selecting information more accurately and for politicians to direct this information to defined audiences more easily (Brants et al., 1996). In addition to increased amount of and access to information, these networks are thought to have the potential values of reducing the gap between public discourse and provisions for involvement in decision-making. In a general sense, electronic networks were considered to have "the potential to develop into the means of democracy" (Brants et al., 1996: 236). In this sense, the democratizing potential of the Internet should not be ignored.

In an extensive study, Bryan, Tsagarousianou and Tambini (1998) list the 'hopes' of digital democracy:

- Digital democracy promises efficiency and ease of access to information by increasing the scale and speed of information provision, and giving citizens more control over their information diet, which in turn creates informed citizens ready for participation.
- This technology can measure citizens' preferences in representative democracies, which makes political participation (access to information, deliberation, debate and voting) easier.
- Computer-mediated communication can develop the conditions for collective political participation, such as creating subject-specific discussion groups, reduced publishing and communication costs.
- The use of Internet as a communication tool can lead to more horizontal and less vertical communication.
- The passive reception of information will be replaced by active discovery of it.
- Computer-mediated communication can eliminate the mediators such as journalists and parliamentary representatives, from the process of political communication and decision-making.
- This technology enables the possibility of tailored public services to citizens.

- Computer-mediated communication technology can be used to eliminate some of the key problems of representative democracy in practice, such as proportional representation, strategic voting and agenda-setting.

After listing these expectations from digital democracy on the basis of computer-mediated communication technologies, the authors underline that they are actually isolated from their socio-political, historical and economic context (Bryan, et al., 1998). In a separate study, Tsagarousianou (1999) attempts to understand these predictions on electronic democracy by offering a typology of three core claims or "a typology of promises" as Jankowski and van Selm, (2000:150) put it. According to the author, these predictions concentrate mostly on obtaining information, engaging in deliberation, and participating in decision-making. Regarding information provision, Tsagarousianou (1999) explains that all notions of democracy are based on the idea of the 'informed citizen'; and electronic democracy projects aim to allow citizens to access information of different sorts. However, according to the author, questions of access to and quality of information remain unanswered. In terms of deliberation, Tsagarousianou (1999) examines the public space and its relation to citizen involvement in a democratic state. Accordingly, "new technologies clearly have the potential to sustain such spaces as they enable both deliberation (citizen-to-citizen communication) and 'hearing' (citizen-to-authorities communication)" (Tsagarousianou,1999:196). For participation in decision-making, the author specifically underlines that collective actions occurring outside the vested political order may have more promise regarding digital democracy (Tsagarousianou,1999:196):

> *Public spaces […] and the modes of interaction that they support might lead to the re-invigoration and democratization of contemporary democracies, by increasing the scope for autonomous public initiatives developing outside and independently of the state apparata. Again, interactivity in the form of both citizen-to-state communication (decisionist dimension) and citizen-to- citizen communication (autonomous collective action) is a most important factor to be considered.*

In a general sense, Tsagarousianou's typology summarizes the potential use of digital technologies in enhancing democratic conditions. In an attempt to understand in what manner and to what extent can electronic networks contribute to democracy, Jankowski and van Selm, (2000) conduct a study based on the aforementioned three-point typology, and examine different versions of digital democracy practices including an online discussion, an experiment with teledemocracy, and a political debate held on a website. Their concluding remarks include that initiatives with digital democracy can contribute to an increase in citizen involvement and a reformulation of what is considered part of the democratic process. Moreover, this "may lend more legitimacy to the principles of participatory democracy in which communications is seen as the core component of an on-going democracy process […] and may provide a sense of personal empowerment for participants, which result in political action" (Jankowski and van Selm, 2000: 161).

In its relevantly short history, the Internet's past can be divided into "four waves" related to its affair with democracy (van Dijk, 2012:50). During 1980s, the idea of teledemocracy was on the rise, where the Internet would enable forms of direct democracy without any intermediaries by removing space barriers. In the early 1990's Rheingold's virtual community idea appeared with the expectation of compensating the concept of lost community in modern society. With the new millennium came the widespread use of the Internet in society, which created the expectation of increased and broaden participation of citizens. And only three years into the millennium, the concept of Web 2.0 was introduced by enabling user-generated content, which created the prediction of increased contribution to policy making in different methods like civic journalism, online petitions and blogs. It is possible to say that this last 'wave' remained valid to this day.

From a general perspective, characteristics of the Internet that were thought to revolutionize or at least transform democracy in the last 25 years are summarized by van Dijk (2012:49-50). Accordingly, the Internet was considered to be a:

- *interactive medium that departs from the one-sided communication of existing mass media;*

- *active and creative medium enabling users to transform from viewers, listeners and readers to participants;*
- *direct medium in which individual users are able to determine at a distance what happens in the center of among other politics and mass media;*
- *platform on which everybody is equal in principle as assumed expertise has to prove itself before being accepted;*
- *network medium enabling the collective creation of products online, not primarily by individual authors or businesses.*

Overall, the Internet is considered to contain the promises of a 'real democracy' due to reconstructing public sphere in an electronic milieu, and offering both representative and participatory characteristics. There are many studies, which argue that Internet carries great possibilities in terms of democracy; however, the evaluation of this relationship requires careful consideration. Basically, there are two approaches to the effects of Internet on social structure. The first one includes the optimistic views mentioned above and they comply with technological determinism view. According to this approach, information technologies have an emancipating effect; information society has a more democratic structure; and the Internet helps restricting oppressive regimes with its anarchist characteristic, difficulty of censorship and independence from time-space constraints. The second approach, on the other hand, opposes technological determinism view and argues that technology is socially constructed and controlled. Accordingly, information technologies like the Internet cannot be revolutionary by themselves; on the contrary, they have a reinforcing effect on the status quo.

From this perspective, arguing that the Internet encourages democratic citizenship and enhances democracy in general, requires explaining its general implications. As a downside, the Internet is accused to cause information aristocracy by sacrificing people with insufficient equipment and education; create digital tyrants; and maximize surveillance practices (Dolgun, 2011). According to Tambini (1999), for instance, access is an essential issue to discuss. Even though the Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in general have implications for information provision, voting and polling, in addition to the very formation and

organization of political identities, it is important to mention that this democratic potential can only be realized if access is not restricted.

Furthermore, claims like new media will replace existing political hierarchies with new egalitarian and democratic civil society are misleading. New media's role in democracy depends on how it is regulated and who has access (Tambini, 1999). In a study evaluating the role of Internet in public resistance, Tunç (2004) discusses case studies where the Internet is used as a platform for resistance by political movements. Her main argument depends on the thought that "on a global level, the Internet alone is far from introducing democracy to oppressive governments; however, it can only be a tool for disseminating democratic ideals" (Tunç, 2004:140).

Regarding the thought that the Internet provides a new public sphere, Timisi (2003) points out that there is not sufficient data to define the Internet as the new center of public sphere. According to the author, Internet – ideally – carries the potential to host a rational discussion among citizens; but due to lack of visible identities, which is an essential criterion for public sphere, the Internet fails to offer the 'ultimate' public sphere.

There are also concerns about the Internet where certain rights of citizens will be damaged. Regarding privacy, the Internet is thought to enable corporations and governments to keep much closer tabs on individuals, which points to a panoptic society (McChesney, 2008). In addition to surveillance practices, voyeurism stands as a problem for citizens, which intensifies with the existence of the Internet (Nalçaoğlu, 2004). Besides privacy concerns, new digital system is thought to make it possible for poor people to be excluded, which makes political democracy much more fragile. Moreover, there are studies that show those who spend the most time online may become more antisocial and unhappy (McChesney, 2008).

Continuing with the social aspects, in the relationship between the Internet and democracy, lie virtual communities. However, there are some researchers, who argue that the values that virtual communities generate actually endanger democratic systems, let along enhance them. First of all, it can be said that the formation of

virtual communities is based on embracing similarities among group members, and this results in avoidance or denial of differences. Through this introversion, individuals in a virtual community get together with others that share similar views or characteristics, which in turn results in group polarization (Nagel, 2002 cited in Dolgun, 2011). Group polarization is explained to be dangerous because of radical and extremist movements. In addition, the feature of personalization that the Internet offers is claimed to be endangering democratic values. As individuals choose the information they receive, the concept of informed citizen gets harmed due to the fact that restriction and filtering of information on the basis of one's own interests narrow down citizens' perspectives (Dolgun, 2011). Overall, when individuals constitute a virtual community, they do so on the basis of their similarities, which also means the exclusion of and intolerance towards 'others'. As Dolgun (2011: 227-228) asserts, "in the milieu of the Internet, there is 'polyphony', rather than 'pluralism'; whereas democracy necessitates opposing views to hear and communicate with each other."

Dystopian views concerning digital democracy also include the impossibility of direct democracy in a modern complex society. Moreover, digital media is argued to be a platform that supports populism, increases information inequality and does not provide a solution for the lack of political motivation among citizens (van Dijk, 2012).

Regardless of these downsides of the Internet, examining the last three decades of its history shows that there are certain achievements, which are for the benefit of democracy. To begin with, according to van Dijk (2012: 54), "much better political and government information provision, retrieval and exchange is the greatest achievement of digital democracy." There is a big amount of information available online, and the users with necessary skills may freely select the information they need. In this direction, it can be argued that this online information partially liberalizes citizens from the traditional media content. The reason for characterizing this liberalization "partial" is twofold. First of all, choosing the necessary information requires certain level of experience and education. Citizens who lack these skills are not able to enjoy this liberation. Second of all, it can be observed that media professionals or government officials mostly produce the information online, which results in a position not so different from traditional media.

Moving on from this liberation, the Internet offers a wide range of websites including the websites of governmental departments, political parties, citizen organizations and many others, which includes an important amount of information data. Furthermore, political candidates use online sources for their election campaigns. Last but not least, traditional media use online tools to expand their news and information for those who are interested.

On the basis of these, it can be said that the Internet provides a channel for citizens to be much better informed; however, the question of whether an extensive amount of information brings along informed citizens, which is required for democracy, remains unanswered. Information is a necessary condition of a healthy democracy as long as it is accessible, reliable and valid. However, it is not a sufficient condition. Being exposed to endless data of information does not fulfill the condition of an informed citizen because the selection and process of information depends on individuals. Moreover, the selection of information does not necessarily result in political action. Even if it does, it is not plausible to conclude that information alone enhances democracy.

In addition, the idea that online debates improve democratic decision-making does not seem very feasible. Although the interactivity of the Internet makes it possible for citizens to communicate with each other much more easily, it does not result in collective decision-making. According to van Dijk (2012), most people just read discussions, instead of contributing themselves. Those who contribute usually address political representatives; and the online debate does not come to a conclusion. Moreover, it is possible to say that existing power dynamics of groups in society dominates online debates, where minority opinions tend to remain silent and majority opinions are freely expressed (Sunstein, 2008).

Despite of these, it would not be right to conclude that the Internet has no benefit in terms of democracy. Even though it does not – or did not, so far – transform the understanding of democracy, Internet's capacity to offer diversity and reciprocity is noteworthy. In the discussions of the opportunities and threats of the

Internet for democracy, Timisi puts forth a comprehensive and guiding evaluation of the relationship between the Internet and democracy (2003: 29-30):

> *It is clear that the Internet involves an important potential for political organization and public participation. However, critical views on this technology regarding its potentials suggest certain factors that should not be avoided. Regardless of its democratic potential, the question of whether Internet's development will make it different from traditional communication tools requires careful consideration. The Internet is subject to important practices like connecting individuals, local and global groups to each other, generating public opinion, motivating and creating solidarity. Nevertheless, issues like commercialization, imbalance in terms of access and surveillance by authorities eliminate this democratic potential from a macro point of view. In this sense, instead of considering the Internet to be a democratization tool by itself, it is suitable to say that it will find its meaning in a general democratization process.*

2.2.3. Online News as an Alternative Medium

Evaluating the relationship between media, democracy and the Internet reveals a junction point, which is online media. And discussing that media on the Internet has a connection to democratic standards lead to online or digital news. News in general is considered to be a vital element of democracy because it offers necessary resources for process of information gathering, deliberation and action. What is expected of news journalism in democratic societies is to monitor, to hold to account and to facilitate and maintain deliberation. These expectations do not differ for online news. Journalism practice has always been accountable in terms of providing information for the public good.

In a general sense, news is what journalists make, and it depends on journalists' working environment, which is based on economic, social, political and technological factors. As these factors changed over time, it can be said that news media was forced to transform itself in line with technological, social and economical developments; hence, online news and news websites.

Pavlik (2013) asserts that the key to the viability of news media in the digital age is innovation. According to the author, news media use innovation strategies in three areas (2013: 190):

> *These are (1) creating, delivering and presenting quality news content; (2) engaging the public in an interactive news discourse both in terms of citizen reporters and in concert with social media where a public dialogue can easily occur online; and (3) employing new methods of reporting optimized for the digital, networked age.*

Pavlik (2013) also suggests four principles for news media to keep up digital developments and insure long-term success, namely intelligence or research, a commitment to freedom of speech, a dedication to the pursuit of truth and accuracy in reporting, and ethics. It can be said that these principles are not irrelevant to basic responsibilities of media in democracy.

Considering news' role in democracy and its development within the digital age, the question of whether online news helps improving democratic conditions becomes a necessary inquiry topic. Journalism is and has been undergoing a fundamental transformation due to the changing nature of technology. Whether this development is positive or negative is evaluated on the basis of the contribution of news media to modern democratic systems. And whether positive or negative, it can be argued that the structure of news media has been changed.

As a matter of fact, the arguments regarding online news' impact on democracy are very similar to those about the relationship of the Internet and democracy. There are both optimistic and pessimistic perspectives regarding online news' role in democracy. Various studies claim that online news has an interactive nature; its content is complex in terms of volume and variety; it is easily accessible; it offers a chance to make news outside the newsroom; and it is fast and open. Negative views, on the other hand, indicate that the ownership issues and commercial concerns still discredit reinvigoration claims of news – both traditional and online – on democracy.

In an extensive study exploring how technological, economic and social changes have reconfigured news journalism and the consequences of these transformations for a vibrant democracy, Fenton (2010) and her colleagues try to gain a critical understanding of news and news journalism in the digital age. Their research questions include how new technology affects journalism; whether it revitalizes the public sphere or becomes a tool of commerce; and how these changes influence online news and participatory journalism. Fenton (2010) explains pros and cons of three main characteristic groups that are prominent in terms of the Internet's role in news production, namely speed and space; multiplicity and polycentrality; interactivity and participation.

2.2.3.1. Speed and Space

To begin with, the space that the Internet offers for news journalism has two aspects. The first one explains how there is literally more space for news compared to hard copy; and the second one covers geographical reach (Fenton, 2010). In other words, with the help of the Internet, the possible amount of news coverage increases and more people can have access due to the elimination of geographical limitations. In addition, speed of the Internet benefits both readers/users and those who practice journalism. Journalists can use the Internet to collect data without even leaving their office and it is much more faster to publish their news online. And with this speed, online readers can access news that is relevant, up-to-date and immediate.

However, this need to publish variety of news in a very short period of time has its downsides. As Fenton (2010:7) puts it, in the context of journalism, "speed and space translate into speed it up and spread it thin". In order to produce more articles in less time may cause journalists to overlook certain controlling mechanisms and may result in only using articles released by reporters of news agencies, which causes journalism to be transformed into nothing but a desk job (Gunter, 2003). From another perspective, although the need for speed in the digital news production may damage the accuracy of news; Joseph (2011) argues that the speed of the digital news age allows journalists to correct information more rapidly than traditional news

media. In other words, even though the notion of speed may cause accuracy problems, it also enables immediate correction of information if an error is found.

When traditional and online news are compared, it is apparent that online news contains an important advantage in terms of space and speed. Space for news on the Internet is literally limitless. An online news site does not need to limit itself both in terms of the amount and the length of news. Moreover, news in a website can contain more photographs and other media. This can be evaluated as an important advantage. In terms of speed, online news provides an opportunity both for the production and consumption of news. For production, publishing a news item online is faster than publishing it in print newspaper. And for consumption, it is faster for users of online news sites to access news. The important thing is to use these features of speed and space in online news favor. In this sense, it can be said that more space and speed is an advantage for online news only if they are used to produce more valid and reliable news in terms of content, amount, and diversity.

2.2.3.2. Multiplicity and Polycentrality

As other characteristics of the Internet that affect journalism, multiplicity and polycentrality come forth on the basis of the vast amount of space available online. Because of this unlimited space, it is possible to speak of a plurality of news providers. The model of information dissemination online is considered to be many-to-many which includes views and news of minorities. By accepting a vision of 'multiple publics' instead of a notion of the public as a single, "online journalism is claimed to offer a view of the world that is more contextualized, textured, and multidimensional than traditional news media" (Fenton, 2010:8). This indicates that online news provides a multiplicity of views and voices from a diversity of cultures and viewpoints.

Nevertheless, multiplicity does not necessarily mean diversity. The availability of space indicates an opportunity for producing various content, but it does not imply that this large amount of information will be of good quality. Moreover, having more space for news does not prevent the fact that newspapers usually use the same content for both their hard copy and online editions (Redden and Witschge, 2010).

And from the audience's perspective, it may be even harder to find reliable information because of this polycentric and multiple structures.

In addition, the formation of online news media that targets a specific group, region or demographic segment, does not guarantee opportunities for diversity by challenging media monopolies (Flew, 2009). In order to build a genuinely competitive news site, they need to invest in news production and distribution, which in turn leaves them with similar financial problems with their mainstream competitors.

Similar to the use of space and speed, features of multiplicity and polycentrality can be advantageous for online news on the basis of how they are put into use. The Internet provides an opportunity for multiple news sources to produce content and on the basis of this, a more diversified representation in the news content. However, it is apparent that online news content is dominated by major news organizations, which does not differ from traditional news media. In this sense, even though online news contains the possibility of a more diversified understanding of news media, it is not the case in practice.

2.2.3.3. Interactivity and Participation

When it comes to the characteristics of interactivity and participation, the Internet is claimed to provide a great opportunity both for journalism practices and democracy. With these features, everyone can be involved in the news from participating in discussions to producing their own news. In the online environment, readers can have a greater impact on journalists. Accordingly, this involvement in journalistic practices "is claimed to break down the barriers between audience and producer facilitating a greater deconstruction of the normative values embedded in the news genre and re-imagining of what journalism could and/or should be" (Fenton, 2010:10). Moreover, it can be argued that through the characteristics of interactivity and participation, a "public fact-checking body" has emerged, which increases accountability (Joseph, 2011: 710).

On the other hand, there are concerns that these features of interactivity and participation do more harm than good for journalism. First of all, it can be argued that the values of news are replaced by populist concerns, which undermine the ethics of public value. Moreover, anonymity and the lack of accountability raise the questions of verification and accuracy.

From another point of view, the concepts of interactivity and participation give rise to the discussion of an online public sphere. In Habermas's (1989) understanding, public sphere was a space where citizens would meet and deliberate, constituted as a public, and free from state and church. In this conceptualization, anyone could participate in the public sphere. This notion of participation in particular, "has flagged the idea of the Internet as a place in which modern political public sphere might emerge" (Bosch, 2010: 268). It is possible to say that an idea of a single public sphere that consists of millions of people is questionable due to function and deliberation issues; however speaking of multiple publics with different interests may be plausible in terms of online public spheres (Poor, 2005). This perspective, however, requires careful consideration. The Internet seems to captivate the principles of public sphere, which allow democratic participation, but issues of unequal access and literacy still stand. Moreover, there may be audience fragmentation, and any online public sphere faces the challenges of corruption by commercialism and being a bourgeois public sphere (Poor, 2005).

In a study conducted two decades ago, Rojo and Ragsdale (1997, cited in Jankowski and van Selm, 2000) identify a number of characteristics of Internet newsgroups and discussion lists that relate to the potential values of the Internet in democracy. According to the authors, these forums offer a shared pool of information for participants, which becomes a collective public good for all; however, the authors emphasize the problem of actual participation, where many people passively attend or subscribe to these services, but few actively contribute. Van Dijk describes these online debates as "weak attempts to resolve a collectively perceived problem" (2012: 55).

In this direction, Noci and his colleagues (2012) analyze news comments in online news sites, which are the most popular feature in terms of audience

participation. The authors analyze over 36,000 comments in six online newspapers and carry out in-depth interviews with their online editors. It can be said that their conclusions include important remarks on one of the most essential democratic tools of online news. First of all, the analyzed comments do not foster a democratic dialogue. According to the authors, the lack of respect, diverse perspective and mature arguments do not constitute a Habermasian understanding of public debate. In addition, most users comment once and usually do not contribute to a rational debate. In addition, the interviews with the editors reveal that the motivations for allowing users to comment on news are "economic and journalistic, but the perceived benefits are far more tangible in the first case: user loyalty and increased audience figures" (Noci et al., 2012: 62).

As part of the discussion on the Internet's features of interactivity and participation, the concept of citizen journalism comes forth with its democratic implications. The concept of citizen journalism is used in order to cover web-based practices, where ordinary users engage in journalistic practices such as blogging, photo and video sharing and posting eyewitness commentary. Furthermore, political blogs and citizen journalism sites are thought to hold authority and credibility in the online landscape with an aptitude for "quasi-public sphere" (Bosch, 2010: 273). In this regard, citizen journalism is treated as an alternative to mainstream or traditional media; where the citizens have a free voice. However, this understanding of citizen journalism should be approached carefully, as well.

First of all, associating citizen journalism with the Internet is misleading, since the concept cannot be limited to digital media. Both in broadcast news and print media, there are examples of journalistic practices of citizens where they can create content. Secondly, the idea that citizen journalism provides an alternative to mainstream media needs to be approached with caution. Goode (2009: 1289) asserts "the political economy of citizen journalism is in flux with large-scale commerce and advertising dollars (and in some cases traditional media corporations) encroaching steadily into this area". And even when these kind of journalistic practices are independent from traditional media, they may still continue to be influenced by traditional norms associated with mainstream journalism. Overall, it can be said that

characterizing citizen journalism with the quality of alterity requires careful examination.

In fact, analyses of user participation in digital journalism explain this need for examination. Studies on citizen journalism websites such as *Ohmynews* in South Korea and *AgoraVox* in France show that "citizen reporters are actually a very small proportion of users and the vast majority of them belong to intellectual professions and social elites," and they share a sociological particularity, which is "a high degree of socio-political activism" (Rebillard and Touboul, 2010: 327).

In a comprehensive study, Fico and his colleagues (2012) implement a content analysis of 48 citizen journalism sites, 86 weekly newspapers and 138 daily newspapers regarding local government content in United States. The results of the study indicate that some citizen journalism sites complement newspapers by increasing the number of news stories and the amount of opinion available; however, the authors conclude that "citizen journalism sites are imperfect substitutes, at best, for most newspapers" (Fico et al. 2012: 166).

Overall, it can be argued that interactivity and participation provide many opportunities for democratic implications regarding journalism practices. In theory, they make it possible for everyone to be involved in the news from participating in discussions to monitoring and to producing their own news. Moreover, these characteristics enable citizen journalism to function more easily and allow the emergence of online public spheres. Nevertheless, there is good reason to approach these opportunities with caution for that they may just be an illusion used for the benefit of profit-driven motivations of news organizations.

In this direction, besides the characteristics of space and speed, multiplicity and polycentrality, interactivity and participation, there is another issue related to online news' role in democracy that needs to be discussed; and that is the notion of ownership. Ownership has always been an important issue in terms of media's role in democracy; and ownership structures constitute an essential discussion topic for digital journalism, as well.

2.2.3.4. Ownership

From a general perspective, McChesney (2008) adopts a critical approach to the use of the Internet in communication technologies reminding that its opportunities should be greeted with caution. Evaluating the central trends in U.S. media from a general perspective, McChesney (2008) asserts that the main features of the media system include concentration and conglomeration, and through numerous massive media deals, every major newspaper chain is now part of a larger media conglomerate. According to the author, this concentrated media markets raise concerns about the inhibition of "the flow and range of ideas necessary for a meaningful democracy" (McChesney, 2008:429). In addition to media ownership becoming concentrated into extremely large conglomerates, McChesney argues that journalism is denigrated. The reasons underlying this denigration include the practice of journalism by self-interested, profit-motivated companies; reluctance of local commercial media to provide investigations of local commercial interests; and media's willingness to provide favorable coverage of politicians who provide them with favorable subsidies and regulations. This, as McChesney puts it, "violates every canon of ethical or professional journalism" (2008:431). Regarding commercial news media in the twenty-first century, McChesney (2008) makes the observation that there is an increased focus on the more affluent part of the population, which reinforces and extends the class bias in the selection and tenor of material; and in accordance with the standards of the corporate news media, stories of great importance to many citizens are not included in the news coverage.

When it comes to the Internet as a communication tool, the ownership and controlling structures do not appear to be different from the traditional media system. Media giants, as McChesney (2008) argues, colonize the Internet with their market advantages, making it difficult for viable challengers to be launched. Accordingly, it is not sufficient to launch a website and expect to contend with these media giants. McChesney makes a prediction about the near future of digital media (2008:435):

> *As all communication switches to digital format, what seems most likely is that the corporate media giants will increasingly merge and partner with the few remaining corporate computer and telecommunication giants. We will have a*

global communication oligopoly of ten to twelve unbelievably huge firms, rather than a media oligopoly of six to eight believably huge ones.

In this direction, Flew (2009) argues that major media players use the transformation in commercial media for their advantage by generating competitive strategies, namely building brand advantage, cost reductions and brand extension/diversification. Due to the questions that follow the Internet's existence, trust and reputation become increasingly central and globally recognized brands use this to their advantage. Moreover, the author explains that major media players reduce their costs in the online environment by cutting back on the number of staff and other resources. Finally, these media giants get the chance to experiment with online-only sites, which target particular regions and segments.

With a similar perspective, Curran (2005) explains this phenomena with the operation of free market, where "the rise in publishing costs led to a progressive transfer of ownership and control of the press to capitalist entrepreneurs" in addition to a new economic dependence on advertising (Curran, 2005: 222). When it comes to explaining the relation of this media ownership issues to democracy, it can be said that this sort of market-driven media narrow the scope of public voice. According to Keane (2000), the number of enterprises that control or influence the production and circulation of information is reduced; inequitable power relationships develop between dominant, metropolitan enterprises and cultures; and most importantly, "these market-produced inequalities in turn reinforce deep-rooted social inequalities, which future market-driven technological change in the field of communications will almost certainly deepen" (Keane, 2000:72).

Careful consideration of the relationship between media, democracy and the Internet leads to the examination of online news and journalism practices. As mentioned above, online news is thought to provide great opportunities for citizens to exercise their democratic rights. Accordingly, online news has an interactive nature; its content is comprehensive; it offers easy access; it is fast; it is open to everyone; and most importantly, it gives the people a voice. Nearly two decades ago, Palmen and Eriksen (1999) attempt to answer the question how digital media is shaping news provision and put forth five distinct criteria in order to discuss the

differences between existing media and the digital media. Accordingly, “these criteria reflect the capabilities of the Internet as a medium in its ability to (1) support multiple media, (2) enable interaction with users, (3) provide individualized response to users, (4) allow instantaneous access, (5) provide unlimited opportunities for distribution” (Palmen and Eriksen, 1999:31). It can be said that this analysis summarizes the opportunities that online news provide for citizens.

However, as discussed above, these opportunities should be greeted with caution. It needs to be reminded that online news creates a “communication continuum that stretches between the interests of multinational news corporations (where online news is first and foremost a commodity defined by profit-maximization), at the one end, and the spontaneous actions of ordinary citizens compelled to adopt the role of a journalist in order to participate in the making of online news, at the other.” (Allan, 2006:10). Overall, it is necessary to emphasize the potential rather than actual democratic impact (Goode, 2009) because so far, the conception of a “digital revolution in journalism does not stand up to empirical verification for all its cultural power” (Rebillard and Touboul, 2010: 331).

2.2.4. History of Online News

Online news refers to “content that is accessible through the Internet and other digital environments, whether it also appears in print, radio or television” (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2010:1096). In order to have a better understanding of online news and its role in democracy, it is thought be fruitful to provide an overview of its history. In this regard, it is important to comprehend its technological developments, as well as its roots in the changes in political economic structures. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that content of online or digital journalism is not disconnected from the world of print and broadcast news. As argued above, digital news can be supplementary or complimentary to traditional media; but the main issue is whether it offers a new medium for news media or just a better functioning tool for news dissemination.

Actually, the development of the Internet had little to do with journalism, but it was about information (Stovall, 2004). It was also about the emergence of a new

economic landscape. As Manual Castells (2001:66) explain, business adopts the network as its organizational form by treating the Internet as a "fundamental medium of communication and information-processing." And this transformation spreads "throughout the entire economic system, and affects all processes of value creation, value exchange, and value distribution." In this regard, the convergence of computers and telecommunication has brought forth a new understanding of journalism, as well. All in all, online journalism is based on the use of a certain technology; thus, focusing on how this technology is used is more important than focusing on what this technology is and will be. Boczkowski (2004) suggests that instead of emphasizing technology's revolutionary effects, it is more fruitful to analyze how this technology is implemented. Therefore, it is important to examine the evolutionary process of the development of online news. In order to have a better understanding of online news and its development, it is essential to review the development of the Internet.

2.2.4.1. Origins of the Internet

It is possible to summarize the history of the Internet based on several studies on the subject matter (Leiner et al., 1997; Gribbin, 2011; Wood and Smith, 2014; Birsen, 2017). It is thought that the need for an infrastructure like the Internet emerged due to military requirements. During the 1950s, United States of America established the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). In 1962, the first head of the computer research program at DARPA became J.C.R. Lickider, who envisioned a globally interconnected set of computers through which everyone can quickly access data and programs from any site. It can be said that this concept was very much like the Internet of today. Lickider convinced Sutherland, Taylor and Roberts of the importance of this concept of networking.

The idea of packet switching, suggested by Kleinrock in the early 1960s, was another major step towards computer networking. Based on this idea, Roberts developed his DARPA funded plan for the ARPANET, which is considered as the foundation of the Internet. The first node on the ARPANET was in UCLA, and the second one was at Stanford Research Institute (SRI). The first host-to-host message was sent from Kleinrock's laboratory n UCLA to SRI. By the end of 1969, ARPANET included four nodes with the addition of UC Santa Barbra and University

of Utah. In the following years, more computers were added to the ARPANET and Network Control Protocol (NCP) was developed in order to connect different networks.

In 1972, the first public demonstration of this new network technology took place; and in the same year electronic mail (email) was introduced, which is considered as "a harbinger of the kind of activity we see on the World Wide Web today, namely, the enormous growth of all kinds of 'people-to-people' traffic" (Leiner et al., 1997:103). It can be said that with many years of researches and experiments, the original ARPANET grew into the Internet. In 1982, the rules for the Internet are set out by the standardization of the Internet Protocol Suite, which is referred to as TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). This protocol suite basically the structure that allows data transmission over the Internet and it's the most commonly used protocol today.

As another milestone in the Internet's history, Tim Berners-Lee developed Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) deriving from the necessity of a common language between all networks. Moreover, Berners-Lee proposed an information management system called World Wide Web, which allows people from all around the world to speak the same language and find a common ground for interaction. The World Wide Web, or www in short, is considered as the actual beginning of today's Internet.

The development of the Internet is considered to have two phases, namely Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Web 1.0 represents an era that begins with the development of the World Wide Web (www). It is considered as a medium that support mostly text-based content and it consist of stable and less interactive pages. The idea of Web 2.0 (the terms was first used by O'Reilly in 2004) refers to the second generation of Internet. In O'Reilly's (2007:17) terms, Web 2.0 goes beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences; it delivers software as a continually updated service; includes individual users; and creates network effects through and "architecture of participation". Web 2.0 basically includes social network sites, wiki applications, interactive communication applications and dynamic sites.

Overall, the Internet does provide a new perspective to communications due to its differences from its predecessors. According to Leiner and his colleagues (1997:102):

> *The Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before. The telegraph, telephone, radio and computer have all set the stage for the Internet's unprecedented integration of capabilities. The Internet is at once a worldwide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographical location.*

What makes the Internet so distinctive is based on its certain technical characteristics (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996, cited in Wood and Smith, 2014). First of all, it offers multimedia, which is the ability to use different features like sound, text, images and animation at the same time. Second of all, it is hypertextual. Hypertext is a type of non-sequential writing. This characteristic creates a move from linearity to multilinearity;, from centrality to a system of links, and from hierarchy to cooperation. Hypertextuality enables readers to shape the meaning of a text by providing the means to establish meaning between and across texts. Thirdly, the Internet uses packet switching technology, which sends messages over multiple pathways rather than a single line. At the end of the transmission, a computer breaks down the message into packets of information, which then are routed to their destination and reassembled by another computer. The forth characteristic is interactivity; which means that online communication allows for interaction among its users. And the final characteristic is synchronicity. This means that messages sent over the Internet transverse not only space but also time, which allows communication to be continuous and permanent.

As online news is based on the use of the Internet, all of these characteristics directly or indirectly shape the structure of online news. In other words, online news emerged because of the opportunities that the Internet provides; therefore, it is important to analyze the subject matter on its technological capacities. But first, a historical overview of online news is necessary.

2.2.4.2. Historical Development of Online News

It is argued that the roots of digital journalism go back to teletext and videotex, which were invented in 1970s (Carlson, 2003; Garrison, 2005; Boczkowski, 2004). They were both systems of transmission of text, graphics and visuals, but they were mostly directed to take place on a television set. The first example of online journalism is considered to be the web site called Mosaic, which was launched by University of Florida's Journalism Department in 1993. It was a static web site with occasional updates. The web sites that followed Mosaic were similar in nature with static pages and lined up articles (Garrison, 2005; Siapera and Veglis, 2012). Since then, online journalism witnessed both gradual developments like interactivity and multimedia features and radical ones like social media and participatory web in general.

It can be said that beginning of online journalism, in its current sense, occurred with the emergence of first commercial web browsers, namely Netscape in 1994 and Internet Explorer in 1995. At that time, as Scott (2005) explains, most news outlets had a web site where they used the original form of publication. However, the online presence of news offered a new way of consuming the same journalism. By this technology, news content could be grouped topically with links to different sections or pages, which can be published instantly. Moreover, the Internet enabled archive system, which produced a big database of information easily accessible for users. Furthermore, with lower production costs and the development of features like chat rooms, interaction with journalists, e-mail to readers, and multimedia, "digital news looked to be just the revolutionary force its champions had predicted" (Scott, 2005: 94).

However, the adaption process of the Internet's opportunities was not so straightforward. It can be said that print journalism followed more or less the same principles and production routines for almost 300 years; but with the introduction of the Internet, journalism needed to develop new functions to adapt to its new environment. Siapera and Veglis (2012) explain the development process of online journalism in three phases. In its first phase, journalism tried to impose its traditional norms and criteria on the new media, with its static pages similar to print versions. In

the beginning of the new millennium, journalism sought to adapt by embracing features of hypertext, interactivity and multimediality, which marked its second phase. Early examples of this phase is considered to be Associated Press's AP Streaming News, which offered multimedia content; and *International Herald Tribune's* site that introduced customization and applied interactivity by allowing users to flick over page turns and store headlines for viewing later. On September 11, 2001, the immediacy of online news was tested, when the world wanted to get immediate information about the terrorist attacks in USA. The news sites at the time were not ready for this and most of them crashed under the demand. However, this was the time when the importance of immediacy was realized for the competitive online news environment. Following this, there were two events that shaped the third phase of online journalism. These were the Asian tsunami in 2004 and the terrorist attack in London in 2005, which gave rise to new kinds of journalism. These events were reported through the contributions of eyewitnesses, which portrays the shift of journalism toward a collaborative, open source model through interactive and participating users (Siapera and Veglis, 2012). There are various examples of events such as Mumbai attacks in 2008, the Iranian elections in 2009, the Arab spring and Gezi events that underlined the importance of the development of online journalism. On the basis of these, it can be said that the development of online journalism or online news has a technology-driven aspect.

2.2.4.3. Technological Development of Online News

Online or digital journalism is defined as "the use of digital technologies to research, produce and deliver (or make accessible) news and information to an increasingly computer-literate audience" (Kawamoto, 2003:4). And various technology-based characteristics of the concept are emphasized such as hypertextualilty, interactivity, nonlinearity, the use of multimedia, convergence, customization and personalization. (Kawamoto, 2003). When compared to its predecessor, Ward (2002) summarizes what make online journalism practices distinctive. According to the author, the range of access to sources, the amount one can access, the speed of access, ability to analyze data, and the ability to tap in to debates and discussions are the benefits of online as a research tool. When it comes to publishing online, the differences lie within features of information dissemination,

archiving, the relationship with the reader, interactivity, and linkage. According to Ward (2002) publishing online can provide new opportunities for information dissemination and build a more dynamic relationship with the reader. In addition, capacity, flexibility and permanence can be added to these features (Stovall, 2004). In online journalism, limitations of time and space are eliminated; the web can handle a vide variety of forms like words, pictures, audio and video for the information it presents; and its content is more permanent, if properly maintained, than any other kind of medium.

Overall, features of the Internet had an impact on journalism. The most salient ones that shaped online news are considered to be hypertextuality, interactivity and multimediality. Steensen (2011) provides a comprehensive review of the research on technology-based developments, where it can be seen that these features are not utilized to their full potential in terms of online journalism practices. Hyperlinks are used mostly to refer to other stories in the same site. Interactivity makes room for mostly comment sections and participation in the site; but it does not include the selection and editing of stories. And finally multimedia, even though used to tell a story with the combination of different media, is not a feature that alters the news presented. These demonstrate that online journalism's development cannot be explained by technological innovations alone (Siaper and Veglis, 2012). In this regard, it is important to understand the conditions that socially and economically led to the emergence of online news.

2.2.4.4 Economical Development of Online News

From an economical point of view, Scott (2005) argues that in the 1990s, before and during the rise of the Internet, it was clear that journalism was moving away from the public service mission and towards commercial press. It was a period where costly journalistic practices like investigative reporting, foreign correspondence, and maintaining a large and diverse staff of reporters were replaced by less costly and more saleable trends like sensationalism, disproportionate coverage of marketable business news, blurred distinctions between editorial and advertising content, and reliance on press releases and publicity as news sources.

This, according to the author, was basically sacrificing long-term credibility for short-term returns.

There were both critics and supporters of the status quo, and the emergence of the Internet was considered as a great opportunity for both parties. Those who were critical of journalism practices – these were mostly journalists - at the time were hopeful that the Internet would restore the value of journalism as a public servant. Those who sought revenue and profit in journalism practices, on the other hand, saw this opportunity as a brand new market. This, in fact, explains the online expansion of journals as a search for source of income (Allan, 2006).

Moreover, the use of new media for journalism brought upon different requirements for journalists and their work such as multitasking, more work load and time pressure. As Quant (2004) argues, this need to publish in a short period of time has made journalism dependent on news agencies. In this regard, speed and interactivity cut in front of other values of journalism. In addition, the fact that users can participate in online environment creates one of the major factors of change in journalism, as it allows communication to turn into a dialogue (Siapera and Veglis, 2012).

Whether from sociological, economical, technological or historical perspectives, it can be indicated that online journalism has its own routines, norms and practices, which in turn shape the structure of online news. Overall, as Carlson (2003:53) asserts, “an online journal can have the depth and breadth of newspapers, the immediacy of radio, television’s ability to make us eye witnesses to events, and the typography and resolution of slick magazines.” And the Internet, in theory, does contain “the potential to change the way information is produced and consumed” (Scott, 2005:92). Accordingly, it offers an instantaneous, unlimited supply of information on every topic, which are easy to access. Moreover, its production costs are low. Many people can generate or find alternative content, which threatens the elite media outlets.

Overall, through the Internet, journalism can be used for democratic citizenry. However, as underlined in the beginning of this section, there are some bullet points

that should be kept in mind regarding the potential of online news. First of all, online news does not emerge independently from its predecessors or its social, political or economical environment. Second of all, it is more important to focus on the evolutionary process of online news instead of its revolutionary effects because its development is based on how and by whom it is being used. And finally, due to the nature of technological developments, the face of online news and online journalism practices may change everyday.

2.2.5. Hate Speech Online

On the basis of the overview of online news' development, it is apparent that the understanding of news in general is changing. With its many features, the Internet has changed the one-way flow of news that is related to traditional media. In print media, information could only be disseminated, but in online journalism, it can be reproduced. Online news is considered to be enhancing democratic citizenry, but the qualities that allow it to be democratic also may harm certain democratic rights. In this regard, it is important to evaluate the online environment in terms of hate speech.

In 1980, the report of MacBride and his colleagues asserts the idea of true democratization of communication can be attained through a two-way flow between participants in the process, the existence of multiple information sources permitting wider selection, more opportunity for each individual to reach decisions based on a broad awareness of divergent facts and viewpoints, and increased participation by readers, viewers and listeners in the decision-making and programming activities of the media.

As argued comprehensively above, it appears that online news contains features that MacBride Report was suggesting for the true democratization of communication. A two-way flow between participants and increased participation can be actualized through the features of interactivity and participation. Multiple information sources are possible with space and multiplicity features. And reaching decisions based on divergent facts and viewpoints is possible with polycentrality of online news.

Based on the literature review provided above, it can be summarized that media has many functions in democracy such as serving as a channel for governments to communicate with citizens, investigating governments' work, acting as a channel for public opinion and popular pressure to reach government, providing a forum for political and public debate, and most importantly providing information and informing the public. When the Internet's technological advantages are added, as explained in previous sections of this thesis, the list grows longer.

When it comes to online news' role in democracy, it is possible to summarize its opportunities as following: It is possible to provide and reach much more news content in much shorter period of time. There are more sources of news both in terms of amount and in terms of diversity. And users can participate in the news and interact with each other. All of these lead to the idea of an informed citizen, which is an essential element of democratic values. Needles to say, this perspective requires careful consideration because not all features of the Internet in general and online news in specific benefit democratic conditions. This perspective is valid for when the opportunities this new media offers are misused; and this becomes noticeable especially in terms of hate speech online. Because of the characteristics listed above, online hate speech is perceived to be more natural, common, available, easier to be created and consequently more ordinary (Binark, 2010; Gagliardone et al., 2015). Moreover, produced hate speech can spread faster and more easily, again, because of these characteristics.

In this direction, Timofeeva (2003:256) argues that the opportunities that the Internet offers such as establishing groups and discussion forums, easy means of communication, accumulating data and reaching large numbers of people make the medium a "unique resource for expanding hate propaganda." The Internet's characteristics, as the author adds, also make it difficult to regulate this sort of discourse due to the emergence of mirror sites, which may appear again on another server even with imposed regulations.

From a legal point of view, "hate speech on the Internet is special because […] it is pure speech, and among degrees of racial discrimination, such as verbal

rejection, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack and extermination, hate speech on the Internet falls into the least dangerous category of verbal activity" (Timofeeva, 2003:259). As a matter of fact, hate activists were very quick to realize the potential of the Internet for the dissemination of their cause. For example in the beginning of 1980s, American neo-Nazis were one of the first groups that utilized the features of the Internet for propaganda by preparing guides on how to seek and contact potential members, and how to increase their influence by the means of this new medium (Timofeeva, 2003; Çomu and Binark, 2013). The first hate site on the World Wide Web was launched in the beginning of 1995 and it was named Stormfront. One of its extremist racist founders Don Black once said that "The Internet is that opportunity we've been looking for … We never were able to reach the audience we can now so easily and inexpensively" (Werts, 200 cited in Cohen-Almagor, 2011:4). Of course there are many web sites that are racist, anti-Muslim, anti-immigration, anti-gay, and anti-semitic. There are anti-religious, anti-abortion, anti-liberal, anti-communist and anti-feminist sites as well. According to Cohen-Almagor (2011), some of these hate sites are extensive for that they offer documents, journals, newspapers, videos, radio, TV, shows, books, games, survival information, homeschooling information, cartoons, artwork, jokes, quotes, poems, stickers and merchandise; and some of these web sites are multilingual. This extensive content shows how easy it is to produce and disseminate hate speech online.

Online hate speech has its own structure different from other media because of the nature of interactions enabled by digital information and communication technologies. Although online hate speech is intrinsically different from hate speech found offline, there are certain challenges unique to online content, which are related to its permanence, itinerancy, anonymity and cross-jurisdictional character (Gagliardone et al., 2015). First of all, once the hate speech is created online, it can stay online for a long time across multiple platforms even if the first 'shared post' is removed. Second of all, hate speech online is itinerant, which means that even if the content is removed, it appears somewhere else. And because of its itinerant nature, online hate speech can travel and find a larger audience. Thirdly, anonymity that online spaces provide may be problematic in terms of creating hate speech. Due to the fact that people do not think they have to face the consequences of what they say online, destructive behavior can easily accelerate in online platforms. Finally the

transnational reach of the Internet raises issues of cross-jurisdictional co-operation in regard to legal mechanisms for combatting hate speech.

Returning to the relationship between hate speech and democracy, it can be said that hate speech aimed at reducing an identifiable group's rights does not further democratic ideals. To the contrary, destructive messages cause conflict and division. "Unrestrained bias foments disunity and endangers civil liberties. The Internet is being used to undermine democracy by providing a far-reaching medium for drawing together distant hate groups" (Cohen-Almagor, 2011:20). Although the Internet is considered to provide extensive opportunities in terms of democratic participation, freedom of speech and representation, it also carries great risk for certain rights and freedoms because it offers a platform where everyone can say, write or disseminate anything they want (Öztekin, 2015). In this regard, online environment may become a space where discriminatory expressions are stated without any regulation whatsoever.

It goes without saying that the roots of hate speech online is based on everyday life and it is not right to blame solely the characteristics of the Internet for its production (Öztekin, 2015; Çomu and Binark, 2013). However, it is these characteristics that make hate speech to be more natural, common, available, easier to be created and consequently more ordinary (Binark, 2010; Gagliardone et al., 2015).

Media has an important role in reinforcing already existing discrimination and hate speech in a society. Especially news plays this part because they are considered as the representation of real life and therefore more reliable (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988a). This, of course, applies to online news, as well. According to Çomu and Binark (2013), the use of lingual practices and the milieu where such practices are popularized are very important for hate speech. And the added convenience of online environment, as mentioned above, makes online news an even more outstanding medium for dissemination of hate speech.

Compared to traditional media in terms of hate speech, what is most distinctive about online news is that it enables its readers or users to produce content. In online

news sites, users can participate in the production of news – to a certain degree –by commenting on the news, stating their opinion or even shape the news content (Dirini, 2010). Through this feature of online news sites, users can reach the journalists and site owners, as well as other users, very easily. This feature is called user-created content (UCC) and it is not exclusive to online news. OECD (2008:5) explains this as a phenomenon with major social implications. Accordingly,

> *Changes in the way users produce, distribute, access and re-use information and entertainment give rise to: increased user autonomy; increased participation, increased diversity and increased creativity. UCC also provides citizens with improved ICT skills. As an open platform, UCC increases the free flow of information and freedom of expression, as well as enriching political and societal debates and broadening diversity of opinion.*

This grand opportunity to generate content that is hard to find in traditional media also carries the risk of the use of new media for producing and disseminating hate speech. In fact, the reason that hate speech is easily created and distributed online is based on various applications that allow content creation by users, and online news sites are considered as one of these applications (Çomu and Binark, 2013).

According to Dirini (2010:56), "discourse starts to marginalize in society, culture and politics when the page is loading. Marginalization starts at the location of the news; it continues to be produced through news' title, rhetoric and photographs; and it ends with user comments at the final stage." In accordance, due to the Internet's non-restrictive nature, some users misuse the medium to create and promote discriminatory and offensive language, including hate speech, which affects the experience of other users, negatively influence business of online companies and may lead to severe real-life consequences (Djuric et al., 2015).

Overall, it can be said that the Internet makes it easy for hate speech to be produced and disseminated; however it also incorporates many opportunities and possibilities. Therefore, it cannot be announced to be completely bad or completely good in terms of hate speech. In this regards, it is important to remember that online

hate speech emerges based on beliefs and thoughts from the offline world, and that the basis for combating hate speech online is possible through change on an individual level.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Research Question of the Study

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. The research question of the study is as follows: Does online news provide an alternative medium for the victims of hate speech in terms of their ability to exercise their democratic rights? The main hypothesis is that victims of hate speech can benefit from online news in terms of reclaiming their rights to be heard, to speak and to participate in social and political life, which are compulsory elements of democracy.

3.2. Research Method

In accordance with the research question, multi-research method is used, which has a two-dimensional structure. The first one aims to analyze online news sites in terms of hate speech. The second one aims to understand the perspective of hate speech victims towards online news and its positioning in democracy. The first part of research is thought to provide a demonstration of how and to what extend hate speech takes place in online news sites. And the second stage of research, which serves the main purpose of this study, aims to provide an understanding of the role of online news in democracy, if any, in the context of hate speech.

Since hate speech itself is a complex and comprehensive concept, defining victims of hate speech is a difficult task. For the purposes of this study, victims of hate speech can be understood as any individual, who defines himself/herself as a member of a certain group that is exposed or subjected to, and affected by hate speech. Hate speech can be defined as “bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived characteristics” (Cohen-Almagor, 2011:1). These characteristics include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability and sexual orientation, and

hate speech expresses discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic and/or prejudicial attitudes towards those characteristics. As it can be seen from this definition, the target groups of hate speech are just as extensive as the term's definition. This complexity of the concept requires attention on a detailed level for each and every group that is mentioned. That is why, it is thought to be beneficial for this study to focus only on one of those characteristics in order to have a better understanding of the subject matter.

In choosing the group for analysis, Turkey's penal codes on hate crime are taken into consideration. On September 13th, 2013 the Prime Minister at the time Erdoğan announced the planned changes with the democratization package, which includes regulations for hate crimes, where crimes committed with a motivation of hatred will receive an increased penalty. Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved the clause on hate crimes and discrimination to be included in Turkish Criminal Code on March 2nd, 2014. In this direction, the title of the Article 122 was amended as "Hatred and Discrimination", which contains a specific penalty-enhancement provision on the ground of hatred based on differences of language, race, nationality, color, gender, disability, political view, philosophical belief, religion or sect. However, the alterations are not consistent with the Law Draft on Hate Crimes suggested by the Platform for Hate Crimes Legislation Campaign[8].

According to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), hate crimes include any criminal offense committed with a bias motive or intolerance on the basis of race, color, ethnicity or nationality, religion, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disabilities and other protected characteristics (OSCE/ODIHR, 2009). Even though discrimination and hate crimes have been included in Turkish Criminal Code, it should be mentioned that the amended article does not cover the definition set out by OSCE. Characteristics that are left out of the Criminal Code can be summarized as groups of identity or belonging on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and health condition.

[8] To read the law draft, see http://www.sosyaldegisim.org/belgeler/turkiye-cumhuriyeti-yasalari/nefret-suclari-yasa-taslagi/

As hate speech is considered as the prerequisite of hate crime, any study conducted on speech is thought to benefit the battle against hate crime. That is why, this thesis aims to focus on hate speech directed at those, who are not listed in the amended Article 122 of the Criminal Code. It is thought that by doing so, it can be set out that hate speech directed at any identity group matters.

An overview of the literature on hate speech shows that there are various studies conducted in order to demonstrate hate speech in media. Most of these studies focus on hate speech directed at groups on the basis of certain characteristics such as race, nationality, ethnicity and religious belief (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013; Talimciler, 2012; Altheide, 2007; Demir and Zeydanlıoğlu, 2010; Teo, 2000; Erjavec, 2001; Billig, 1995; Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000; nefretsoylemi.org). There are also studies on gender identity and sexual orientation such as researches conducted by Kaos GL (2012), Ördek (2012) and Çınar (2015). Among the four group characteristics that are left out, it can be said that hate speech on the basis of health condition is the least studied area of research; and hate speech against people suffering from certain diseases is increasingly observed in Turkey (Binark and Çomu, 2012).

Although hate speech based on diseases contains various health conditions such as obesity, Alzheimer's, and diseases that come with age, the one that stands out the most in terms of production and reproduction of hate speech is HIV/AIDS. It can be said that people who live with HIV suffer from discrimination, stigmatization and hate speech. The reasons for this can be listed as misinformation about the infection of the virus, biased attitudes towards individuals or groups that are most affected by HIV, use of intravenous drugs and sexual behavior that are thought as reasons for infection, and fears related to disease and death (Duyan, 2001). Regarding media's role on hate speech, it can be said that the news about HIV/AIDS in media actually promote the discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

Returning to the methodology of this thesis, the main area of research is determined to be hate speech towards people who live with HIV firstly because it is an important issue that need careful examination; and secondly, studies that focus on this type of hate speech are limited in number. Moreover, by focusing on only one

group, it is thought that making an extensive and thorough analysis becomes possible.

3.2.1. First Stage of Research

This section of research aims to demonstrate the existing hate speech in online news sites. The way HIV and AIDS related news are presented promotes and reproduces existing social stigmas and discrimination in society (Visser et.al., 2006). From a general point of view, media presents AIDS as an untreatable disease and patients as dangerous people; which increase existing bias and fear in society. When the fact that media is the most used source of information on HIV/AIDS is taken into consideration (Yegen, 2014), the influence of hate speech in media becomes prominent. Due to the fact that discriminating statements appear to be mere talk, they are not considered as damaging expressions; however, they could be very effective in marginalization and exclusion of certain groups (van Dijk, 2000).

In order to demonstrate the hate speech against HIV/AIDS in online news sites, method of critical discourse analysis is adopted. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 2015:465). In explaining CDA, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) assert some basic principles. Accordingly, CDA addresses social problems; power relations are discursive; discourse constitutes society and culture; it does ideological work; it is historical; the link between text and society is mediated; discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory; and discourse is a form of social action. In a general sense, CDA deals with specific discourse structures that are implemented in the reproduction of social dominance; and the notions that it features include "power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order" (van Dijk, 2015:468).

Concerning discourse analysis, there are various approaches by different scholars, namely Bell (1991), Fairclough (1991), Fairclough and Graham (2003), Pecheux (1992), and Hartley (1990; cited in Özer, 2015). According to Özer (2015),

Bell does not emphasize ideological factors; Fairclough does not focus on news; Pecheux approaches text in a manner of structuralism and analyzes on the basis of contrast; and Hartley focuses on ideological reproduction in news but does not provide an orderly model for analysis. van Dijk, on the other hand, adopts an approach to CDA in terms of revealing the structure of news (and other content) and its ideological representation. Since the main purpose of this stage is analyzing online news in the context of hate speech towards people who live with HIV/AIDS, van Dijk's approach is considered to be more suitable because it is based on analyzing news primarily as type of text or discourse (van Dijk, 1988a).

van Dijk divides the analysis of news as discourse into two structures, namely macro and micro structures. To begin with, macro structure consists of two dimensions; the first one is thematic and the second is schematic. Thematic structure should be understood as the overall organization of topics a news item is about, which is the formal representation of the content of news by characterizing part of the meaning of a text. Schematic structure, on the other hand, refers to overall form of a discourse. van Dijk (1985:69) argues that news discourse has a "conventional schema," in which the overall topics or content may be inserted and that schematic structures organize thematic macro structures.

Thematic macro structures can be explained as "global levels of descriptions"; and they are assumed to be semantic structures of discourse "whose meaning and reference is defined in terms of their constituents' meanings" (van Dijk, 1977:7). Analysis of thematic structure deals with headlines and leads of news. Accordingly, headline and lead precede the rest of the news item and together, the express the major topics of the text where they function as an initial summary (van Dijk, 1988a).

Another topic of importance at thematic structure is headlines' and leads' relevance to each other, as well as to the text, and their length in terms of the information they contain (İnceoğlu and Çomak, 2009). Macro structures may also require processes of inference where they are inferred from the explicit text because macro-propositions may not be explicitly expressed in the discourse. van Dijk (1977:8) calls this semantic transformation as "macro-rules" and explains them as mapping rules to obtain the macro structure from the micro structure of the

discourse. The first macro-rule is generalization, which is based on abstraction of certain essential properties that become irrelevant at macro-level and denoted by their common superset. The second macro-rule is deletion where full propositions from a text are deleted. In terms of news analysis, this can be explained as withholding certain information such as place, period, or time. Other macro-rules include integration/selection and construction. Integration or selection refers to abstraction of more specific information where it has been denoted somewhere else in the text. Finally, construction basically organizes micro information by combining propositions and reduces information without deleting it (van Dijk, 1977; Özer, 2015).

The other dimension of macro structure is news schema. Schematic structure focuses on circumstances and evaluations. An analysis of circumstances deals with main events, consequences, background, and context in order to understand the patterns of news story. The presentation of the main event usually follows headline and lead, and it may be embedded in background and context. Consequences can take precedence over main event because "the newsworthiness of social and political events is partly determined by the seriousness of their consequences" (van Dijk, 1988a:54). When it comes to analysis of evaluation, it can be said that it depends on verbal reactions and comments. Verbal reactions consist of names and roles of news participants and quotations, which allow journalists to formulate opinions that are not necessarily their own, but still objective because they have been stated; however the selection speakers and quotations do not need to be considered as objective. And comments usually consist of opinions, evaluations or expectations of the journalist or newspaper itself. According to van Dijk (1988a), not all news texts have all of these categories, but their analysis enables understanding how news text is presented in a formal way.

When it comes to the micro structure of news discourse, the focus shifts to sentences and words. Micro structure is basically concerned about syntactic analysis, local coherence, choice of words and rhetoric of the news. Syntactic structure deals with sentential organization, whether they are active or passive; simple or complex; as well as word order (İnceoğlu and Çomak, 2009). In news content, it is observed that discourse is fairly complex, whereas sentences that consist of simple clause are

rare. “Most sentences are complex, with several embedded clauses and nominalizations and, therefore, express several propositions” (van Dijk, 1988a:77).

The sequence of propositions and sentences refer to local coherence, which include conditional, functional and referential coherence. Conditional coherence involves connections of causality between sentences and denotation of facts, which are conditionally related. Functional coherence signals explanations in consecutive sentences or phrases, where a certain proposition has a specific function relative to a previous proposition. And referential coherence explains any missing connection between consecutive sentences or propositions. (van Dijk, 1988a; Özer, 2009).

The choice of words is basically related to the style of discourse, but it also reveals important notions for semantic content analysis. The choice of words may explain the degree of formality, the relationship between the speech partners, the group-based or institutional embedding of discourse, and most importantly, “the attitudes and ideologies of the speaker” (van Dijk, 1988a:81).

The rhetoric of news discourse has to do with how things are said and it depends on the goals and intended effects of communication. According to van Dijk (1988a), the effectiveness of news comes from suggesting factuality, which is based on persuasion. In other words, news discourse uses rhetoric in order to persuade readers of its factuality. This persuasive aspect of news content has several characteristics such as emphasizing the factual nature of events, building strong relational structure for facts, and providing information with attitudinal and emotional dimensions. Rhetorical features include direct description and eyewitness reports, sources and quotations, numbers, and photographs, which all increase the chance of persuasion of news.

Özer (2015:247-8) suggests an overall model for van Dijk’s approach to discourse analysis, which visualizes the categories mentioned above (see Table 3.1.)

Table 3.1. Model of van Dijk's Discourse Analysis

A. Macro structure
1. Thematic structure
   a. Headline(s)
   b. Leads
   c. Photographs
2. Schematic structure
   a. Circumstances
      1. Main events
      2. Consequences
      3. Background
      4. Context
   B. Evaluation
      1. Verbal Reaction
      2. Comment

B. Micro Structure
1. Syntactic analysis
   a. Passive or active sentence structure
   b. Simple or complex sentence structure
2. Local coherence
   a. Conditional coherence
   b. Functional coherence
   c. Referential coherence
3. Choice of words
4. Rhetoric
a. Photograph
b. Persuasive content
c. Direct description and eye witness reports

From a general perspective, news constitute a particular type of discourse, which should be analyzed in terms of its structures at different levels of description that includes syntactic and semantic structures, as well as more complex properties such as coherence relations, overall topics, schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions. Moreover, "the study of discourse is not limited to an explicit account of structures per se […] discourse is not simply an isolated textual or dialogical structure. Rather it is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context" (van Dijk, 1988b:2).

Returning to the aim in choosing CDA as an analysis method, it should be remembered that "critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality" (van Dijk,

2015:465; Özer, 2015). The work of critical discourse analysts is political and should aim to critically understand those who suffer most from dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 1993).

3.2.1.1. Sampling

The sample of this stage of research is determined on the basis of Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016 (Newman et al., 2016) and Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017 (Newman et al., 2017). These reports are commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in order to understand how news is being consumed in a range of countries. The report of 2016 is conducted at the end of January/beginning of February 2016 and the report of 2017 is at January/beginning of February 2017, by using a comprehensive online questionnaire. In order to represent the total population of each country, the data of the reports were weighted to targets based on industry-accepted data such as age, gender, region newspaper readership and social grade. It should be underlined that the reports' samples are reflective of the population that has access to the Internet. The reports also filter out anyone who claims that they had not consumed any news in the past month of the survey[9]. These reports provide an understanding of how online news is consumed by those who regularly reads online news and who has access to it. Therefore, these reports are taken as a reference point in determining the sample for critical discourse analysis.

The findings of the reports top brands on weekly usage percentages in Turkey are demonstrated in Figure 3.1. and Figure 3.2. The figures include both brands of TV, radio and print, and online news sources.

[9] For further information about methodology see www.digitalnewsreport.org

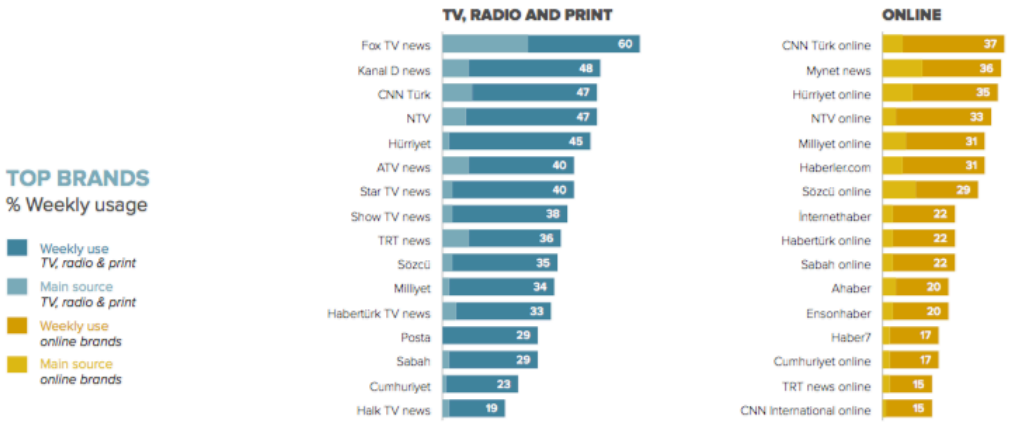

Figure 3.1. Top Brands % Weekly Usage 2016
Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016

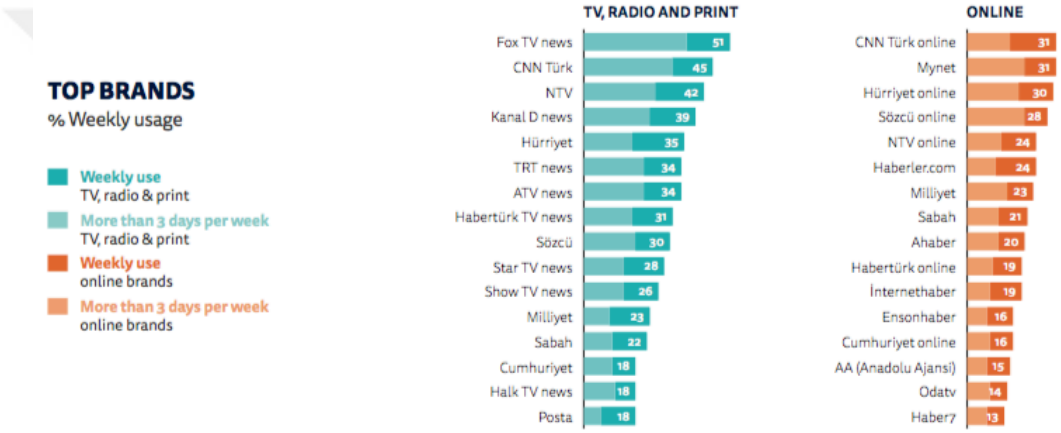

Figure 3.2. Top Brands % Weekly Usage 2017
Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017

Concerning the percentage of weekly usage of online news, both years' analyses show that the top three online news sources are CNN Türk online, Mynet news and Hürriyet online, which constitute the sample for analysis. CNN Türk online can be considered as the online version of the TV channel CNN Türk. Its website is www.cnnturk.com. An overview of the web site shows that it contains a wide variety of news segments such as Turkey, Economy, Sports, World, Life, Art, Magazine, Technology, Weather Report, Automobile and Real Estate. It also provides links to the channel's TV programs and live broadcast. Mynet news operates under the Internet platform named Mynet. Its website is www.mynet.com/haber. It also contains variety of news segments as well as links to other news sources such as BBC and Deutsche Welle. Finally, Hürriyet online is the online version of the print newspaper of Hürriyet. Its website is www.hurriyet.com.tr. As the first two websites,

Hürriyet online contains news segments such as Agenda, World, Economy, Sports, Travel and Breaking News.

Including these three online news sources into the sample of the study provides an understanding of how news related to HIV/AIDS are presented in terms of hate speech.

3.2.1.2. Data Collection Method

The data is collected from online news sites that are included in the sample, namely CNN Türk online, Mynet News and Hürriyet online. All three news sites are scanned in the time period between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016, by using their embedded search tool functions. The keywords used in search are HIV and AIDS. The results of the search are scanned and news that does not contain HIV/AIDS related content are eliminated from the acquired data.

3.2.2. Second Stage of Research

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the role of online news in democracy, a qualitative research approach is adopted because the research question of the thesis aims to understand certain attitudes, perceptions, motivations and behaviors that are largely qualitative in nature. This stage of analysis aims to explore whether online news has any effect in enhancing democratic conditions for victims of hate speech.

For data analysis method, a model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) is adopted, which suggests successive stages of data collection, data preparation, data reduction, data display and conclusion/verification. Each of these stages are explained in Figure 3.3.

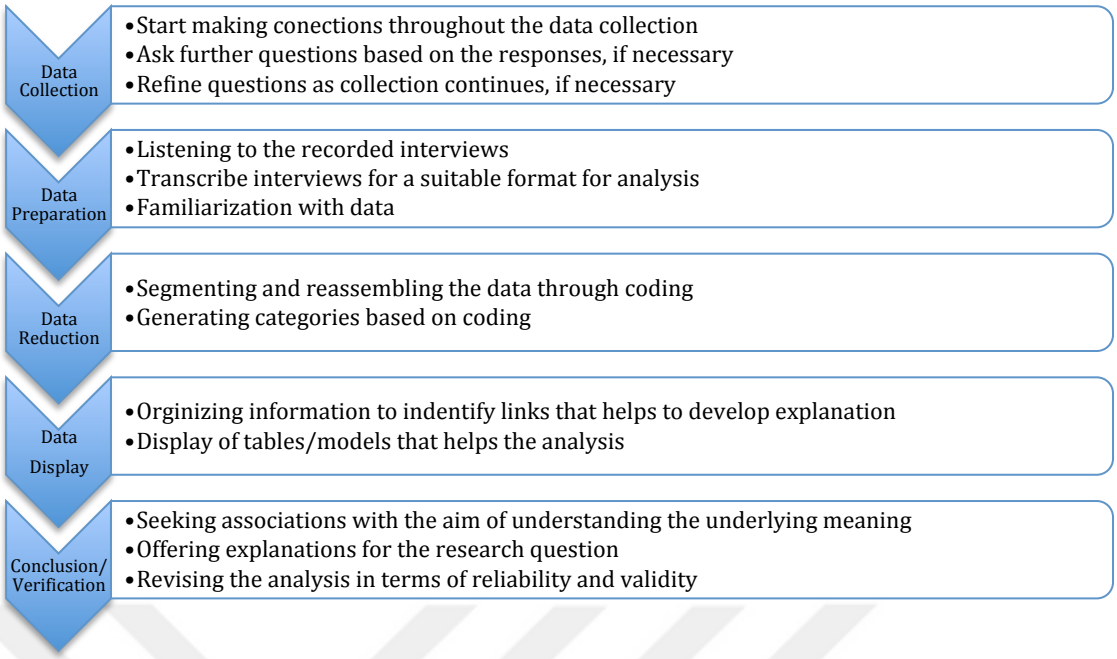

Figure 3.3. Stages of Qualitative Data Analysis
Adopted from: Miles, M.B. and Huberman A.M. (1994) *An Expanded Sourcebook. Qualitative Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The research design in qualitative research usually does not contain a priori procedures and it remains flexible both before and throughout the research, but following a certain methodology and general research interests is helpful (Taylor et al., 2016). That is why, the model suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) is adopted as a guide throughout analysis.

3.2.2.1. Sampling

The target population for this study is defined as people who live with HIV/AIDS and consume online news in Turkey. The reasons for this definition of the target population includes that the aim of this study is the exploration of online news role in democracy for hate speech victims, especially people who live with HIV; that the research is geographically limited to Turkey; and that people who do not consume online news may not provide appropriate data for analysis.

As for sampling plan, judgment sampling method is adopted because this method enables selecting members based on the purpose of the study (Taylor et al., 2016). Individuals who can be included in the sample need to have two characteristics, namely living with HIV and consuming online news.

Due to the qualitative nature of this stage of analysis, the sample size is determined by borrowing the grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967, cited in Taylor et al., 2016). According to the grounded theory, the research process should continue in an iterative manner until no new information about the subject emerges. With this method, "researcher consciously select additional cases to be studied according to the potential for developing new insights or expanding and refining those already gained […] and additional cases [are] selected in order to broaden the applicability of theoretical insights" (Taylor et al., 2016: 32). At this direction, the sample size is determined, at the end of the data collection process, to be ten respondents.

3.2.2.2. Data collection method

Data collection method is determined to be in-depth interviews. In-depth interview is based on the communication between interviewer and respondent and involves acquiring the respondent's perspective as a whole; and it is a convenient technique for making the respondent feel comfortable (Taylor et al., 2016). Taking into consideration that issues related to HIV and AIDS are sensitive and require a careful approach, in-depth interviews are thought to be an appropriate method for data collection.

As for the implementation of interviews, firstly, unstructured interviews are conducted with experts and volunteers from different NGO's in order to have a better understanding of the subject matter. Accordingly, the issues related to HIV/AIDS are discussed such as access, violation of certain rights, attitudes towards people who live with HIV and hate speech in media. On the basis of these interviews and literature review, the second stage of interviews is shaped on a semi-structured basis. A guideline consisting of questions is prepared in order to conduct in-depth interviews with people who live with HIV. For the guideline, see Appendix A.

3.2.2.3. Research framework

"A good qualitative study combines an in-depth understanding of the particular setting investigated with general theoretical insights that transcend that particular type of setting" (Taylor et al., 2016:31). The research framework of this study is developed on the basis of this principle. The framework is based on the literature review of the subject matter, as well as unstructured interviews with experts from various NGOs.

The research framework consists of five parts. The first one is patterns of news consumption; the second is issues related to access; the third part consists of patterns of participation; the forth one concerns content production and sharing; and the last one deals with main elements of democracy, including public debate, freedom of expression, censorship and surveillance practices.

News consumption

Understanding news consumption patterns of individuals included in the sample is important because the main research area of this thesis is online news. In this regard, interviewees are asked about their general news consumption patterns, whether they use digital media to consume news, which digital news sources they use, and which medium they choose for consuming news. Although, research indicates that online and traditional news consumption patterns are not very distinct, it is essential for the purposes of this study to demonstrate how online news sites are used.

Although studies show that people usually rely on mainstream media's online sources (Thorson, 2008; Newman et al. 2016; Newman et al., 2017), online news consumption assigns a more active role to audiences in their interactions with news institutions (Boczkowski, 2004). In other words, the online environment offers a decentralized network (Thorson, 2008), which differentiates online news consumption from the traditional sense.

Access

The issue of access is one of the most important aspects of online news' role in democracy for that its democratic potential can only be realized if access is not restricted (Tambini, 1999). It can be said that this democratic tie depends on how online news is regulated and who has access. Overall, democracy requires equal and open access to different information sources (Keane, 1999).

The issue of access has several connotations. The first one involves its literal meaning, where online news provides an opportunity for easy access in terms of cost and time (Palmen and Eriksen, 1999). The second one refers to access as a possibility to eliminate geographical limitations (Fenton, 2010). The third one is associated with the range of access to sources and the amount one can access (Ward, 2002), which brings the issue of representation to light. And finally, access is related to censorship through legal regulations. It should be remembered that a healthy democracy necessitates accessible, reliable and valid information (van Dijk, 2012). In this regard, respondents are asked about sufficiency of information that they want to access, any restrictions or limitations they encounter and access to online environment in general.

Patterns of participation

One of the most salient features that the online environment offers for news consumption is participation. In this regard, it is crucial to understand the patterns of participation in online news. As mentioned above, it is argued that through online news, users can take control over what news they consume, become a part of news production processes, and interact with others. This involvement by the users "is claimed to break down the barriers between audience and producer" (Fenton, 2010:10).

For the purposes of this study, it is important to understand which sources of online news are preferred in addition to any participatory behavior that the users display. In this regard, interviewees are asked about the sources of news they follow; whether they participate in any form such as choosing their interest topics, commenting and rating; how and to what extent they participate.

Content production and sharing

Related to the issues of participation, content production and sharing are also features that become prominent in terms of online news. Together with participation, the ability to produce content is considered as an opportunity for democratic participation (Fenton 2010) and an empowering tool for citizens (Jönsson and Örnebring, 2011). In this sense, it can be argued that content production and participation have liberating effects. Moreover, through content production and sharing, users become "secondary gatekeepers" of the content published online by "assessment of contributions by other users; communication of the perceived value or quality of user-and-journalist-produced content; selective re-dissemination of that content" (Singer, 2014:55).

That is why, it is important to understand how and to what extent users create content. In this regard, the respondents are asked whether they produce any news content; whether they share online news through social media, mobile applications or e-mail; and if they do so, what kind of news they produce or share with others.

Democratic implications

As argued comprehensively in the literature review section of this thesis, Internet in general and online news in specific are considered to be enhancing tools for democratic conditions. Accordingly, citizens gain the right to reply, to select information, and to communicate directly. Moreover, citizens can seek the information of their interest rather than what journalists and editors present. And this new media offer faster access to more information, improved search and storage functions (Tambini, 1999). There are also arguments related to online news as its is the harbinger of a new public sphere on the basis that it offers open access, voluntary participation, and formation of public opinion through rational discussion (Rheingold, 2000); it has an equalitarian and democratic aspect (Fernbeck, 1997); and it enables and promotes democratic debates (Kellner, 1995 cited in Timisi, 2003).

Despite the Internet's democratic implications, the features it offers raise a series of issues such as privacy and surveillance (McChesney, 2008), voyeurism (Nalçaoğlu, 2004), group polarization and extremist movements (Nagel, 2002 cited in Dolgun, 2011), exclusion of and intolerance towards others (Dolgun, 2011), populism and information inequality (van Dijk, 2012). In this regard, respondents are interviewed about participation in online debates, freedom of expression, censorship, self-censorship, and surveillance practices.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter of the thesis presents the findings of the study that are obtained through research. It consists of two sections, namely Critical Discourse Analysis and Analysis of In-Depth Interviews. The first section provides analysis of selected news items on the basis of prominent findings that are acquired through critical discourse analysis method suggested by van Dijk; followed by an overall analysis of news items, which include the distribution of news among websites and their dates; news sources; news segments under which the news items take place; and an evaluation of news pages in terms of the use of technological features. Following these, hate speech against people living with HIV is examined in the online news items included in the sample by giving salient examples from the news on the basis of van Dijk's model of critical discourse analysis.

The second section provides the findings acquired from analyzing 10 in-depth interviews with HIV positive individuals. Findings in this section are presented in accordance with the research framework explained in the methodology chapter, which includes patterns of news consumption, access, patterns of participation, content production and democratic implications. As the last subsection, findings regarding hate speech in online news are presented with theoretical implications.

4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Three online news sites, namely CNNTürk online, Mynet News and Hürriyet online, are included in the sample. All three news sites are scanned in the time period between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016, by using their embedded search tool functions. The keywords used in search are HIV and AIDS. The results of the search are scanned and news that does not contain HIV/AIDS related content are eliminated from the acquired data.

4.1.1. Analysis of News Items

The total number of news included in the analysis is 46. Hürriyet online covers most of this number with 32 news items followed by Mynet news with 8 news items and CNNTürk online with 6 news items. A full list of these news items is provided in Appendix B. The analysis of selected news items are given below in detail, based on prominent findings.

News Analysis 1

Table 4.1. Details of News 1

Headline	"Prostitution operation in Aydın: 2 people diagnosed with HIV virus"
Website	Hürriyet online
Source	DHA-İHA
Date	13.10.2016
Topic	A police operation for sex trafficking in Aydın, where involved people are taken into custody.
URL	http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/aydinda-fuhus-operasyonu-2-kiside-hiv-virusu-tespit-edildi-40247196

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline of the news explains a police operation for prostitution, where two people are diagnosed with HIV. The lead shares the information that these two women, who are diagnosed with HIV, are foreign and they have been with almost 200 men in three months. It can be said that there is deletion in the headline and lead because they do not cover the main event of the news or any other related information given in the news text.

2. Schematic structure

The main event presented in the news is the police operation for prostitution, where 16 suspects are arrested and 40 prostitutes – 6 Turkish and 34 foreign – are taken into custody. It can be seen that although the headline points out HIV, the main event is different. Moreover, the lead of the news is actually at last paragraph of the

news, which generally represents the least important information in news structure. (van Dijk, 1988a).

The consequences include legal procedures for suspects and health conditions of the sex workers. It is mentioned that “two foreign women is diagnosed with Hepatitis B, one foreign woman with Hepatitis C, four foreign women with syphilis and two foreign women with HIV virus (AIDS).” Moreover, the text also refers to a possible consequence where it mentions that women with HIV have been with almost 200 men in three months. All of these consequences point to a link between sex trafficking and sexually transmittable diseases, where the emphasis is mostly on AIDS. There is no other related information provided in the text.

When it comes to evaluation, there are no verbal reactions or explicit comments and opinions in the text. However, it can be said that the choice of emphasis on HIV/AIDS reflects the opinion of the reporter and/or the news organization, which relates person/people living with HIV to sex trafficking. This reinforces the idea that people living with HIV are dangerous people and a threat to society (Köylü, 2012).

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

The structure of sentences is observed to be passive and fairly complex, which involves different propositions. Most sentences in the text are a paragraph long. An example of this is can be given: “The women who carry diseases are taken under control by Kuşadası Health Group Presidency, while the other foreign women are turned over to the Aydın Immigration Office to be deported”. The passive and complex structure is apparent in this sentence; and it can be said that this structure causes the women in the news to be portrayed as not victims but mere objects that can be “ controlled”, “turned over” and “deported”.

2. Local coherence

The coherence observed in the text is mostly functional. For example, the number of women who are taken under custody in the operation is given followed by their state of health; and the following sentence explains what the officials did based on their state of health. Conditional coherence is rarely found; and for referential coherence, it can be observed that there is a distinction between Turkish and foreign women, where it is underlined that only foreign women tested positive for diseases.

3. Choice of words

The most important aspect of analyzing the chosen words in news discourse is that it reveals the attitudes and ideologies of the speaker (van Dijk, 1988a). In the case of the news under analysis, it can be observed that there are many problematic words and statements. First of all, there is misused terminology in the news. For example, the phrase “HIV virus” in the headline is wrong because HIV means Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Therefore, by saying HIV virus, the headline says “virus virus”. This mistake is repeated throughout the text. The women who are the subject of the news are referred to as “hayat kadını”, which has a metaphorical meaning and can be translated as “prostitute”. As Özer (2015) explains, the choice of words explains ideological perspectives, which can be seen in the example of referring to the same group of people as “terrorists” or “freedom fighters”. This represents the ideological standpoint of the speaker. For the case in hand, politically correct terminology is considered to be “sex worker”, which has a critical connotation, whereas the word “prostitute” both devalues humans and banalizes the concept.

4. Rhetoric

In terms of rhetoric, features such as quotations, eyewitness reports or statistics are not used in the news but the use of photographs stands out. There are three photographs in the news, which are assumed to be taken during the police operation (see Figure 4.1.). There are no subtitles or references in the text explaining them. The use of photographs increases the persuasiveness of news because it serves as proof of

the event. It can be argued that this news reinforces existing social stigmas and prejudices by creating a link between sex trafficking and HIV.

Figure 4.1. Photograph used in the news
Source: Hürriyet Online (2016, October 13). Retrieved from http://www.hurriyet.com.tr

News Analysis 2

Table 4.2. Details of News 2

Headline	"AIDS has officially exploded"
Website	Hürriyet online
Source	Reporter
Date	29.09.2016
Topic	The increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey
URL	http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/aids-resmen-patlamis-40235481

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline of the news is not explanatory and can be considered as sensational. The lead gives the headline a meaning by expressing that "the prediction that AIDS will explode in Turkey has been realized since 2003. The number of HIV/AIDS carrier is now 11.109, which increased 522 percent between 2005-2015."

Together, they provide a summary of the news, which emphasizes a 'drastic' increase in the number of people living with HIV. The photograph used below the lead is an image of a needle and various pills, which may add meaning to the summary by providing a scary and repellant image. The macro-rule observed in the thematic structure is selection, where specific information is abstracted from the headline but denoted both in the lead and the rest of the text.

2. Schematic structure

The main event presented in the news is the increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey; and it is supported by verbal reactions. In fact, most of the news text consists of quotations from experts and institutions. This can be evaluated as a schematic structure that allows the reporter to formulate opinions that are not her own, but still objective because they present the opinions of experts. The names and roles of news participants include General Manager of Human Resource Development Foundation Dr. Muhtar Çokar, Ministry of Health National Health Commision, Ministry of Health, Hacettepe University HIV/AIDS Treatment and Research Center, and World Health Organization.

Generally, verbal reactions follow background and context in news schema (van Dijk, 1988a); however, in this case, it is used as the main event, consequences, background and context. This structure can be argued to be more factual than interpretational; however, the quotations selected by the journalist are subjective. The journalist chooses to use, for instance, the headline "AIDS has officially exploded" – which in fact is another verbal reaction in the text – and to give the number of diagnosed people for each year. In this way, the reporter of this news provides an evaluation of the situation of HIV/AIDS in Turkey.

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

The sentence structures are observed to be active in the news. Since most of the sentences consist of quotations, they appear to be colloquial language; nevertheless,

the sentences are long – more than three lines – and they include many figures and numbers, which make the structure complex.

2. Local coherence

Both conditional and functional coherence are observed in the text. As a matter of fact, local coherence basically marks toe overall structure of the news, where each sentence explains, adds or contradicts its former one. For example, the statement that the number of diagnosis is increasing each year is followed by its reason that the issue priority has regressed in the country. Another example is the sentence, which explains the activities of National AIDS Commission since 1996; but, as a contrast, its sequent presents the reasons why the commission is not functioning properly any more.

3. Choice of words

The headline of the news is actually retrieved from a quote in the text; however, the choice to use it as the headline signals the perspective of the reporter. In this direction, AIDS is represented as a bomb, which kills humans. And sharing the increasing number of diagnosed people throughout the text supports this understanding. As another example, the following quote can be examined: “Until 1995, 100-150 people joined to the pool of HIV/AIDS in Turkey. This was not a significant number.” The first problem with this quote is the choice of words “pool of HIV/AIDS” as if they are not people who are diagnosed or tested positive for a very serious epidemic but mere informational data. This can be dehumanizing for people living with HIV, which is considered as a consequence of hate speech (Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Furthermore, not considering 100-150 people’s lives as significant is devaluing and it creates the idea of ordinariness and commonness.

There are also misused terms throughout the text. One salient example of this is using the words “HIVli” or “AIDSli”, which can be translated as “HIV carrier” and “AIDS carrier”. According to UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines (UNAIDS, 2015), the term “AIDS carrier” is incorrect, stigmatizing and offensive, and the preferred term is “person living with HIV”.

4. Rhetoric

There are various rhetorical features used in this news in order to increase the effectiveness of discourse. The most prominent feature is the use of numbers and statistics. The news provides the number of diagnoses for more than 20 years including percentages and statistics. The use of quotations is another rhetorical feature, which increases the persuasiveness of discourse. As matter of fact, most of the text consists of persuasive content such as statements of experts and reports of institutions.

Overall, the news reduces people living with HIV to mere numbers, which can be considered as dehumanizing; and it reinforces the prejudice that AIDS is an unrestrainable epidemic.

News Analysis 3

Table 4.3. Details of News 3

Headline	"Daunting numbers for Turkey in AIDS"
Website	CNNTürk online
Source	DHA
Date	30.11.2016
Topic	The increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey
URL	https://www.cnnturk.com/saglik/aidste-turkiye-icin-urkuten-rakam?page=1

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline of the news directly implies fear in terms of AIDS. And the lead supports this by adding that Turkey is now in the risky countries category because of the increase in AIDS cases. This increase is also explained in the lead where numbers of patients are given for 2005 and 2015. Therefore, the summary of the news is the number of people living with HIV is increasing and it is "daunting". The macro-rule observed in the headline is integration, where certain information – the

numbers and why they are daunting – is abstracted because it is denoted somewhere else in the text – in this case, the lead.

2. Schematic structure

The main event is presented as the increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey over the years and it is embedded in the context that 1st of December is World AIDS Day. The main event is also supported by background, where information about numbers of people living with HIV in the past is given. The consequence of the main event can be considered as the fact that Turkey has entered the category of countries with risk. The seriousness of consequences in news increases the newsworthiness (van Dijk,1988a), and this particular consequence is thought to serve this purpose.

Verbal reactions are used in the text not for supporting the discourse but for presenting the main event. Most of the text consists of quotations and information that Op. Dr. Yavuz Selim Süral provides. The verbal reactions provided include both explanations and comments on the subject matter and additional information on HIV response. Regarding comments, the news does dot explicitly provide evaluations or expectations; however, using the word “daunting” in the headline can be interpreted as a comment of the journalist because this adjective is not found somewhere else in the text.

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

Syntactic analysis reveals that most of the sentences in the text indicate active structure due to the nature of quotations. There are simple structured sentences in the news item such as “ 75 percent of cases are male, 25 percent are female” and “16.2 percent consist of foreign individual.” However, most of text consists of complex sentences, which express several propositions. For example, the first paragraph of the news is one sentence and it includes information about the percentage of increase in data; the name and institution of the speaker; the fact that Turkey used to be

considered as a low risk country in terms of HIV/AIDS; and that the increase in recent years striking. Most of the sentences are structured in a similarly complex way in the news item. Another salient example of this can be directly translated as:

> *By asserting that HIV infection is not transmitted by touching, shaking hands, using common objects in common places, Süral mentions that according to United Nations 2015 report, in the world, almost 2.1 million people have caught HIV infection, there are 36.7 million HIV carriers and 1.1 million people have lost their lives because of AIDS in 2015.*

As it can be observed in the one sentenced paragraph, besides the complex structure of sentence with several propositions, there is too much information to be understood in one sentence. In van Dijk's (1988a:78-79) words, "this is a rather heavy cognitive load for immediate processing in short-term memory. Full understanding of such sentences is, therefore, rather difficult."

2. Local coherence

The most significant type of local coherence in the news is observed to be referential coherence, which explains missing connections between sentences or propositions (Özer, 2015). The sentences and paragraphs are connected on the basis of the fact that number of people living with HIV is increasing. Although this is not done explicitly, they each add new information to the previous sentence.

3. Choice of words

The most striking choice of words is the use of the adjective "daunting" in the headline. The Turkish word is "ürküten" which can also be translated as scary, dreadful, startling, spooky, gruesome, and alarming. It can be seen that all of these translations imply a negative connotation for AIDS. Although the news refers to the increase as daunting, the underlying meaning may cause people living with HIV to be perceived as daunting and scary. There is also problematic use of terminology in the news. Examples of this include phrases like "contaminating (or transmitting) HIV" and "catching HIV infection." Because the word transmission has negative

connotations, the preferred phrase is being infected with HIV (positiveyasam.org). For the same reason, “catching HIV/AIDS” is incorrect and the preferred term is “being infected with HIV” or “HIV positive” (UNAIDS,2015).

Another example can be found in the sentence “what needs to remembered is that HIV infection is a preventable disease.” The problem is referring to HIV as a disease because people living with HIV are not considered to be ill. Overall, using this sort of incorrect terminology causes reproduction of misconceptions and prejudices.

4. Rhetoric

In the news, persuasive content is used in terms of rhetoric. As mentioned above, there are many numbers and statistics in the text and quotes from experts are used to increase persuasiveness. Referring to people living with HIV as mere numbers and cases can be considered as dehumanizing. In addition, there are seven photograph in the news, two of them belong to the expert in the news and the rest presents general images. However, one of the photographs is striking the most in terms of supporting the idea that “AIDS is daunting” (see Figure 4.2.).

Figure 4.2. Photograph used in the news
Source: CNNTürk Online (2016, November 30). Retrieved from: https://www.cnnturk.com

On the basis of these, it can be said that the rhetoric of the news support the main topic by giving warning quotes, threatening numbers and scary photographs.

News Analysis 4

Table 4.4. Details of News 4

Headline	“Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS”
Website	CNNTürk online
Source	N/A
Date	17.06.2016
Topic	A woman runs over her boyfriend with her car because she finds out that he has AIDS.
URL	https://www.cnnturk.com/video/dunya/aidsli-oldugunu-ogrendigi-sevgilisini-ezdi

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline of the news reports a crime, which is rationalized by the fact that the victim “has AIDS”. It can be said that there is deletion in the headline because it does not contain any specific information. The lead gives more information about the event by asserting the details for, when and where the crime took place. The headline and the lead summarizes the news; and photographs can be added to this summary (Özer, 2015). In this case, a video is provided where the car hit is shown (see Figure 4.3.)

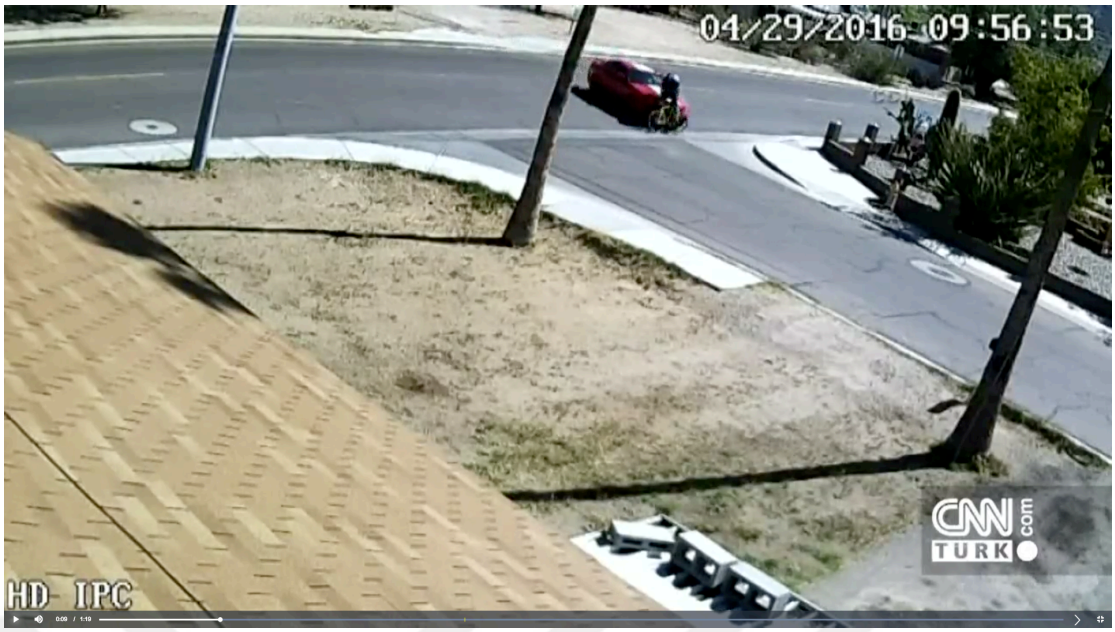

Figure 4.3. A Scene From the Video
Source: CNNTürk online (2016, June 17). Retrieved from: https://www.cnnturk.com

The video is used as a proof for the news story and it supports the headline and lead for explaining how the event took place.

2. Schematic structure

The main event is presented as the crime of ‘hit and run’. And the car crash is described in detail, which can also be seen in the video. Following the main event, a consequence is presented by explaining how the victim is injured because of the crash. The background of the news consists of why the suspect committed the crime. Accordingly, the suspect calls the health officials to report the event and tells them that she had a fight with her boyfriend after she found out that he has AIDS. Her boyfriend laughed at her and she stabbed him in the arm. Following this background information, another consequence is presented related to the investigation of the crime. The context of the news is considered to be the fact that the victim is HIV positive.

The evaluation of the news is not explicit. There are no sources of information, verbal reactions, or comments present in the texts. The reason for is may be the presence of a video in the news, which is explanatory and does not require any further proof.

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

The syntactic analysis reveals that a combination of active and passive sentences is used through out the text. Regarding complexity, although some sentences are long and consisting of several propositions, the general nature is rather simple. The text is descriptive in a direct manner, which is easy to understand.

2. Local coherence

Both conditional and functional coherence can be found the news text. the sentences that give explanation to its predecessor points to functional coherence. This observed in the text where it is explained why and how the crime is committed. Conditional coherence is found where there is denotation of fact that are conditionally related. An example of this in the text is where the charges against the suspect is listed on the bases of her crime.

3. Choice of words

First of all, the use of the word “AIDS’li” cathes the attention, which is used to refer to “a person who has AIDS” and can be translated as AIDS carrier. The correct word for this term is HIV positive because referring to a person as AIDS carrier is considered to be stigmatizing and offensive (UNAIDS, 2015). Another problematic use of words is about the exposure of the suspect and consequentially the victim. News regarding sensitive issues like HIV/AIDS should be considerate about the fact that persons involved in it may not want to be exposed. But the news at hand gives the full name of the suspect, which causes the exposure of her and her boyfriend’s identities.

4. Rhetoric

For rhetorical features it can be said that the news uses the video of the event as persuasive content. Moreover, rhetoric of news discourse is about how things are

said (van Dijk, 1988a). In this news, the issue of AIDS could have been given as a part of the background information, but the reporter chooses to present it as a part of the main event. This choice could be based on the purpose to draw attention or on the ideological perspective of the reporter. In this case, it can be said that a committed crime is justified with the fact that a person is HIV positive. By relating a crime to HIV/AIDS, the news legitimizes the criminal action. The last sentence of the news text is remarkable in this sense where it mentions that the suspect does not plead guilty. Basically, the news end with a fact that even though a person stabbed someone and ran him over with her car, she does not admits that she is guilty just because her victim is a person living with HIV.

News Analysis 5

Table 4.5. Details of News 5

Headline	"Everyday in Kenya, 14 people die because of AIDS"
Website	Mynet news
Source	N/A
Date	11.08.2016
Topic	The situation of AIDS cases in Kenya
URL	http://www.mynet.com/haber/dunya/kenyada-her-gun-14-kisi-aidsden-oluyor-2583453-1

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline implies that people die because of AIDS in Kenya by giving a daily number of deaths that is considered to be high. In the lead, two more propositions are introduced, which are Kenya is east African country and AIDS is caused by HIV. There are no photographs in the news. The macro-rule observed in the thematic structure is construction, where information is constructed at a more global level on the basis of micro-information. "Typically, the micro-propositions represent conditions, components, and consequences of the fact denoted by the macro-proposition" (van Dijk, 1977:14). This is the case for this news item. The macro-proposition in the headline – people die because of AIDS in Kenya – is supported and explained by other propositions in the text. It can be said that the thematic structure is constructed on the basis of the news text.

2. Schematic structure

The main event presented in the news is 14 people die everyday in Kenya because of AIDS. And the context is a conference in the state of Mombasa. The information about the main event is retrieved from the speech of Kenya National AIDS Control Committee official Celestine Mugambi in the mentioned conference. The background of the news is based on statistics about the population of Kenya and situation of AIDS in the country. As a matter of fact, most of the text consists of background information including the number of young people living with HIV and their access to treatment; the population of young people in Kenya; UN 2015 AIDS report on Kenya; and other African countries with high rates for HIV cases. As the consequence of the news, Mugambi's explanations are used where the official asserts that they have prepared a two-year plan in order to reduces deaths caused by AIDS to 40 percent. Another consequence is given by a verbal reaction: "While we are talking here, a lot of our young people are dying because of HIV."

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

All of the sentences in the text are perceived to be structured in an active manner. They either involve quotations from the speaker – Mugambi asserted "a lot of our young people are dying because of HIV" – or information retrieved from the speech – Mugambi underlined that more education is necessary" – or direct background information – according to United Nations 2015 AIDS Report, there are 100 thousand children living with HIV in the age group of 0-14 in Kenya. Regarding complexity, a mixture of simple, compound and complex sentence structures can be found in the news text; however, the comprehension of the discourse is not difficult.

2. Local coherence

Functional coherence can be found in the text, where explanations or additions are made in sequential sentences. For example, after mentioning that 14 people in

Kenya die everyday because of HIV, additional information is given in the next sentence by saying that there are many new HIV cases recorded in the country. Referential coherence is also observed in the text. The news begins with a denoted fact (number of deaths) and continues with the details of this fact (numbers and solution proposals). Following these, certain background information is given related to the fact (population with HIV and statistics on HIV) and the news is concluded with general information (situation of HIV cases in other African countries). Overall, the news text follows a path from specific to general, where information is connected referentially.

3. Choice of words

First of all, the use of the word “death” or “dying” through out the text can be considered as reinforcing existing fear among the society. Being related to death is one of the biggest problems that people living with HIV face (Köylü, 2012). Describing HIV as a lethal disease is not correct. It is agreed by professionals that that with appropriate treatment, HIV positive people can live a long and healthy life. Other issues regarding word choice in the text are about terminology. The news uses the phrase “HIV virus” several times; whereas the correct term is HIV. Also saying “HIV virus carrier” is not acceptable. The preferred use is HIV positive or person living with HIV.

4. Rhetoric

Rhetorical features are used in the text to support the main event of the news. First of all, presenting the main event with verbal reactions increases the news’ perceived credibility even though it does not contain specific information about how these verbal reactions are retrieved. There are other persuasive content in the news, such as information about the population of the country, percentages of diagnosed and treated people, and number of children living with HIV.

As mentioned earlier, rhetoric is about how things are said and it presents the ideology of the environment the news is constructed in (van Dijk, 1988a; Özer, 2015). the simple publishing of this news has several ideological implications. First

of all, it reproduces the idea that "HIV kills", which in turn reinforces misinformation, stigmatization, prejudices and perceived threats in society. Secondly, by creating a triangle between AIDS, death and an African country, the news reiterates and confirms the existing world hierarchy, where African countries are placed at the bottom. Finally, listing other African countries that have high rates of HIV cases causes the marginalization and devaluation of people in Africa. This is demeaning for both African people and people living with HIV.

News Analysis 6

Table 4.6. Details of News 6

Headline	"The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing"
Website	Mynet news
Source	Deutsche Welle
Date	01.12.2016
Topic	The increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey
URL	http://www.mynet.com/haber/saglik/turkiyede-aids-tehlikesi-artiyor-2756450-1

Macro structure

1. Thematic structure

The headline of the news asserts a proposition that the danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing. In a similar way, the lead mentions that "the regressed disease around the world is inclined to increase in Turkey." On the basis of this, the summary of the news reads even though the AIDS is in regression around the world, the numbers are increasing in Turkey. When the headline and the lead are analyzed alone, the macro-rule applied seems to be deletion because propositions that are explanatory are abstracted. However, when the rest of the text is evaluated, it can be seen that other macro-propositions, such as the main event, background and verbal reactions, denotes the missing information of the thematic structure. Therefore, the rule applied here is integration.

2. Schematic structure

The main event, as implied in the headline, is the increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey. The context of the news include both World AIDS Day and the fact that studies on "AIDS Strategic Plan" have begun in order to raise social awareness. A comprehensive background is provided in the text. In this regard, the details of the UNAIDS 2015 Report is provided with numbers of HIV positive people from all around the world including how many is infected, how many is not aware, how many does not have access to treatment, how many are children, how many deaths and HIV cases can be prevented in the future, and how many has lost their lives. Following these, statistics and numbers in Turkey are given as consequence.

For evaluation, the news uses verbal reactions including the statements of the Head of HIV Infection Association, Prof. Dr. Fehmi Tabak and Prof. Dr. Fadile Yıldız from Harran University. All of the verbal reactions are used to support and explain the main event. And to support the seriousness of the main event, another consequence is presented as the last paragraph of the text. Accordingly, it is explained that National AIDS Committee will be reinvigorated and studies regarding Turkey HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan will begin.

Micro structure

1. Syntactic analysis

According to syntactic analysis, both active and passive structured sentences are used in the text. In general, verbal reactions are given in active sentences and information that the journalist presents show passive structure. For complexity, a paragraph from the news can be evaluated as an example:

On the other hand, as a result of worldwide medical research and awareness studies, while the infection rate of HIV virus is regressed 35 percent in adults and 58 percent in children, death rate on the basis of the disease has increased 42 percent. Despite this considerably positive picture worldwide, the number

of AIDS patients in Turkey is inclined to increase every passing year. According to official data, the number of HIV virus carriers, which causes AIDS disease, has reached 13 thousand in Turkey. Experts, who assert that especially in the last years, the number of disease carrying people has shown 50-60 percent increase in a year, emphasize the importance of educating the people about how the disease is transmitted.

This long paragraph consists of several complex sentences and provides various macro categories including main event (increasing numbers in Turkey), consequence (the number has reached 13 thousand), background (decrease of percentages in the world), verbal reactions (experts' statements) and comments (regression of the disease is considered to be positive). In accordance with van Dijk's (1988a) views, these kind of complex sentences are difficult to understand.

2. Local coherence

According to van Dijk (1988a:62), "propositions cohere locally only if they both match the topic." In this regard, examples of conditional, functional, and referential coherence can be found in the text. The main event of the news is presented through constructing meaning with conditional coherence. "The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing" because the number of people living with HIV is increasing. An example of functional coherence in the text is where the proposition that the first AIDS case was recorded in 1985 in Turkey, is followed by another proposition, which asserts the number of patients today. And the sentence "Experts, who assert that especially in the last years, the number of disease carrying people has shown 50-60 percent increase in a year, emphasize the importance of educating the people about how the disease is transmitted" shows referential coherence. It refers to the importance of education in order to prevent any further increase in the number of HIV positive people.

3. Choice of words

According to van Dijk (1988a), the choice of words is associated with the style of discourse. The words chosen for the headline, for instance, incorporate certain

values. The meaning that AIDS is dangerous is implied in the headline, which in turn confirms the belief that people living with HIV are dangerous, as well. And now, according to the headline of the news, this danger is increasing. In other words, the headline strengthens beliefs and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS that already exist in society. The same perspective applies when the phrase “one of the scariest diseases of the last 50 years” is used to refer to AIDS.

There are also examples of misused terminology in the text. For example, there is no such thing as “HIV microbe” or “germ”. It is a virus; therefore just using the term HIV is sufficient. Moreover, the use of the phrase “AIDS patient” should be avoided in general. It can only be used in a medical context because the term implies that the individual is powerless, with no control over his or her life. The preferred term is HIV positive or person living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2015). Another problematic issue in the text is using the abbreviations HIV and AIDs interchangeably. However, this is an issue that requires attention firstly because most people with HIV do not have AIDS; secondly, AIDS is not an infectious agent; and finally, AIDS describes a syndrome of opportunistic infections and diseases that can develop as immunosuppression deepens along the continuum of HIV infection. All of these misused terms create misinformation, which in turn cultivates negative attitudes toward people living with HIV.

4. Rhetoric

Several rhetorical features are used in the news as persuasive content, including sources (UNAIDS Report), quotations (Prof. Dr. Fehmi Tabak and Prof. Dr. Fadile Yıldız), and numbers (statistics, percentages and numbers of people living with HIV). All of these emphasize the factual nature of the event.

4.1.2. Overall Analysis

It is possible to make an overall analysis on the basis of categories of news discourse proposed by van Dijk, which can provide a better understanding of how and to what extent online news produces, reproduces and promotes hate speech.

Before going any further with findings of discourse analysis, general findings in terms of content can be provided. As mentioned above, there are 46 news items included in the analysis. 32 of them are in Hürriyet online, 8 of them are in Mynet news and 6 of them are in CNNTürk online. Regarding the dates of news, it can be seen that 15 of them are published between 30.11.2016 – 03.12.2016, which coincides with 1st of December, World AIDS Day. There is no other clustering observed in terms of date. In terms of news sources, 22 of the news are taken from news agencies, including DHA, İHA and AA.

When the news segments are analyzed, under which the news items are presented, the results vary. For Cnntürk Online, 4 news items take place under Health segment, 1 under World and 1 under Turkey. In Mynet News, 4 news items are presented in World segment, 2 in Life segment, 1 in Current Events and 1 in Health segment. As for Hürriyet online, 9 news items are presented as Local News; another 9 is presented in World segment; 1 in Technology segment; 4 in Current Events segment; and 9 news items take place under Health segment.

From a technological perspective, an overall evaluation of the news websites included in the sample can be made, as well. The features related to the presentation of news included in this study are multimediality, hypertextuality and interactivity. Other features, such as nonlinearity, customization and personalization are related to general use of news websites, rather than to particular consumption of news.

To begin with, it is argued that the Internet offers the feature of multimediality for online news (Kawamoto, 2003; Fenton, 2010). When the news sites included in the sample are analyzed in terms of their technical features, it is seen that the multimedia feature is not used very often. Most of the news consists of photographs and text; 3 of them include a video related to news, and 2 of them are designed as photo gallery, where the user flips through pages of photographs by clicking on the 'next sign' to read the news. Multimedia can be used to tell a story with the combination of different media; however, the news analyzed in this study does not use this feature. As Steensen (2011) argues, journalists are not certain of how to use multimedia and its use does not change the way news are presented online. However,

it should be noted that multimedia features are used for commercial purposes, where an advertorial video pops up on almost every page.

The same situation can be applied to hypertextuality. In accordance with Steensen's (2011) findings, hypertextuality is only used as links to other stories on the website, which are not related to news under analysis. Similar to multimedia feature, hypertextuality is used to give links to commercial websites as advertisements. Regarding interactivity, all of the analyzed news pages only offer section of comments of the users. This feature can be used by signing up to the website. As Steensen argues (2011), interactivity feature of online news makes room for mostly comment sections; however it does not include the selection or editing of stories. Moreover, the comment feature is used in only 13 news pages, which reveals that in the case of analyzed news about HIV and AIDS, commenting rates are rather low. The content of the comments is not included in the analysis due to the limitations of the study. Regarding these evaluations, it is important to underline that the findings presented here do not apply to the overall news sites, but only to news pages that are analyzed in this study.

4.1.3. Hate Speech Against People Living with HIV in Online News

Hate speech refers to all types of expression popularizing, promoting, defending or justifying hate which results from intolerance and is fed by prejudices (Binark and Çomu, 2012). It expresses "discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and/or prejudicial attitudes" (Cohen Almagor, 2011:2). Target groups are intended to be injured, dehumanized, harassed, intimidated, debased, degraded and victimized by hate speech; and insensitivity and brutality against them are encouraged. Similarly, Göregenli (2013b) defines hate speech as an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which represents a systemic hierarchy among groups of a society.

When media content includes hate speech, it serves to suppress the variety of ideas in a society. And ideologies that are endorsed through the discourse of media influence social representations of attitudes, ideas and beliefs toward certain groups on an individual level. It can be argued that news in media, in particular, mediates

concepts and values of the dominant ideology by constructing discourse; and it contributes to the production of intolerance, bias and even hatred towards groups that are 'marginalized' in society by being a reference point for "social representations" (Moscovici, 1988:222).

In addition, media has an important role in reinforcing already existing discrimination and hate speech in a society. Especially news plays this part because they are considered as the representation of real life and therefore more reliable (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988a). It is much more likely for stereotypes and prejudices about certain groups to turn into knowledge and judgment if they are represented in the news compared to any other media tool because as mentioned above, news are considered to reflect real life (Çınar, 2013).

Even though media representations do not directly cause physical or emotional damage on the basis of discrimination, they may actually lay the ground for them. Moreover, discrimination in media may reach large masses because of fast and extensive circulation. In general, discrimination on media is related to the lack of representation, under representation or misrepresentation, and stereotyping certain groups. As Çelenk (2010) indicates, media may discriminate disadvantaged groups by ignoring them, by providing limited representation, and by stereotyping them on the basis of prejudices.

This role of media also applies to people living with HIV. According to Visser et al. (2006), news about HIV/AIDS and their style contributes to socially constructed stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV. In other words, news content may reinforce social stigmas. When the representation of HIV positive people in news is evaluated (Yegen, 2014), it is seen that AIDS is described as an untreatable disease; HIV positive people are pictured as dangerous; and on the basis of this, they are marginalized. By creating stereotypes and images of 'dying people', news media promotes and reinforces already existing prejudices in society.

When online news about HIV and AIDS is examined, the situation does not seem to be different. In order to elaborate, online news included in the sample can be

evaluated in terms of hate speech. In this regard, salient examples are given for each category of news structure proposed by van Dijk. In doing so, it should be remembered that hate speech can be concealed in expressions, which may seem rational and normal at first; and it "does not necessarily manifest itself through expressions of hatred and emotion" (Weber, 2009:5).

According to van Dijk, (1988a), thematic organization of news plays a crucial role because it constitutes the theme or topic of text. Topics are usually expressed and signaled by headlines, and together with the lead, they provide a summary of the news text. For this reason, hate speech in headline or lead of news requires careful consideration.

Examined news items reveal that there are certain headlines and leads that summarize the increase of HIV positive people. As mentioned above, people living with HIV already constitutes a group, which is perceived as dangerous and threatening by society. When news topics assert that "Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey" (2016); "The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing" (2016); and "AIDS has officially exploded" (Aydın, 2016), the fear in society regarding HIV and AIDS is cultivated. In this regard, one of the headlines actually includes the word "daunting" ("Daunting numbers for AIDS in Turkey," 2016).

Moreover, some of the topics introduced by headline and lead are related to criminal acts. Examples of this sort of headlines include "Prostitution operation in Aydın: 2 people diagnosed with HIV virus" (2016); "Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS" (2016); "Assertion "priest with AIDS who raped 30 children is found innocent" is denied in Mexico" (2016); and "Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS" (2016). Establishing a relationship between HIV/AIDS and crimes describes people living with HIV as criminals, and in turn, creates disapproving and antagonistic attitudes.

Other salient examples include a direct relationship between AIDS and death. In one of the news, AIDS is framed as a 'murderer' by asking the question "Did AIDS kill Prince?" (2016). This approach reinforces the perception of AIDS as an untreatable and threatening disease. This type of relationship can also be found in

news item titled "14 people die everyday in that country" (2016) and "Everyday in Kenya, 14 people die because of AIDS" (2016). Making this description of 'dying people' may cause HIV positive people to be shunned in society. There is another ideological perspective in these news items. As Göregenli (2013b) mentions, hate speech is based on an ideology of exclusion, which represent a systemic hierarchy among groups of society. News about Kenya is an example of this perspective. It can be said that establishing a connection between AIDS and Kenya reproduces prejudices both for HIV positive people and for the country Kenya, due to the fact that they both represent lower groups in social hierarchy. The same reasoning applies to news titled "Serious increase of HIV cases in Kenya" (2016), and "AIDS epidemic in Cambodia" (2016).

Overall, thematic structures of news are observed to be promoting and justifying hate by describing them as an increasing threat; by making a connection with criminal acts; by creating an image of 'dying people' that needs to be shunned; and by reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

Schematic structure of news discourse refer to discourse categories of main event, consequences, background and context, which constitute the circumstance of news; and verbal reactions and comments, which constitute the evaluation of news. In general, news schema determines the overall ordering of topics in the text and it is used to effectively express information in a news discourse.

According to van Dijk (1988a:41), "news events necessarily embody a point of view, and so does their description in a news discourse." This is why examination of schematic structures becomes important in terms of hate speech. The news article titled "Deaths caused by AIDS is decreasing in the world" (2016) provides an example of this. Although the headline asserts that deaths due to AIDS are lower in number, the main event presented in the news is different. The main event is actually the increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey. In the text, it is emphasized that even though the world numbers are decreasing, the numbers for Turkey are on the rise. In this regard, it can be said that the context of news is presented in the headline instead of the main event. This contrast presented in the

news can be interpreted as an intention to create awareness for the subject matter; however, it causes HIV/AIDS to be perceived as a threat in Turkey.

In another example, “Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS” (2016) news is not actually about two HIV positive sex workers but a police operation for sex trafficking. In this sense, a consequence in the news is presented as the main event in headline. This decision of the news producer can be explained by the influence of fundamental news values such as negativity, unusualness and unexpectedness (van Dijk, 1988a). Using ‘the most negative’ consequence as the headline signals the point of view of the news discourse.

A similar finding is revealed when two news about the same event are analyzed. One of them is in Hürriyet online and the other one in CNNTürk online. Both news present the Prevention of Transmitted Diseases Association’s event, where they hand out preservatives and leaflets on World AIDS Day. The news in Hürriyet is titled “Distributed preservatives on World AIDS Day.” The one in CNNTürk, on the other hand, is titled “Distributed preservatives in İzmir, those ashamed did not accept.” Both in the headline and the text, the first news emphasizes the event and World AIDS Day, whereas the other focuses on a consequence of the event. And by doing so, it debases and degrades the issue of HIV/AIDS in general.

Verbal reactions category, which is used very often in analyzed news, is a category signaled by names and the roles of news participants and by direct or indirect quotes. According to van Dijk (1988a:56), the use of verbal reactions “allows journalists to formulate opinions that are not necessarily their own, but which nevertheless are objective because they have been stated.” However, the selection of speaker and quotations reflects journalists’ and newspapers’ decisions. Moreover, the category of comment involves opinions, expectations and evaluations of newsmakers, which can be found in the news in an indirect manner. Both verbal reaction and comment categories are thought to represent the ideology of news discourse.

One salient finding in this regard is that all of the news that included verbal reaction category uses quotations of experts, NGO workers and mostly doctors.

Furthermore, most of the factual information is given through verbal reactions. For example, the news “The biggest prejudice: “Don’t touch him, he has AIDS” (2016) only consists of statements of Prof. Dr. Füsun Terzioğlu, the Dean of Health Sciences Faculty, Istinye University, where she shares information about ways of infection, treatment and stigmatization of people living with HIV. In a similar way, the news “AIDS is becoming chronic” (2016) presents all of the information on the basis of statements by Prof. Dr. Önder Ergönül, who is the Head of Turkish Clinical Microbiology and Infection Diseases Association.

When verbal reactions are used in news discourse, they formulate opinions and they increase persuasiveness of the news. Because of this role of verbal reactions, using them as commentary is a sensitive issue. In order to elaborate, a statement can be examined from the news “The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing” (2016), which includes statements of the Head of HIV Infection Association Prof. Dr. Fehmi Tabak.

> *Prof. Dr. Tabak, who points out that the number of people catching AIDS through homosexual relationships is increasing in Turkey, asserts “It seems that the diminish in disease’s fatal characteristic and the threat to normal life expectancy weaken the prevention methods. Unfortunately, people are not as scared of AIDS as they used to be.”*

This assertion is clearly not a scientific statement. It involves the opinion of the speaker; however, due to the fact that it is given as a quotation and it belongs to an expert, it may cause the formation of attitudes and beliefs about HIV and AIDS.

What is more prominent about verbal reactions and comments is that none of the analyzed news includes opinions or reactions of people living with HIV, which can be interpreted as HIV positive people’s exclusion and marginalization by news discourse. The idea that news discourse represents the dominant ideology is apparent in this regard. No matter what the topic is, whether a criminal act, medical developments or awareness campaigns, the main subject of the news - person living with HIV - is not included.

Regarding syntactic analysis, it is observed that while giving information about the increase or decrease in the number of HIV positive people, passive sentence structure is adopted. They are presented not as humans but only content of information. It can be said that speaking of people living with HIV in an indirect manner and reducing them to numbers and statistics is dehumanizing.

In addition, the sentences that have active structure either include quotation of experts, such as " Prof. Dr. Tabak says that there is 36 million people with HIV in the world" ("The aim at HIV is 90-90-90", 2016) or present the agent of the sentence as HIV or AIDS. Some distinct examples can be found in the same news item aforementioned: "Since it first emerged in 1980, HIV infected nearly 78 million people;" "HIV/AIDS is now a treatable disease;" and "As long as the medicine are taken, the disease stays chronic." In this sense, the agent or subject of these sentences is either the virus or the "disease" but not the people. Overall, by using passive sentence structures and not mentioning HIV positive people as the agent news actor, the news discourse reproduces their position as the "other", where they are pictured as a "threat," "danger" or "risk" for the constructed "us".

According to van Dijk (1988a:81), "the use of active and passive sentences, and the agent or subject position of news actors in sentences reveals much about the newspaper's implicit stance towards these news actors." On the basis of this, it can be said that people living with HIV are treated as mere content of information instead of news actors. They are not subjects themselves but only the topics of news discourse. And this, just as it is argued in the category of verbal reactions, can be interpreted as reinforcing the distintion between "us" and "them", marginalizing HIV positive people and ignoring them as a constituent of the society.

Examining the local coherence of news discourse enables understanding the implicit assumptions and beliefs of the speaker. Moreover, local coherence between propositions make sense only if they both match the topic of the news and if they are consistent with the knowledge or belief of the listener. In other words, "local coherence is established relative to the current topic and knowledge or beliefs of the speech partners" (van Dijk, 1988a:62). In this regard, every coherence strategy used

in the analyzed news corresponds to existing beliefs, attitudes and knowledge in society.

For instance, in the news titled “14 people die everyday in that country” (2016) propositions and sentences cohere locally mostly in a referential way. After saying that three quarters of the population is under the age of 30, the news continues with UN 2015 AIDS report, which includes that there are 100 thousand children living with HIV in the age group of 0-14. It can be said that these two sequential sentences locally cohere by completing each other and they are also coherent with the topic of the news, which involves the high rate of diagnosis and deaths in Kenya on the basis of HIV/AIDS. But more importantly, these propositions are coherent based on the assumption that the reader already has a belief or knowledge about the situation of HIV or AIDS in Africa. In this way, the news item confirms the already existing prejudicial attitude in society that HIV/AIDS in Africa is common; and reproduces it as knowledge by presenting numbers and reports.

As for choice of words in news discourse, it may refer to the degree of formality, the group-based or institutional embedding of discourse, and the attitudes and hence ideologies of the speaker. Choice of words is often associated with the style of discourse, but it is also controlled by rhetorical strategies. Regarding the word choice in the analyzed news items, there are two important findings about hate speech and its constituents. First of all, there are words that promote and popularize certain prejudicial attitudes. Some examples include associating HIV/AIDS with death, emphasizing it as a threat or danger, underlining the increasing numbers, and describing HIV positive people as criminals.

The sentence “every year, 2 million people catches HIV virus, 1,1 million people loses their lives because of AIDS” (“Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey,” 2016), is both associating HIV with death and emphasizing increasing numbers. Other examples of word choice include different variations of dangerous, scary, daunting, risky and alarming. It can be seen that the analyzed news items usually feel the need to “warn” the society about HIV or AIDS. It may be interpreted as an intention to raise awareness about the subject matter; however all it does is contributing to the stigmatization of people living with HIV.

As the second important finding about word choice, the use of wrong terminology shows the negligence of journalists and newspapers; which in turn explains that the issues related to HIV/AIDS are not considered to be very important. In this regard, one paragraph from "AIDS is no longer fatal" (2016) can be given as an example:

> *By emphasizing that not every patient who catches HIV microbe will become an AIDS patient, Specialist Dr. Sema Karaoğlu mentions "AIDS is a disease which completely blocks our immune system. When a person catches this disease, even a tiny microbe may make him/her face consequences that can end in death. That is to say if a person infected with HIV virus becomes AIDS, the disease may come to a fatal state because his/her immune system will not work. A very simple fungal infection, influenza or urinary system infection may drag the person to death.*

Besides the many words and phrases in the paragraph that may cause panic in society such as "completely blocks our immune system," "consequences that can end in death," "a fatal state" and "drag the person to death;" the improper use of terminology stands out, as well[10]. To begin with, HIV is not a microbe but a virus. Calling it a microbe is medically wrong. Another improper phrase is "catching HIV or AIDS." HIV is not something to be caught; it is an infection. Referring to it as catching a cold may be diminishing for people living with HIV. Also, referring to AIDS as a disease is complicated because AIDS describes a clinical syndrome of opportunistic infections and diseases that can develop as immunosuppression deepens along the continuum of HIV infection. In this direction, AIDS is also not something that people become but develop. It is an epidemiological definition based on clinical signs and symptoms. And finally, although AIDS remains a serious health condition, labeling it as deadly and incurable may create fear and increase stigmatization and discrimination.

From a general perspective, the effectiveness of news is based on persuasiveness. In this sense, rhetoric is used in news discourse in order to persuade

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[10] For a full list of preferred terminology, see UNAIDS (2015). *UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines*.

readers of its factuality. The strategies of rhetoric in news discourse are derived from the goals and intended effects of communication; and they partly depend on the inherent news value system that underlies news production, which include attention for the negative, the sensational, sex, and violence (van Dijk, 1988a). Overall, rhetorical strategies used in analyzed news items include emphasizing the factual nature of events through descriptions, eyewitness reports, reliable sources, exact numbers and direct quotes; building a strong relational structure for facts through using background, context and consequences; and provide information with attitudinal and emotional dimensions.

As an overall evaluation, it cannot be said that the analyzed news items contain explicit hate speech; however, both in macro and micro level, the news discourse promotes and reinforces stigmatization and marginalization. Most of the news describes issues related to HIV/AIDS as threatening; and in doing so, they implicitly construct the meaning that "they" are threatening for "us". In addition, not using any verbal reaction that belongs to HIV positive people and not referring to them as agent news actors also confirms the distinction of "us" and "others". In other words, the news items present facts and information about "others" for "us". And the fact that there are limited number of news, especially in CNNTürk and Mynet, supports this marginalization.

It should be remembered that language shapes beliefs and may influence behaviors. As Binark and Çomu (2012) mentions, "stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are different from the identities constructed as 'us/someone like us' all play a role in the formation of hate speech." Rhetorical features strengthen the existing beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, which are mostly based on misconceptions and incorrect information. And this becomes the most prominent reason for stigmatizing people living with HIV. Stigmatization is basically linking a person to undesirable characteristics on the basis of certain attributes. Stigma can be defined as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" which reduces "a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963:3). Regarding stigmatization of people living with HIV, there are certain constituents: it is a life threatening disease; people are afraid of AIDS; AIDS is thought to be related to homosexual relationships, relationship with sex workers,

relationship with multiple partners, and intravenous drug use; and people living with HIV are perceived to be facing the consequences of their moral choices (Singh et al., 2002 cited in Oran and Şenuzun, 2008). Not all of these constituents can explicitly be found in the analyzed news; however, they are mediated through news discourse.

In a conceptualization of the term, it can be asserted that stigma exists when five interrelated components converge. The first one is distinguishing and labeling human differences. For people living with HIV, it can be said that they are labeled because of their health condition. The second is linking labeled people to negative stereotypes by dominant cultural beliefs. These negative stereotypes involve misconceptions and incorrect information about HIV/AIDS, which describe HIV positive people as a threat. The third component is the separation of 'us' from 'them' by placing labeled people in distinct categories. This distinction is constructed through the implicit meaning that "they" are threatening for "us." In the fourth component, labeled people experience discrimination and status loss. This can be observed in the analyzed news where HIV positive people are not taken as agents but mere topics. And the last component is about access to social, economic and political power, which allows all the other components to unfold. This last component is explored in the second stage of analysis, where the role of online news in democracy is examined in the context of hate speech.

4.2. Analysis of In-Depth Interviews

This section of the thesis presents the findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with 10 HIV positive people regarding their use of online news. The collected data is analyzed through coding and generating categories on the basis of the research framework. For coding frames and categories generated during analysis, see Appendix C. The findings are presented in a manner that corresponds to the research framework introduced in the methodology chapter, which include patterns of news consumption, access, patterns of participation, content production, and democratic implications. In addition, findings about hate speech in online news are shared with theoretical implications. It should me mentioned that, respondents' identities are kept confidential due to both the sensitivity of the issue and

respondents' requests to remain anonymous. For the transcriptions of interviews, see Appendix D.

4.2.1. Patterns of News Consumption

In order to understand whether respondents are news consumers, they are asked if they follow the news. All of the respondents said that they do so; although some of them mention that they rarely read the news and others on a regular basis. All of the respondents said that they use the Internet for reading the news while only two of them also use TV as a news source. Interestingly, none of them purchases print newspapers. Even tough the Internet is used among respondents for news consumption, their choice of online news sources vary. These online news sources include newspaper websites, foreign websites, minority news sites, LGBT associations' websites and social media. In terms of social media use for news consumption, applications of Facebook and Twitter stand out through out the interviews. Regarding the tool used for reaching online news, all of the respondents either use their computers, smart phones, or both. One of the respondents explains their preferred tool for news access as follows:

> *I usually read the news from my computer. Only if I need to get news on an urgent matter, then I use my phone. Other than that, I don't have the habit of reading news regularly on my phone (Respondent 7).*

In a similar way, most of the respondents mention that they use a combination of computers and smart phones depending on where they read the news such as work place or home. Moreover, their choice also depends on what they read. For instance, if it is news about daily events, they may prefer their mobile phones, whereas for reading about an extensive subject, which includes searching for information on the Internet, they prefer using their computers.

When it comes to the news sources used by respondents, most of them mention the names of websites that are online versions of mainstream news organizations. These include websites of Cumhuriyet, CNN, Hürriyet, NTV, HaberTürk, Sözcü, Sabah, Milliyet; and one respondent claims that they visit the websites of BBC and

The Guardian for foreign news. There are only two news websites that do not take place in print and broadcast media, namely Mynet News and Son Dakika, which are online-only news sources.

Regarding news sources for HIV and AIDS, none of the respondents use or consider online news sites as a source of information. It is explained that in order to get news about HIV/AIDS, they visit foreign news sites, various associations' websites, namely Pozitif Living Association, PozitifİZ and Red Ribbon Istanbul, and other foreign websites that just share information and news about HIV/AIDS, including thebuddy.com, cause.com, and aidsmap.com. As another source of information, respondents say that they use closed Facebook groups, which consist of HIV positive individuals sharing news, information, and experiences. The reason for not using online news sites as a news source for HIV/AIDS is explained on the basis of the quality and sufficiency of news content. One respondent's statement is explanatory in this regard:

> *There are a couple of English websites that I follow for following the developments in the field of AIDS. There is not much on the Turkish websites anyway. The news items on these sites are usually like "5 women were caught in Aksaray, and 2 of them have AIDS" (Respondent 1).*

In this direction, it can be said that respondents do not prefer online news sites as a news source for HIV/AIDS due to insufficient news content. The subject of sufficiency will be elaborated at length later on in this chapter. Overall, online environment does provide a medium for news consumption; but the use of online news sites is mostly limited to consuming news about daily and current events.

As explained above, the finding that online news sites used by respondents are mostly mainstream media's online versions is in line with the research on the subject matter (Thorson, 2008; Newman et al. 2016; Newman et al., 2017); however certain opportunities that the Internet offers for news media are also used frequently when it comes to news about HIV/AIDS. First of all, as many of the respondents mention, they can find information about HIV/AIDS in associations' websites and foreign news sites. This shows that online environment provides an easy access opportunity.

A person living with HIV can reach news about their status through the Internet in a fast and easy manner, which would have been more difficult and time consuming to do in print media. For instance, one respondent explains that after reading about a new vaccine developed in Armenia, they put together all news from different websites about the development and shared with friends (Respondent 6). Doing this could be much more difficult, if not impossible, without the use of the Internet. In this regard, it can be argued that the amount of news coverage increases and geographical limitations are eliminated because of the use of online news sites. This can be explained with Fenton's (2010) views that the Internet offers more space for news compared to hard copy and it increases news' possible geographical reach.

Moreover, respondents use interactivity and hypertextuality features of the Internet when consuming news. Examples of this include searching for news in search engines and search tools embedded in news sites; using Google Alerts, which is basically an Internet monitoring tool that sends emails when a predefined keyword appears somewhere new on the web; subscribing for newsletters, which consist of recent developments and news; and using Facebook groups both for following the news and interacting with each other. One of the respondents mention that they do not follow the news from news institutions but from Facebook groups:

> *I do not follow the news very much. I read them only if I come across one […] I usually find them on social media. There are groups about HIV on Facebook. I follow the news from there. I am a member of 2-3 groups (Respondent 5).*

These findings support the studies conducted by Boczkowski (2004) and Thorson, 2008), where it is argued that online news consumption assigns a more active role to audiences and the online environment provides a decentralized network. In this direction, it can be seen that instead of settling for what online news sites offer them, the respondents undertake an active role in order to access news regarding HIV/AIDS.

Findings about the patterns of news consumption show that HIV positive people use online sources for finding information about HIV/AIDS. Different news sources for people living with HIV include websites of associations that publish

information about HIV, foreign websites, and Facebook groups. In addition, the application of Google Alert is used to follow news that takes place on the Internet. It is interesting that online news sites in Turkey or Turkish news sites are not considered as a source of news regarding HIV/AIDS. This is based on the fact that Turkish news sites do not provide sufficient information about the subject matter.

Although the online news sites, especially Turkish ones, are not used in accessing news about HIV/AIDS, other opportunities that the Internet provides benefit HIV positive people in terms of news consumption. The Internet is thought to offer faster access to more information and improved search functions (Tambini, 1999). The findings of this study coincide with this view because HIV positive people get their news through foreign websites, social media applications, and associations' websites. This can be observed as an example of opportunity for easy access, where news about HIV/AIDS can be found on the Internet without much of an effort. Moreover, the use of Google Alerts and subscription to newsletters of news sites can be given as examples of easy access. In this way, features of the Internet are used in order to consume news about HIV/AIDS.

4.2.2. Access

In order for online news to have a role in democracy, access to online news becomes a necessity because democracy requires equal and open access to different information sources. In this sense, access to online news assumes different meanings. The first one is related to its literal meaning where it offers convenience in terms of cost and time. The second one concerns elimination of geographical limitations. The third meaning regards the amount and quality of information that is open to access. And the last one refers to any restrictions or regulations implemented on access to online news.

To begin with, respondents claim that they can easily access online news. As mentioned in the findings about news consumption, all of them use the Internet to consume news. When they cannot find information about HIV/AIDS in online news sites, they use other means to access information, such as foreign news sites, associations' websites, search engines, and social media. The application of Google

Alerts is also used in order to receive news that is harder to find on their own. This type of use of the Internet shows that respondents actively seek news about HIV/AIDS, which corresponds to the opportunity the online environment provides for access. In terms of convenience, it can be argued that online news is easier to access in terms of both time and costs. As respondents explain, they can reach information about HIV/AIDS by just using their mobile phones or computers.

This also applies to geographical limitations. Respondents explain that they use foreign sites, both news sites and other sites that provide information about HIV/AIDS, in order to access news. The use of Google Alerts is also an example for this, where it enables respondents to receive news about HIV/AIDS that exists on the Internet. In this regard, it can be argued that the Internet in general and online news in specific enable respondents to seek information easily and without limitations.

Moreover, respondents claim that they do not experience any kind of restrictions or legal regulations in terms of access. According to respondents, everyone has open access to news about HIV/AIDS due to the widespread use of the Internet and smart phones. One respondent, however, compares the ability to access news and the intention to access news:

> *There is access to the Internet but not everybody wants to access news. It's not that they can't access but rather they don't. There are a lot of people who doesn't care. They don't read the news because their use of the Internet is very different (Respondent 3).*

On this manner, respondents' perspectives can be interpreted as there is no apparent problem with accessing online news about HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, being accessible is not sufficient for online news to play an essential part in democracy. The information online news present should also be reliable and valid. In this regard, most of the respondents assert that there are news items they can access but their amount and content is insufficient. This is an issue related to both quantity and quality of news items.

When asked whether they find sufficient amount of news online, respondents either mention that there should be more news covering the issues related to HIV/AIDS or that there are news but they lack useful information. In this regard, one respondent asserts:

> *I think there could be more news about HIV. About treatment, about developments… It is always news on an event about HIV/AIDS. Instead of this, it would be better if there were more news that would be beneficial for us (Respondent 7).*

While mentioning the insufficient amount of news about HIV/AIDS, respondents explain that this applies to Turkish news sites. According to them, these news items are insufficient, their content is limited, and they make connotations to various notions. In order to understand how respondents perceive news content, see Table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Perception of News Content

Description of news content	News content	Associations/Connotations
Insufficient	World AIDS Day	Prostitution
Incorrect	Number of patients	Fatal disease
Twisted	Doctor statements	Contagious disease
Untrustworthy	Events	Gay disease
Annoying	Crimes	Sexually transmitted disease
Sensational		Intercourse with monkeys
Not useful		Social morality

As respondents perceive, the content of news that take place in Turkish sites mostly include World AIDS Day, numbers of patients, doctor statements, events, and crimes. This type of content is described by respondents as insufficient, incorrect, twisted, untrustworthy, annoying, sensational, and useless. In this sense, it can be seen that respondents not only find news content insufficient but also are bothered by it. Another point that bothers them involves associating HIV with different notions. Accordingly, HIV is associated with prostitution, homosexuality, and social morality; and it is described as a disease that is fatal, contagious, and sexually transmitted. One of the respondents' statements are explanatory in this sense:

> *I'm a university graduate. I think I know a lot and read a lot but it turns out that I knew nothing until I was diagnosed. First of all, I learned that my point of view was completely wrong. I think this is because HIV is associated with different things on the basis of social morality. After being diagnosed, we call it diagnosis, not disease; and I really understood why. Reality and the things we learn from media are very different. That is why I can say that news are definitely insufficient, blocked, not shown, and not shared (Respondent 9).*

This perspective reflects insufficiency in terms of both quantity and quality of news presented about HIV/AIDS. There are a limited number of news items on the subject matter and they do not provide useful information. Finding reliable and valid information requires a more active role in consuming news.

Overall, findings are consistent with the idea that the Internet offers literally more space for news compared to hardcopy news and it eliminates geographical limitations (Fenton, 2010). Moreover, there are multiple sources of information regarding HIV/AIDS; however, multiplicity does not indicate diversity and although the availability of space enables producing various content, it does not imply that this large amount of information will be of good quality. According to van Dijk (2012), accessible, reliable and valid information is required for a healthy democracy; nevertheless, the findings of this study show that accessibility does not entail reliable and valid news. In other words, there are news regarding HIV/AIDS, however, their content is either problematic or insufficient for HIV positive people. Given the fact that people get their information about HIV/AIDS mostly from the news, insufficient news content actually may misinform citizens about the subject matter.

Analyzing the findings about access to online news points to another finding that coincides with the assertion that digital media increases information inequality (van Dijk, 2012). This derivative finding is based on the claims of respondents that they actively seek information about HIV/AIDS in various websites and that they can find news in foreign news sites. In this respect, it can be said that online information liberates citizens from content that traditional media offers; however this liberalization is only partial because choosing the necessary information requires certain level of experience and education and citizens who lack these skills are not

able to enjoy the opportunities the online environment presents. For instance, a person living with HIV cannot receive e-mails that contain news about HIV/AIDS from all around the world if he or she does not know how to use Google Alerts. Another important point about this is that only people who speaks or understands other languages can seek information in news in a foreign language. This also supports the idea that online environment causes information inequality where HIV positive people who only speaks Turkish are required to content themselves with only Turkish news sites. Although some of the respondents mention that they try to make translation and disseminate them in order to overcome this problem, its effectiveness and reach is debatable.

4.2.3. Patterns of Participation

The active role of audience that the online environment provides is based on users' capacity to participate. It is argued that by using online news sites, users can control what news they consume, become a part of news production process and interact with other users. This involvement of users in news consumption and production is evaluated as a feature that breaks down the barriers between audience and producer of news. In this regard, respondents' choices of news sources are examined in addition to their participation behavior in online news sites.

One manner of participation that most respondents mention is related to finding sources of information for HIV/AIDS. As mentioned above, none of the respondents consider online news sites as a source where they can find sufficient information on HIV/AIDS. On the basis of this, they undertake an active role in order to access news related to their health status. In this direction, different methods adopted by respondents include visiting foreign websites, reading associations' websites, subscribing for newsletters of websites where they can find information, using the application Google Alerts through which they receive e-mails containing news about HIV and AIDS, using search engines in order to find news items, becoming members of Facebook groups which allow interaction between users, and following Twitter accounts of institutions and associations that provide information about HIV and AIDS. A statement of a respondent can be given as an example:

I receive all of the news about HIV and AIDS in my e-mail through Google Alerts. This way, I see at least two-three news items that appear in online media everyday (Respondent 1).

In this sense, it can be said that respondents actively seek information online that is not given to them through news sites. Interestingly, respondents do not consider this as a type of participation in the online environment, but only as a way of consuming news. When asked about their participation habits, the common response appears to be related to comments in news sites. Although participation levels vary for respondents, most of them state that they use the feature of commenting offered by online news sites.

The different reasons for leaving a comment can be listed as negative reporting, incorrect information, incorrect use of terminology, violation of rights, correcting what is considered to be wrong, answering another comment, satisfaction, and mockery. However, respondents who leave a comment under news items explain that they do not do so exclusively for news about HIV/AIDS. One respondent says:

I write comments about all kinds of news. I can write a comment both for tabloid news and technology news. But these days, I specifically leave comments on news about violence. I have written some solid comments under news on violence. I do not know how much they are being read but I satisfy myself (Respondent 6).

When it comes to commenting on news about HIV/AIDS, respondents explain that they usually feel the need to leave a comment in online news sites where there is incorrect information, inappropriate use of terminology and violation of certain rights. This need is driven by the aim of correcting news content that is considered to be wrong by the respondents. The reason for leaving a comment can be summarized to be sharing more accurate information about HIV/AIDS because participation through comments is only used for news that is considered to be negative and incorrect in some way, and none of the respondents claim that they comment on positive or accurate news.

Other types of participation mentioned during the interviews include e-mails and surveys. Few of the respondents claim to send e-mails to news editors for the same reasons as leaving a comment. For participating in surveys, some of the respondents mention that they use surveys in order to state their opinions on a subject matter that they care about; however, none of them remembers taking a survey about HIV/AIDS.

Another finding about participation patterns of respondents involves the possible consequences of this participation. There are two different perspectives on this issue. The first one is action-based, where respondents find some benefit in participating. For example, some respondents claim that after sending e-mails to news editors, they got the news item removed from the website. Others try to correct wrong information and misused terminology by leaving a comment on news sites, which is considered to be instructive both for journalists and other users. In other words, respondents who live with HIV try to educate people about their status. This kind of participation can be explained as taking action in order to make a change. The second perspective, on the other hand, is based on the thought that participating in news sites is insignificant and exhausting. One of the respondent's statements is summarizing in this sense:

> *I don't feel the need to comment because I see very speculative comments under news items, and I choose not to be a part of these exhausting processes. If there is any information I can take personally, I take it and move on or I evaluate different perspectives there in my own way (Respondent 4).*

This may signal a state of exhaustion, but this subject is beyond the scope of this research. In this perspective, it can be said that some of the respondents consider participating through comments as insignificant or unnecessary. However, as other respondents explain, through participation, they can make a difference. When asked about the participation of other users in online news sites, the common response is about comments of others. In terms of evaluating these comments, respondents either mention negative characteristics or adopt a neutral attitude. Different words that the respondents use to define participation by others can be seen in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Participation of Other Users

Negative characteristics	Neutral attitude
Comments ➢ Cruel ➢ Stigmatizing ➢ Speculative ➢ Insulting ➢ Defaming ➢ Hurtful ➢ Negative Language ➢ Targeting ➢ Accusing ➢ Discriminating ➢ Marginalizing Discourse ➢ Based on anger ➢ Based on violence Violation of rights Prejudice	Freedom of thought Usual Common Normal Indifferent

Different words to describe comments of other users in online news sites include negative, cruel, hurtful, and speculative; and according to respondents, they can be stigmatizing, insulting and defaming. Similar evaluation is made for the language used by others, which is targeting, accusing, discriminating and marginalizing. Respondents also mention that some comments are in violation of rights, especially the ones that include defamation, and they are prejudicial. One of the respondents states their opinion in an extensive manner:

> *Whatever the topic is, it makes me very uncomfortable to see that people who make comments constantly prefer a language that is targeting, accusing, discriminating and marginalizing for any group in society, any community or any individual because of their HIV, their gender, their sexual orientation or their political stand. I find it very out of line that people make judgments about lives of humans with such big prejudices and I describe it as a violation of human rights (Respondent 4).*

Most of the respondents' description of other users' participation on online news sites is similar to each other. The word 'negative' covers the perceived

characteristics of comments made by others. In addition, some respondents mention that they do not want to read the comments beneath online news because it is tiring and exhausting for them to see such negative opinions and statements. Few of the respondents, however, state that these negative comments are common and usual and that they have become indifferent to the subject matter. In this sense, one of the respondents explain their views as follows:

> *I do not read comments on purpose, but I still look at them; and of course there are things that bother me but I think it is very natural because not everyone has to think the same way. Frankly, I find it normal (Respondent 9).*

This state of being indifferent to negative comments should not be interpreted as respondents are not affected by them, but rather as they are getting accustomed to the fact that other people make negative comments about HIV and AIDS. Regarding participating through comments, respondents do not say that they see comments in a positive manner. According to Respondent 1, any positive comment that appears under online news is probably written by either HIV positive people or someone close to them and these kinds of comments do not reflect the attitude of the society. This cannot be presented as one of the findings of this study, but just as an insight about the subject matter.

Respondents are also asked about whether they use their own names while participating in online news. Their explanations on the subject matter vary. Some of them mention that they share their own names regardless of the type of participation or the place they participate in. Others explain that they use nicknames or stay anonymous while participating in online news. As it is observed through out the interviews, respondent mostly prefer to participate anonymously, especially if this participation has the potential to reveal their identity as a HIV positive person. For example, they use their own name for rating a news item about technology, whereas they stay anonymous while leaving a comment on news about HIV and AIDS. One of the respondents' statements is explanatory in this sense.

> *I participate with my own name for general topics but for HIV, I have concerns about appearing with my full name in online platforms. I prefer to take place in*

online platforms about HIV anonymously except for one group on Facebook (Respondent 4).

The overall analysis signals that most respondents prefer to take place in online news sites anonymously; nevertheless, the may use their own names when it comes to social media accounts. Respondents, who take place in social media with their own names, explain that they can do so because they do not have information on their account that can reveal their identity as a person living with HIV. There are social concerns shared by respondents as reasons for staying anonymous in the online environment. These concerns include violation of privacy, being exposed, exclusion from society, becoming a disadvantaged person, being targeted, and discrimination and stigmatization in general.

From a general perspective, the use of the Internet is emphasized as a potential means for effective participation in terms of democracy (Barber, 1998). Compared to traditional broadcast media, the World Wide Web is considered to enable point-to-point lateral communication and genuine interactivity, which allow users to participate in retrieving and creating information rather than merely receiving it in a passive manner. Accordingly, it is thought that this interactivity gives citizens the right to reply, to select information, and to communicate directly, as well as to seek information of their interests rather than what journalists present (Tambini, 1999).

When participation of HIV positive people is evaluated within the boundaries of this study, it is apparent that online news is used for participation. Instead of passively receiving information, online news about HIV is actively sought by respondents. Moreover, the technology of the Internet has an emancipating effect to a certain degree in a sense that it enables users to reach beyond the limits of what is ordinarily presented to them. This is apparent when various tools and news sources, that respondents use, are taken into account. Respondents also use their right to reply; however, the only opportunity they have is to participate through comment sections that online news sites provide. The functions that the Internet offers such as interactivity, ability to seek information, and faster access are considered to have the potential to remove barriers to participation (Tambini, 1999). The findings of this study partially coincide with this perspective. Even though HIV positive people use

the Internet to find information that ordinarily do not take place in news media, their participation is limited to comments and e-mails to news editors. Moreover, this participation does not signal a democratic understanding but just an attempt to provide accurate information about HIV/AIDS.

4.2.4. Content Production and Sharing

In relation to participation, content production and sharing are considered as important features that online news sites offer. These features are not exclusive to online news, but their use in news media is thought to be empowering for citizens in democratic conditions. In general, the Internet technology, and especially Web 2.0, allows users to produce content easily. When it comes to online news sites, it can be said that they allow their users to create content mostly in comment sections. However, respondents explain that they find other means to share the content they produce. These include personal blogs, HIV blogs, associations' websites, and Facebook pages. These are not necessarily news content; however, it is evident that respondents get the chance to produce and disseminate content in the online environment.

There are some respondents who mention that they share their life stories or stories about HIV on blogs about HIV/AIDS. One respondent explains that they have their personal blog on HIV, and another makes news about HIV/AIDS in a Facebook page that they created. These two are the only respondents that claim to create news content; nevertheless, there are other respondents who assert that they make translations in order to contribute to news on HIV/AIDS in Turkey. In this regard, one respondent says:

> *I personally try to make translation to share healthy data with our society about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health by following articles produced by international research centers. If it is something that interests me, I try to disseminate it through my social media accounts or I share these translations with associations and institutions that work in this area in order for them to reach more people (Respondent 4).*

In this direction, it can be said that respondents who produce content in online environment try to provide more information about HIV/AIDS. A similar reason lies behind producing content about their life stories; they try to be helpful for others who live with HIV.

The concept of sharing news however, has a more extensive role for respondents. The different means used by respondents for sharing news include their social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, Facebook groups, and the application Whatsapp. Some of the respondents mention that they share certain news on closed Facebook groups that consist of HIV positive people; whereas some share them on their own social media accounts. Whatsapp is also used for sharing by sending links of news items as messages. Whatsapp is used both for sending individual messages and for group messages. One respondent explains how they use Whatsapp for sharing as follows:

> *I share news through my Instagram account or through Whatsapp. If it is news about HIV, we have this Whatsapp group here, I send it to them and find out their opinions. If there are news about a topic I defend or I politically agree with, then I send it to three to five of my friends. And I constantly receive news like this from them during the day (Respondent 6).*

In this sense, it can be said that respondents use the opportunity that online platform offers for sharing in order to allow others to be informed. This sharing of news, however, is directed to other people living with HIV and not the society as a whole. This is also evident in the type of news that the respondents prefer to share. For different sharing behavior of respondents, see Table 4.9.

Table 4.9. Type of Shared News

Positive news	**Negative news**	**No sharing**
Success stories Hopeful stories Developments Treatment	Incorrect news Negative reporting Mockery	Disseminating the negative Pointless

Some of the respondents mention that they share positive and constructive news such as success stories, hopeful news, and developments about treatment.

Others, on the other hand, share negative news that contains incorrect information or negative reporting. One respondent explains that they share news in order to ridicule the news making process:

> *I usually share news on Twitter. Sometimes I share negative or wrong news and make fun of it. For instance, I share a news item like this and say "we are in 2017, look at the news they make" and I do this on my personal account (Respondent 2).*

Both of these perspectives include the aim to share information about HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, some of the respondents have concerns about disseminating negative news:

> *I don't have much of a relationship with social media, but I only share positive news or success stories. If a negative situation ends in success – if for example, a violation of a certain rights has been corrected – then I may share it. But I usually prefer to share news that would give hope to HIV positive people. Sharing negative news is like this: People's lives are already difficult enough. I wouldn't want to upset or hurt them by putting it in front of them (Respondent 1).*

Another respondent shares a similar perspective about disseminating negative news due to its content and language:

> *I share online news very rarely because I see news that use discriminating and marginalizing language, which also involves serious violation of rights very often. That is why, even if the news has an appropriate aspect to it, I feel sensitivity about disseminating it because of its incorrect language, and I prefer not to do it. Only if I find something that I trust in terms of its language, tone, and information… Unfortunately, I've never come across anything like this in our country (Respondent 4).*

It is seen from these responses that content production and sharing allow HIV positive people to share information with others, and respondents choose various

methods to use these features that the Internet technology offers. Although content production and sharing does not take place in online news sites, they are influenced by it as respondents share online news and produce content on the basis of what they see in online news sites.

In this regard, content production and sharing are prominent features in terms of online news. The ability to produce content is considered to be an opportunity for democratic participation (Fenton, 2010) and an empowering tool for citizens (Jönsson and Örnebring, 2011). With these features, everyone can be involved in the news from participating in discussions to producing their own news. In the findings of this study, it is evident that HIV positive people use the limited opportunity that online news sites offer, which is comment sections, to create content in addition to other means to share the content they create such as blogs and Facebook pages.

The abilities to participate and to create content are claimed to break down the barriers between audience and producer (Fenton, 2010). Nevertheless, the findings of this study do not point to such a drastic effect. Although people living with HIV create content regarding their status, they are not able to interfere with the process of news production. As the findings reveal, they can mostly act as a "public fact-checking body" (Joseph, 2011:710) where they try to correct misinformation about HIV by making a comment about news content, sending an e-mail to news editor, or sharing the news items with others. This sharing of news items also conforms with the idea that users become secondary gatekeepers of the content published online by selective re-dissemination (Singer, 2014). In this regard, HIV positive people choose the type of news that they consider is worth disseminating. All in all, the findings of this study show that features of the Internet allow people living with HIV to create content and share information online; however, their contribution can be defined as limited and the liberating effects of these features anticipated by early research are not evident.

4.2.5. Democratic Implications

Online news is considered to be an enhancing tool for democracy for that it offers citizens the right to reply, to select information, to communicate directly, and

to seek information. These are enabled by features of participation and content production. Another opportunity online news is thought to provide is a medium where public opinion can be formed through rational discussion. This aspect of online news contains certain democratic implications such as public debate, freedom of speech, censorship and surveillance. In this regard, respondents are asked about their opinions and experiences on these subjects.

Respondents state different opinions on whether online platform enables debate between participants. The majority of the responses indicate that it does not. Some of the respondents claims that for people living with HIV, only closed Facebook groups provide a medium for discussions. They mention that, in these groups, members can state their opinions, share their knowledge, and argue about them. For online news sites, only one respondent asserts that they provide a place for debate:

> *In news sites I use, I can see what other people think and how they respond to my thoughts. The fact that people with different ideas can be in the same place, even if it is to insult one another, is very important. I think it presents a milieu for discussion (Respondent 6).*

In this direction, online news sites are considered as a place for interaction between individuals with different perspectives. Nevertheless, other respondents' claims do not correspond to this idea. Interaction between users in news sites is possible through comments; and according to some respondents, comments do not contain this feature. It is claimed that there is no follow up to comments and users do not engage in a dialogue. Accordingly, users usually do not visit the news page again after they leave a comment to see whether others have responded to their comment. In this sense, other respondents perceive online news sites as a place for stating opinions but not for discussion. One respondent explains this view in relation to news about HIV/AIDS as follows:

> *Online news sites may provide a place for people to express their opinions but I don't think that it's an appropriate milieu for discussion. Especially in news about AIDS, it turns into unilateral swearing instead of a discussion. Those*

who read the news list different ways of how bad we are underneath the news. In my opinion, this cannot be a place for debate (Respondent 8).

The idea that online news sites provide a place for expression of opinions only is a common perspective among respondents. One of them defines this as meaningless because comment sections of news sites consist of one comment after another without any interaction. Other respondents express that they do not think discussing such an important topic in online news sites is healthy, and that this only causes information pollution instead of a rational debate. And one respondent claims that there is no democracy or freedom for online news to enable public debate.

This perspective also refers to the pessimistic opinions of respondents about freedom of speech in online environment. When asked about freedom of speech on the Internet, respondents mostly claim that there is no such thing. However, it should be noted that responses about freedom of speech are in relation with political perspectives of respondents. In other words, it is apparent in the interviews that while claiming that there is no freedom of speech, respondents are referring to political or social constraints. One example of this can be given as follows:

We don't have freedom of speech in any part of our lives […] Freedom of speech is not possible in this country when we are not even free in our private lives. We don't have any freedom since the moment we are born let alone freedom of speech. We are individuals educated, guided and shaped by certain things. It's religion for some people and other things for others. I don't think any of us has freedom of speech. We do have freedom of defamation. We express ourselves through defamation. Is this called freedom of speech? No, it is not. In my opinion, if there were free speech in this country, there would not be so many intellectuals in prison; they would be still out there defending my opinions. Of course there is something political about this (Respondent 6).

This perspective represents the idea that freedom of speech is related to political constraints. It is expressed by different respondents that it is not possible talk about freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and even freedom of thought in this country. Some of the respondents underline the idea that practicing the right to

freedom of speech has negative consequences. Another respondent points out a different perspective about free speech, which involves its social aspect. Accordingly, there is a certain pressure, which causes people to silence their own voices; and both society and other individuals create this pressure. In other words, due to concerns about what other people might think, individuals do not practice their right to free speech.

It is observed in interviews that respondents do not think there is freedom of speech in online environment; however, it should be underlined that this perspective refers to social and political constraints. As a matter of fact, none of the respondents mention that there is a limitation of free speech in terms of issues related to HIV/AIDS. On the contrary, there are respondents who claim that they are free to talk about problems on HIV, including criticizing the government and their politics.

Although it is expressed by respondents that there is no limitation on freedom of speech in terms HIV/AIDS, some of them explain they experience censorship in online news sites. This censorship is related to their comments. Accordingly, their comments are blocked, not approved or not published in the comment section, but similar to freedom of speech, this happens mostly about political comments. Only one of the respondents mention that their comments about HIV/AIDS is blocked in news sites:

> *I used to write more comments. Now they started not publishing comments. They approve it less and publish it less. I think there is a kind of censorship there […] Usually they don't publish the comments I make about my status. There is inappropriate language use and sensational news and these are usually discriminating. When I point this out, my comments are not published. I try to correct it but I either don't get a response or simply don't get approved (Respondent 3).*

Other than this, as respondents claim, blocked comments mostly involve a political aspect. In this regard, one respondent underlines that comments with political content are blocked whereas insulting or defaming comments are published

in news sites. Another respondent presents a different approach in terms of censorship:

> *There are a lot of taboos in the first place. Although we do not experience any limitation by the state, I think a lot of the related issues are either blocked or ignored in media because of these social taboos (Respondent 9).*

In this regard, the absence of news is also considered as a type of censorship by the respondent. Nevertheless, censorship on issues related to HIV/AIDS is not considered as problem for most of the respondents. A similar understanding also applies to self-censorship in online news. Most of the respondents mention that they do not feel the need to apply self-censorship in terms of HIV/AIDS; however, they explain that caution is necessary when speaking of political issues. From a general perspective, it can be said that self-censorship is not applicable for issues related to HIV/AIDS. Only one of the respondents evaluates silence as a type of censorship.

> *I've never thought about it but it may count as self-censorship that I don't share anything about this subject. It's not a situation like I really want to write something but I don't. It's just that I don't say anything because I don't want my HIV status to be revealed. Perhaps this means that I'm restricting myself. In this sense, then, I can say that I apply self-censorship in terms of HIV/AIDS (Respondent 7).*

On the basis of this, preferring to keep silent is also considered as a kind of self-censorship. As the respondent mentions, this silence is also related to the concern about identity exposure. This is actually a concern caused by surveillance practices. This is why some of the respondents claim that they abstain from online presence in order to prevent identity exposure and that online environment is an unsafe space. However, this is the only concern of respondents in relation to surveillance on people living with HIV. They do think that they are observed and monitored in the online environment; however this, according to respondents, is not based on their health status. Rather they refer to surveillance in general terms. One respondent points out the importance of privacy regarding surveillance practices:

There might be surveillance practices online but I think it is not specific to HIV positive people. It is apparent on the Internet what everyone is doing. I don't think people are trying to hide it. On the contrary, there is no such thing as privacy anymore. Everyone is trying to show off their lives to other people. That is why we present it very openly even if we are being followed or monitored (Respondent 10).

On the basis of these, it can be said that respondents think there is surveillance in the online environment but it is not specific to people living with HIV. Overall, it can be argued that issues related to freedom of expression, censorship and surveillance do not have implications specific to HIV positive people. Respondents claim that practicing the right to freedom of expression is problematic in general; that censorship is applied mostly for political subjects; and that there is general surveillance in the online environment but it is not directed specifically to HIV positive people.

From a general perspective, the Internet, with its characteristics of interactivity and participation, is argued to provide a great opportunity for journalism practices and democracy. It is also these features that give rise to discussions of an online public sphere (Bosch, 2010). The Internet appears to captivate the principles of public sphere; nevertheless, the findings of this study do not correspond to this idea. First of all, public sphere is constituted as a space where citizens would meet and deliberate; and the Internet is argued to contain the potential to host a rational discussion among citizens. In relation to online news sites, the only space where citizens can be involved in a rational discussion is comments sections, and the findings of this study include that comment sections in news sites do not provide a milieu for rational debate but only a place for expressing opinions. This corresponds to more critical perspectives on online public sphere, which include that online discussions do not result in collective decision-making; most people passively participate by just reading discussions instead of contributing (Rojo and Ragsdale, 1997); individuals mostly participate anonymously (Timisi, 2003); online debates do not come to a conclusion (van Dijk, 2012); comments do not foster a democratic dialogue where most users mostly comment once and do not engage in a discussion (Noci et al., 2012); and existing power dynamics of groups in society dominates

online debates where minority opinions tend to remain silent and majority opinions are freely expressed (Sunstein, 2008).

The only place where respondents claim to be able to participate in a discussion about HIV/AIDS is Facebook groups. In these groups, HIV positive people interact, discuss and share information with other member of the groups, who are also HIV positive. How these groups are related to online news is based on the fact that they share online news on these groups in order to inform one another. These Facebook groups can be interpreted as one of the multiple publics that online environment makes possible in terms of online public sphere (Poor, 2005). Nevertheless, these groups still contain the issues of unequal access and literacy. Moreover, even if these groups can be defined as a virtual community, where their members can participate in a rational discussion; they may result in group polarization (Nagel, 2002 cited in Dolgun, 2011). In this sense, members of the virtual community can only participate in debate with others that share similar views or characteristics. On the basis of the idea that democracy necessitates opposing views to hear and communicate with each other (Dolgun, 2011), Facebook groups about HIV cannot be argued to emerge as public sphere.

Another concept that comes forth with its democratic implications is citizen journalism, which becomes possible through the features of interactivity and participation. Citizen journalism sites are also thought to provide a quasi-public sphere (Bosch, 2010). However, on the basis of the findings presented above, it cannot be asserted that HIV positive people use the Internet for citizen journalism purposes because citizen journalism refers to web-based practices, where ordinary users engage in journalistic practices such as blogging, photo and video sharing and posting eyewitness commentary. Respondents included in the sample claim that they write in blogs and they comment on online news; however, these are not done within the scope of journalism. Therefore, citizen journalism is not described as one of the democratic implications that this study includes.

In this regard, it is not possible to conclude that online news provides enhancing tools for democracy. For HIV positive people, online news sites are not considered as a place for rational discussion. They can be described as a place for

expression of opinions, which can be interpreted as a part of the right to freedom of expression; however, the findings of this study show that people living with HIV does not practice this right in its full potential due to political and social concerns.

4.2.6. Hate Speech in Online News

When it comes to hate speech directed at people living HIV, respondents provide various opinions; however, most of them claim that there is no direct hate speech in online news about HIV positive people. In other words, online news does not generate hate speech on purpose but they present statements that support hate and promote prejudices. One of the responses in this regard is as follows:

> *I think there are news that support hate speech. I've never read anything that directly involves hate like "let's kill all of them". But I think there are news that trigger prejudices. They always say, "HIV does not kill but prejudices do". I see statements in news not generating hate but supporting prejudices. I think there is hate speech towards minorities, gays and sex workers but not about HIV (Respondent 3).*

This perspective is common among respondents. Even though the news, as they consider, promote prejudice, stigmatization and discrimination, the respondents do not think there is hate speech directed at them in online news. Some of the respondents claim that there is wrong representation of people living with HIV, which causes fear among society, but this is not done on purpose and is based on ignorance about the subject matter. The mutual idea appears to be that instead of hate speech, news content involves invalid information, incorrect data, and misappropriate use of language. One respondent explains this as follows:

> *There used to be hate speech, but I don't believe there is direct hate speech anymore. I believe that because of ignorance, there are stigmatization and discrimination, and use of statements that would promote hate, but I believe this is done indirectly and unconsciously. There is, however, use of wrong information, wrong data, wrong tone or language, and violation of privacy (Respondent 4).*

In this direction, it can be said that respondents do not consider hate speech to be a problem in terms of issues related to HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, there are other areas where they find online news to be problematic. One respondent mentions that although there is no hate speech in news content, comments in online news sites contain this type of discourse. Others underline that news might violate certain rights of people living with HIV. This violation that respondents mention usually involves violation of privacy. Accordingly, news items expose the identities of HIV positive people or do not respect their privacy. And finally, as mentioned above, associations and connotations to certain notions are considered to be an important issue related to hate speech. These associations include sex trafficking, homosexuality and immorality.

When asked about hate speech towards HIV positive people, only one of the respondents asserts that they think they experience hate speech because of their health status:

> *I think there is hate speech. This bothered me for a long time and I suppose this was the reason for me to move away and isolate myself: the reaction and perspective of society… But now I'm passed it mostly because I'm much healthier than before I was diagnosed. I don't see it as a problem anymore (Respondent 9).*

Even the respondent, who claims that there is hate speech towards HIV positive people, appears to accept that it is not a problem. This is the general perspective of respondents, which is not considering problems in choice of words, language, connotations and other issues as hate speech. Rather they appear to find it normal and common.

The research question of this study concerns the role of online news in providing an opportunity for victims of hate speech to practice their democratic rights. In this regard, it is important to understand how HIV positive people perceive hate speech in online news. As it is presented in the findings, there are problematic issues in news items including promoting prejudice, stigmatization, incorrect use of

language, misrepresentations, and misinformation. Although respondents mention these problems with news, they do not define this as hate speech. However, hate speech refers to all types of expression that popularizes, promotes, defends, or justifies hate. It results from intolerance and it is fed by prejudices (Binark and Çomu, 2012). It also involves discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes (Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Hate speech in news reproduces and strengthens stereotypes and mediates the increase of discrimination in society with its provocative and discriminatory language. Moreover, it promotes prejudice against vulnerable groups.

So, when one speaks of discriminatory language, prejudiced attitudes and misrepresentations, they are actually referring to hate speech. The fact that respondents do not use the word hate speech for these matters may be related to the idea that it is considered to be normal and common in society. One response in this regard is prominent:

> *Even some of the doctors have prejudices. All in all, it's not just in media; it's everywhere and this reflects on media. We can't separate the behavior of society and the behavior of media; media tries to meet the expectations of society. In order to sell, they make news according to people's expectations and value judgments. If you don't speak up, they hold you down; if you do speak up, they don't hear you (Respondent 3).*

As it can be seen in the findings, hate speech towards HIV positive people is considered to be mundane, and people living with HIV are used to it. Hate speech and its prerequisites, such as prejudices and stereotypes, are thought to be embedded in social values; therefore, their existence is justified by respondents. This phenomenon can be explained by system justification theory.

Developed by Jost and Banaji (1994), system justification theory refers to the psychological process whereby prevailing conditions are accepted, explained, and justified simply because they exist. In this direction, people are motivated to justify and rationalize their experiences and encounters, so that social arrangements seem fair, legitimate, natural and inevitable. The findings of this study indicate that this

theory is applicable in explaining why HIV positive people consider hate speech as common and usual. As Göregenli (2012) argues, members of disadvantaged groups may have a stronger motive to avoid uncertainty and threat; and therefore may be more likely to justify the system. So, when HIV positive people claim that there is no hate speech towards them but only promoting expressions, they may be adopting the idea that these prejudices and attitudes about HIV/AIDS represent social values and that this is just the way society thinks, which results in the normalization of hate speech.

When hate speech in media becomes ordinary, it may serve to suppress the variety of ideas in a society (Maigret, 2011). This can be considered to cause certain views and groups to feel unwanted and silent their own voices. In this way, hate speech used in media becomes a tool to suppress different life styles, ideas and views which monotypes the society. It is not evident in the findings of this study that hate speech directly suppresses people living with HIV; however, it has this effect to a certain degree. As explained above, some of the respondents find it meaningless to participate in online news sites and create content. And others claim that participation may be exhausting for that they do not want to deal with the consequences of participation. Although this is not the case for all of the respondents, it is evident that they abstain from participation for different reasons. These reasons involve social concerns such as discrimination, stigmatization, being targeted, becoming a disadvantaged person, exclusion, and being exposed. On the basis of these, HIV positive people may prefer to be silent and not use their right to participate.

Another important issue concerns the idea that news provides a reference point for social representations, which enables getting familiarized with strangeness (Moscovici, 1988). Ideologies that are endorsed through the discourse of media influence social representations of attitudes, ideas and beliefs toward certain groups (van Dijk, 1988a). In this way, news serves to mediate concepts and values of the dominant ideology by constructing discourse; and it contributes to the production of intolerance, bias and even hatred towards groups that are marginalized in society. Although the findings of this study are not representative, it can be observed that

respondents are aware of the fact that people's knowledge on HIV/AIDS is shaped by news media. In this regard, one respondent claims;

> *I think there is misleading news rather than hate speech. Because news doesn't present proper information, society doesn't get informed about HIV. That's where the problem appears. Aren't all of the prejudices against us are based on ignorance? News should be telling the truth (Respondent 10).*

Media provides an ideological context, which creates a specific representation of 'others' (Downing and Husband, 2005). Most of unfamiliar concepts are constructed through social representations that take place in news media. News provides a source for the world outside of most people experience by themselves. Moreover, what people see in the news is considered as the representation of real life (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988a). According to the findings of this study, news about HIV/AIDS present numbers of patients, doctor statements, events, and crimes. Respondents evaluate this as insufficient news content.

In this regard, it can be said that news about HIV/AIDS falls short of informing people. When it comes to social representations that news media construct, respondents claim that HIV/AIDS is associated with notions that are considered to be problematic in society such as sex trafficking and homosexuality. Moreover, respondents explain that HIV is described in the news as a fatal, contagious, sexually transmitted disease that threatens social morality. Keeping in mind that news is a source of knowledge for people, misrepresentation of people living with HIV in news contributes to the systemic social hierarchy among groups of society. One of the respondents' expressions is prominent in this sense for that they reproach about this social hierarchy:

> *[People] don't know anything about this subject and they don't make an effort to learn. This needs to be fixed. For example, cancer patients can share their disease with others and continue with their lives; it should be like this for HIV, as well. Frankly, I wouldn't want to get cancer. If I had a choice, I wouldn't choose cancer because if you're conscious, HIV is easier to cope with. But unfortunately, we don't get society's support (Respondent 9).*

As it is evident in this statement, HIV positive people face certain problems regarding their social lives. And news media reinforces these problems instead of trying to solve them. All in all, people living with HIV become victims of hate speech in news, whether it is traditional or online.

Overall, this study aims to understand whether victims of hate speech use online news to practice their democratic rights. It sets out to explore the ways online news is utilized, and whether this online environment is beneficial in terms of democracy for hate speech victims. In this regard, as the findings present, it is not possible to provide a consensus on the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. In certain aspects, use of online news provides opportunities for consuming and accessing news; whereas in others, online news sites' features are inconclusive.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis basically aims to understand the role of online news in democracy in the context of hate speech. In other words, it tries to explore how and to what extent online news can be utilized by hate speech victims as medium that allows them to practice their democratic rights. It is argued through out the thesis that hate speech can only serve antidemocratic purposes and that it has a multi-dimensional structure including political, social, psychological and cultural aspects. This is basically the reason for choosing the context of hate speech in examining the role of online news in democracy. Online news is considered as an enhancing tool for democratic conditions; that is why, it is important to understand how it can benefit the battle against hate speech.

In the literature review chapter of this thesis, it is argued that the concept of hate speech harms democratic ideals. In this sense, hate speech directed at certain groups in a society aims to diminish the deliberative participation of these groups in democracy; it promotes injustice and devalues human worth; it seeks to intimidate and exclude these groups; it increases social discord; and overall, it denies the rights of these groups. From a social perspective, hate speech aims to injure, dehumanize, harass, intimidate, debase, degrade, and victimize groups in its target and this encourages insensitivity and brutality against them. Accordingly, hate speech is based on exclusion and devaluation of certain groups in a society, which represents a systemic hierarchy.

It can be said that this systemic hierarchy is constructed on the basis of discourse that represents the dominant ideology in society and the role of media in the dissemination of this discourse cannot be ignored. In this sense, hate speech can also be evaluated as a discursive practice that serves the benefits of the dominant ideology, which is endorsed through the discourse of media. Especially, news media plays an important role in the dissemination of hate speech because news is

considered as the representation of real life. Therefore, when news content includes prejudicial and stereotypical expressions that are based on intolerance, it both produces hate speech and reproduces or mediates existing discriminatory discourse in society. Whether it is traditional or digital, news media promotes, popularizes and justifies hate towards certain groups in society; nevertheless, as outlined by Camden Principles, media should play a role in combating discrimination and in promoting intercultural understanding. Only then, media can fulfill its responsibilities that are required for a viable democracy.

Communication media in a democratic society should be widely available and accessible; reflect the pluralistic nature of society; not be dominated or controlled by certain interest groups; provide necessary information for citizens to make informed decisions; and provide the means for public debate (Oreja, et al., 1998). When traditional media is evaluated with this conceptualization in mind, it can be said that it fails to perform this role in democracy. In this direction, the emergence of online news was considered to have revolutionary effects in terms of how media can be used as an enhancing tool for democracy. This understanding of online news is based on the features that the Internet technology provides, which include interactivity, participation, hypertexuality, polycentrality, and multiplicity. Through these features, online news is considered to provide a medium that is not controlled by one group; to offer faster and more convenient access for citizens; to present information for citizens in a diversified manner; and to enable public debate.

This thesis aims to examine online news in the sense that whether it provides these opportunities for hate speech victims. In this regard, the research method consists of a two-dimensional structure; where the first one focuses on hate speech in online news and the other on the perspective of hate speech victims towards online news and its positioning in democracy.

For the purposes of this study, victims of hate speech is defined as any individual, who defines himself/herself as a member of a certain group that is exposed or subjected to, and affected by hate speech. Hate speech consists of expressions directed at a person or a group of people on the basis of their actual or perceived characteristics, which include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color,

national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics. In this sense, the target groups of hate speech are just as extensive as the term's definition. In order to make an extensive and thorough analysis, this thesis focuses on only one of those groups, namely people living with HIV.

With the research question of this study in mind, it is thought to be beneficial to understand hate speech against HIV positive people in online news before evaluating the role of online news in democracy. In this regard, news items that take place on three online news websites in the time period between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016 are analyzed by adopting the method of critical discourse analysis suggested by van Dijk. The findings of the analysis demonstrate how online news disseminates and promotes hate speech against HIV positive individuals. This section of analysis is thought to provide the basis for the second stage of analysis, which aims to explore the perspectives of people living with HIV towards hate speech in online news and its benefits for exercising democratic rights. In this direction, 10 in-depth interviews are conducted with HIV positive people by focusing on their views about news consumption, access, participation, content creation, and other democratic implications such as freedom of expression, public debate and censorship.

On the basis of the findings of the research, which are presented in the findings chapter of the thesis, certain concluding remarks can be made. First of all, it is important to mention that hate speech is not found in an explicit manner in analyzed news items, which means that news do not contain direct expressions of the emotion of hate. However, this does not entail that news items do not promote, defend or justify intolerance and prejudices. All in all, hate speech can be concealed in expressions, which may appear to be rational and normal at first. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what news about HIV/AIDS does. It presents an ideology that influences attitudes, ideas and beliefs about HIV positive people. In this sense, analyzed news both creates prejudicial attitudes and reinforces already existing discrimination and hate speech against people living with HIV.

The main findings of critical discourse analysis can be listed as follows:

- The thematic structure of analyzed online news promotes and justifies hate by describing HIV positive people as an increasing threat; by connecting HIV/AIDS to criminal acts; by presenting an image of 'dying people' that needs to be excluded from society; and by reinforcing already existing social hierarchies.
- In terms of schematic structure, the main event, consequences, background and context is presented in accordance with fundamental news values such as negativity, unusualness and unexpectedness, where the analyzed news mostly focus on negative phenomena about HIV/AIDS.
- Verbal reactions are used very often in the analyzed online news, which consist of direct and indirect quotations of experts, NGOs and doctors. None of the news items include opinions or reactions of people living with HIV, which can be interpreted as HIV positive people's exclusion and marginalization by news discourse. The idea that news discourse represents the dominant ideology is apparent in this regard.
- In terms of syntactic analysis, passive sentence structure is adopted while giving information about the number of HIV positive people, which points to their representation not as humans but mere content of information. Active sentence structure is used for giving quotations of experts or they present the agent of the sentence as HIV or AIDS. This both dehumanizes people living with HIV and reinforces the distinction of 'us' and 'them' by describing HIV positive people as a threat, danger or risk for society.
- Local coherence between propositions make sense only if they both match the topic of the news and if they are consistent with the knowledge or belief of the listener. Every coherence strategy used in the analyzed news corresponds to existing beliefs, attitudes and knowledge in society, which confirms the already existing prejudicial attitudes about HIV/AIDS and reproduces it as knowledge.
- Regarding choice of words, there are words in the analyzed news that promote and popularize prejudicial attitudes by associating HIV/AIDS with death, emphasizing it as a threat or danger, underlining the increasing numbers, and describing HIV positive people as criminals.

- There is also use of wrong terminology in news items, which shows the negligence of journalists and news institutions; which in turn explains that the issues related to HIV/AIDS are not considered to be very important.
- In order to increase persuasiveness, rhetorical strategies are used in analyzed news, including emphasizing the factual nature of events through descriptions, eyewitness reports, reliable sources, exact numbers and direct quotes.

Overall, it is important to underline that discourse shapes beliefs and influences behaviors. Rhetorical features strengthen the existing beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, which are mostly based on misconceptions and incorrect information. And this lays the ground for discrimination against people living with HIV. HIV/AIDS is described as a threat for society, which reinforces the distinction of "us" and "them" because it implies that "they" (HIV positive people) are a threat for "us" (the society). This distinction becomes apparent also in the use of agent news actors, where people living with HIV are not treated as subjects of the news but as mere contents of information. In this sense, it can be said that news items present facts and information about "others" for "us". This approach of the news both creates and promotes stigmas, stereotypes and prejudices against HIV positive people, which justifies their marginalization and stigmatization in society and causes the formation of hate speech.

The interviewed HIV positive people also share this idea that news promotes and popularizes prejudices against them. Accordingly, online news does not generate hate speech on purpose but they present statements that support hate and promote prejudices. In this sense, findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews with HIV positive people are in accordance with the findings of critical discourse analysis. The main findings about how people living with HIV perceive hate speech in online news can be listed as follows:

- Hate speech is not generated on purpose in online news; however its content supports hate and promote prejudices, stigmatization, and discrimination.
- HIV/AIDS is associated with sex trafficking, homosexuality and immorality.

- There is incorrect use of terminology, misrepresentations, and misinformation in online news.

It is interesting that even though online news about HIV/AIDS is described as promoting prejudices and stigmas, and its content includes incorrect use of terminology, misrepresentations and misinformation, its language is not considered to involve hate speech. As a matter of fact, hate speech encompasses all types of expressions that promote, popularize, defend or justify discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes. In this sense, what HIV positive people describe as incorrect use of language actually refers to the process, where hate speech is shaped.

It is important to understand this perspective because it reveals how hate speech is internalized and justified by its victims. As argued in the findings section, hate speech and other related concepts of prejudices, stigmas and stereotypes are considered to be part of social values, and therefore ordinary. This can be explained by system justification theory, where victims of hate speech justify and rationalize their experiences so that social arrangements seem legitimate and natural. In this sense, when HIV positive people claim that there is no hate speech towards them but only promoting expressions, they may be adopting the idea that these prejudices and attitudes about HIV/AIDS represent social values and that this is just the way society thinks, which results in the normalization of hate speech.

This approach is problematic because considering hate speech in media as ordinary may result in the suppression of different ideas and groups, which cause certain views to be silenced. In this direction, marginalization of hate speech victims in media results in their marginalization in society. This can also be evaluated as discrimination practiced by media for that hate speech victims are ignored, their representation is limited, and they are stereotyped and stigmatized on the basis of prejudices. Based on these, it can be said that news, whether online or traditional, presents and generates expressions that involve prejudicial discourse, which both reinforces and helps the formation of discriminatory attitudes. This reflects the consequences of discursive practices in online news regarding hate speech.

In terms of content, both critical discourse analysis and analysis of in-depth interviews reveal that news content consists of numbers of patients, doctor statements, awareness events, and crimes, which do not provide necessary and sufficient information about HIV/AIDS. Given the fact that news provides a source of knowledge that helps the creation of informed citizens, online news about HIV/AIDS fails to present comprehensive information on the subject matter. This can be evaluated as online news not fulfilling one of its most important responsibilities in democracy, which is contributing to the formation of informed citizen.

Evaluating the role of online news in democracy for hate speech victims is the main purpose of this study. Although online news content is found to be insufficient, there are certain aspects where online news, with its technological features, provides opportunities in terms of democratic implications. These opportunities mostly concern news consumption and access.

Regarding news consumption patterns of HIV positive people, it is apparent that the Internet is beneficial because it enables finding information about HIV/AIDS. Different means for accessing information include various websites, social media applications, and other Internet based features such as subscription to newsletters and Google Alerts. Moreover, opportunities that the communication technology offers are also enjoyed as HIV positive people can access news through their smart phones and computers connected to the Internet. This shows that access to news is made easier due to the features of the Internet. In addition to easy access opportunities, it can be said that the Internet eliminates geographical limitation, where news from other countries can be followed in a fast and open manner. Nevertheless, this raises the question of information inequality because not everyone can search for and understand news in foreign sites.

When it comes to the quantity and quality of accessible news in online news sites, it can be said that there are a limited number of news items about HIV/AIDS in Turkish news sites and they do not provide useful information for HIV positive people. News content, in this sense, is mostly sensational, limited to doctors' statements and numbers of patients, and carries negative connotations for HIV/AIDS.

In this regard, the insufficiency of news content, both in terms of amount and information, can be considered to be problematic because people receive information about HIV/AIDS mostly from the news. As it is evident in the findings, some HIV positive people try to correct this insufficiency by using the feature of participation.

The Internet assigns an active role to the audience where they gain the capacity to participate. This participation in online news sites entails control over consumed news, becoming a part of news production process and interaction with other users. The most apparent ways of participation for HIV positive people are actively seeking information about HIV/AIDS in online news sites and commenting on news. In this regard, people living with HIV take on an active role to find information that is not given to them through news sites. When it comes to commenting on news, HIV positive people leave a comment in online news sites where there is incorrect information, inappropriate use of terminology and violation of certain rights. This kind of participation through comments is mostly directed to news content and not to other users. This shows that comment sections do not foster a dialogue between users in terms of news about HIV/AIDS.

Moreover, there is no evidence that HIV positive people can become a part of news production process. The only way they can interfere with this process is through comments and e-mails to news editors; and its only effect, although very rare, is the removal of some news items from the website. All in all, it can be said that online news sites enable HIV positive people to control what news they consume and interact with other users to a certain degree, where they can perceive the opinions of other people, but it does not grant them a part in news production process. In this direction, it can be argued that online platform offers HIV positive people the ability to seek information and faster access; however its interactivity feature is limited in a democratic sense.

Together with participation, the ability to create content is claimed to break down the barriers between audience and producer. Nevertheless, the content production is limited to writing in blogs and commenting on online news, which are not done within the scope of journalism. The only democratic implication in this sense is the role HIV positive people undertake as a public fact-checking body,

where they reveal misinformation about news content by leaving a comment, sending an e-mail to news editor, or sharing the news items with others. It can be argued that through sharing, HIV positive people act as secondary gatekeepers by deciding what news they want to disseminate further.

From a general perspective, online news is considered to be an enhancing tool for democracy for that it offers the right to reply, to select information, to communicate directly, and to seek information. Furthermore, it is thought to provide a space for rational discussion through which public opinion can be formed. When online news sites are evaluated, the only space available for a discussion to take place is the comments section of news sites. Nevertheless, when the characteristics of comments are taken into consideration, a rational debate does not seem to be feasible in online news websites on the basis that users do not aim to come to a conclusion; that active contribution of users is rare; that there is not a democratic dialogue between users but only expressed opinions; and that participation is mostly anonymous. In addition, the facts that users are unable to practice their right to freedom of expression in its full potential and their contributions are blocked in comments sections prevent online news sites to be considered as a tool for enhancing democratic conditions.

In summary, what online news provides for hate speech victims is the opportunity to access news in a faster and more extensive manner. This is not a specific situation for online news but rather a general implication for the use of the Internet in news consumption. Through its characteristics of interactivity, hypertexuality, speed, space, multiplicity and polycentrality, the Internet enables its users to access more news in a convenient way. In this sense, online news helps the construction of informed citizen, which is required for democracy. However, the findings that online news sites do not provide a place for rational discussion or to practice the right to freedom of expression show that online news falls short in terms of democratic implications. All in all, online news provide a more convenient means for hate speech victims to be informed, which is an essential element of democracy; nevertheless, it does not live up to its expectations where democratic rights to be heard, to speak and to participate in social and political life can be exercised in a liberating manner.

In conclusion, hate speech stands as a problem for democratic ideals and with its technological features, the Internet makes it easier for hate speech to be produced and disseminated. Nevertheless, it is again the opportunities of the Internet that provides a chance for battling against hate speech; and online news has the potential to be used as an important tool in this battle. It should be underlined that hate speech emerges on the basis of beliefs and thoughts from the offline world and legal restrictions cannot provide an absolute solution for this problem. The important thing is finding a way to reduce prejudices and stereotypes that cause the formation of hate speech because the most important component of the battle against hate speech is changing the mindset of society.

In this regard, the opportunities that online news offers can be put to good use. First of all, with its features of speed and space, online news can provide easy access to more news content; however this content should consist of valid and reliable information. Secondly, participation and content production opportunities should be expanded through the feature of interactivity, where users of online news sites can become a part of news production process. Thirdly, with its polycentric structure, it should provide a milieu, where citizens can express their opinions and hear what others have to say without any censorship. Finally, online news should promote mutual understanding and social tranquility. Only then it is possible to assign an important role to online news in enhancing democratic conditions. And the attainment of these objectives is possible only through ethical journalism practices. In this sense, it is fruitful to remember certain guidelines for journalists.

Regarding the furtherance of hate speech in news, Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) suggests a five-point test for journalists, which requires careful consideration in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and information, and placing what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context by questioning the speaker, the audience, purpose and content of the speech, context and public atmosphere at the time of speech, and how the speech is disseminated.

As a general guideline, Camden Principles, which is outlined by ARTICLE 19, suggest that media should report in a factual manner and bring acts of discrimination

to the attention of public; be careful about furthering negative stereotypes; avoid unnecessary references to group characteristics; raise awareness of negative outcomes of discrimination; and report on variety of groups and communities in order to give them a voice. Overall, media should foster a better understanding of different communities and their issues.

This thesis sets out to explore the role of online news in democracy for hate speech victims. It provides an exploratory perspective on how and to what extent online news is utilized for hate speech victims in terms of practicing their democratic rights. In this regard, firstly existing hate speech against people living with HIV in online news is demonstrated because it provides an understanding of how hate speech is shaped. Secondly, opinions of hate speech victims are included in the analysis, which presents the ways online news can be beneficial or incapable for democratic implications.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, this study focuses on only one group of hate speech victims, which consists of HIV positive people. This represents the main limitation of this study. Both news analysis and analysis of the role of online news provide findings about the issues related to HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the analysis is limited to Turkish news websites and HIV positive people living in Turkey. As other limitations, demographics of respondents are not taken into consideration and their perspectives on democracy in general are not included, which entails that this study does not provide a discussion on democracy. In addition, democratic implications of online news are limited to news content and perspectives of respondents; and a detailed examination of news websites in terms of their technological features is not included in research. Finally, due to the qualitative nature of the study, the findings cannot be generalized.

On the basis of the limitations of the thesis, directions for future research can be generated. First of all, the research methodology developed for this study can be applied for other identity groups that experience hate speech in society. Secondly, an expanded study can be carried out by taking demographics into consideration to understand perspectives of different social groups. Thirdly, online news websites that originate in other countries can be analyzed in order to comprehend the cultural

aspect of the formation of hate speech. Fourthly, online news websites can be examined in terms of the features they offer for democratic implications. Finally, online news' role in democracy can be examined in general without focusing on the perspectives of certain groups, which may provide a more general understanding of online news' democratic implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Question Guide for In-Depth Interviews

1. Do you follow the news?
2. Which medium do you use when following the news?
3. Which online news sources do you follow?
4. Which tools do you use in order to follow the news?
5. Do you only follow news sources that make news about your status?
6. Do you show any kind of participation in online news sites?
7. If so, do you participate with your own name or anonymously?
8. Does the behavior of other users disturb you?
9. Do you produce any content or news content about your status?
10. Do you share any of the online news you encounter?
11. If so, what kind of news do you share?
12. Do you think online news sites provide a medium for debate?
13. If so, do you participate in this debate or start a debate?
14. Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?
15. Have you experienced any censorship regarding what you share on the Internet?
16. Do you apply self-censorship while you are sharing on the Internet?
17. Do you think you are under surveillance on the Internet?
18. Do you have access to news items that are of your interest? Do you specifically search for news items?
19. Do you find sufficient amount of news online?
20. Does everyone around you have access to the Internet/online news?
21. Do you think there is hate speech towards you in online news?

Appendix B. List of News Items

Headline	Original Headline in Turkish	Website	Date	Source	News Section
Organ transplantation will take place between HIV carriers in USA	ABD'de HIV taşıyıcıları arasında organ nakli yapılacak	Hürriyet	11.02.16	AA	Health
AIDS epidemic in Cambodia	Kamboçya'daki AIDS salgını	Mynet	22.02.16		World
Cuba accomplished to prevent HIV virus's transmission from mother to baby	Küba HIV virüsünün anneden bebeğe geçişini engellemeyi başardı	Hürriyet	3.03.16	Hürriyet News	Health
AIDS is almost a chronic disease	AIDS kronik bir hastalık olma noktasına geldi	Hürriyet	11.03.16	AA	Health
AIDS is becoming chronic	AIDS gittikçe kronikleşiyor	CNNTürk	11.03.16		Health
We are very close to the treatment of AIDS	AIDS'in tedavisine çok yakınız	Hürriyet	2.04.16	Foreign News	World
What are the symptoms of AIDS?	AIDS belirtileri nelerdir?	Hürriyet	8.04.16	Hürriyet News	Health
Shocking assertion about Prince: He was AIDS and rejected treatment	Prince hakkında flaş iddia: AIDS'ti ve tedaviyi reddetti	Hürriyet	28.04.16	hurriyet.com.tr	World
Monkey protected from HIV with vaccine	Maymun aşı ile HIV'den korundu	Hürriyet	29.04.16	Foreign News	World
Did AIDS kill Prince?	Prince'i öldüren AIDS mi?	Hürriyet	29.04.16	Foreign News	World
"Take precaution live long" seminar in Burhaniye	Burhaniye'de 'Önlem al uzun yaşa' semineri	Hürriyet	4.05.16	DHA	Local News
Red Ribbon Istanbul against AIDS	HIV'e karşı Kırmızı Kurdele İstanbul	Hürriyet	11.05.16	Hürriyet News	Health
Man who transmitted AIDS to lover on purpose is sentenced for 4 years	Sevgilisine bilerek AIDS bulaştıran adam 4 yıl ceza aldı	Hürriyet	6.06.16	Hürriyet News	Current Events
Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS	Sevgilisinin AIDS'li olduğunu öğrenince arabayla çarptı	Hürriyet	16.06.16	İHA	World
Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS	AIDS'li olduğunu öğrendiği sevgilisini ezdi	CNNTürk	16.06.16		World
Australia has beaten AIDS	Avustralya AIDS'i yendi	Mynet	10.07.16	Deutsche Welle Turkish	World
Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey	Türkiye'de AIDS hastası sayısı arttı	Hürriyet	12.07.16	AA	World
Serious increase of HIV cases in Kenya	Kenya'da HIV vakalarında ciddi artış	Hürriyet	20.07.16	AA	Health
Imam emphasized AIDS by shaking a condom	İmam, kondom sallayarak AIDS'e dikkat çekti	Hürriyet	27.07.16	Hürriyet News	Health
14 people die everyday in that country	O ülkede her gün 14 kişi ölüyor	Hürriyet	11.08.16	AA	World
Everyday in Kenya, 14 people die because of AIDS	Kenya'da her gün 14 kişi AIDS'den ölüyor	Mynet	11.08.16		World
Good news for HIV carriers	HIV'lilere müjdeli haber	Hürriyet	23.08.16	Reporter	Current Events
AIDS has officially exploded	AIDS resmen patlamış	Hürriyet	29.09.16	Reporter	Health
One out of 10 children is resistant to AIDS	Her 10 çocuktan biri AIDS'e dirençli	Hürriyet	29.09.16	AA	Health
AIDS has officially	AIDS resmen patlamış	Mynet	30.09.16	Hürriyet	Health

exploded					
Assertion "priest with AIDS who raped 30 children is found innocent" is denied in Mexico	Meksika'da "30 çocuğa tecavüz eden AIDS'li rahip suçsuz bulundu" iddiasına yalanlama	Hürriyet	2.10.16	Hürriyet News	World
Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS	Kuşadası'nda iki hayat kadınında AIDS çıktı	Mynet	12.10.16	İHA-DHA	Life
Prostitution operation in Aydın: 2 people diagnosed with HIV virus	Aydın'da fuhuş operasyonu: 2 kişide HIV virüsü tespit edildi	Hürriyet	13.10.16	DHA - İHA	Current Events
Assertion of "AIDS in imported banana" increased local banana sales	İthal muzda AIDS" iddiası yerli muz satışlarını arttırdı	Hürriyet	31.10.16	DHA	Local News
The aim at HIV is 90-90-90	HIV'de hedef 90-90-90	Hürriyet	30.11.16	Reporter	Current Events
The Head of HATAM Prof. Dr. Serhat Ünal: "A big progress is made in medicine regarding HIV disease; however discrimination continues"	İstanbul Haberleri: HATAM Başkanı Prof. Dr. Serhat Ünal: "HIV hastalığında tıpta büyük aşama kaydedildi ancak ayrımcılık devam ediyor"	Hürriyet	30.11.16	DHA	Local News
Daunting numbers for AIDS in Turkey	AIDS'te Türkiye için ürküten rakam	CNNTürk	30.11.16	DHA	Health
Awareness increased, AIDS's increase slowed down	Farkındalık arttı, AIDS'in artış hızı kesildi	CNNTürk	30.11.16		Health
Distributed preservatives on World AIDS Day	Dünya AIDS Günü'nde prezervatif dağıttılar	Hürriyet	1.12.16	DHA	Local News
Galatasaray uniform to child with AIDS from Minister Kılıç	Bakan Kılıç'tan, AIDS'li çocuğa Galatasaray forması	Hürriyet	1.12.16	DHA	Local News
Apple applications turn red	Apple uygulamaları kırmızı renge büründü	Hürriyet	1.12.16	Hürriyet News	Technology
Distributed preservatives in Izmir, those ashamed did not accept	İzmir'de prezervatif dağıttılar, utananlar almadı!	CNNTürk	1.12.16	DHA	Turkey
Today is World AIDS Day	Bugün Dünya AIDS Günü	Mynet	1.12.16		World
The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing	Türkiye'de AIDS tehlikesi artıyor	Mynet	1.12.16	Deutsche Welle Turkish	Health
AIDS is no longer fatal	AIDS artık ölümcül değil	Mynet	1.12.16		Current Events
"Deaths caused by AIDS is decreasing in the world"	"Dünya'da AIDS'ten ölümler azalıyor"	Hürriyet	2.12.16	DHA	Local News
AIDS is emphasized in Balcalı	Balcalı'da AIDS'e dikkat çekildi	Hürriyet	2.12.16	DHA	Local News
AIDS test from Rihanna and prince of England	Rihanna ve İngiltere prensinden AIDS testi	CNNTürk	2.12.16		Health
They had a test for HIV	HIV testi yaptırdılar	Hürriyet	3.12.16	Foreign News	World
AIDS education for university students	Üniversite öğrencilerine, AİDS eğitimi	Hürriyet	9.12.16	DHA	Local News
The biggest prejudice: "Don't touch him, he has AIDS"	En büyük önyargı: "Ona sakın dokunma, onda AIDS var"	Hürriyet	15.12.16	DHA	Local News

Appendix C. Coding Frames

Table C.1 Coding Frame for News Consumption Patterns

Frequency	Everyday Daily Rarely Twice a day If come across
Medium	Television Internet Online news sites
News source	Online news sites Newspaper websites Foreign news sites LGBT organizations' web sites Associations' websites Social media • Facebook • Facebook groups • Twitter Google Alerts
Tools	Computer Smart phone Mobile phone Television

Table C.2 Coding Frame for Access

Means for access	Search engines Links Social media Google Alerts Subscription for newsletters Foreign websites Associations' websites
Possibility of access	Everyone has access Smart phones Internet No limited access for websites Reluctance in access
Accessed online news	No Turkish news Insufficient Incorrect Twisted Untrustworthy Annoying Sensational Not useful News content • World AIDS Day • Numbers • Doctor statements • Events • Crimes Associations/Connotations • Prostitution • Fatal disease • Contagious • Gay disease • Sexually transmitted disease • Sex with monkeys • Social morality

Table C.3 Coding Frame for Patterns of Participation

Types of participation	Google Alerts Foreign news sites Facebook groups Newsletter subscription Twitter Search engines Blogs Comment E-mail to the editor Surveys
Reasons for participation	Negative reporting Incorrect information Incorrect use of terminology Violation of rights Answering another comment Correcting Satisfaction Mockery
Style of participation	Own name Own name in social media Nickname Anonymous Anonymous for HIV Social concerns • Privacy • Discrimination • Stigmatization • Targeting • Becoming a disadvantaged person • Exclusion • Being exposed
Consequences of participation	News removed Satisfied Exhausting Pointless
Participation of others	Comments • Cruel comments • Stigmatizing comments • Speculative comments • Insulting comments • Defaming comments • Hurtful comments • Negative comments

	Language • Targeting • Accusing • Discriminating • Marginalizing Discourse • Based on anger • Based on violence Prejudice Violation of rights Freedom of thought Usual Common Normal Indifferent

Table C.4 Coding Frame for Content Production

Content production	Means for content production • HIV blog • Associations' website • Facebook page • Book Type of content • Life story • HIV story • Translation
Means for sharing	Social media accounts Facebook Twitter Instagram Facebook groups Whatsapp
Shared news	Positive news • Success stories • Hopeful news • Developments • Treatment Negative news • Incorrect news • Mockery No sharing • Disseminating the negative • Pointless

Table C.5 Coding Frame for Democratic Implications

	Positive/neutral	**Negative**
Debate	Online news sites Facebook groups Place for opinions	No democracy No freedom Unhealthy Meaningless debate Information pollution Opinions only Comments • No follow up • No response
Freedom of expression	Free speech for nonpolitical issues	No free speech No free press No freedom of thought Repression Freedom of defamation Consequences of free speech
Censorship	No for HIV Free to criticize	HIV blocked on media HIV ignored on media Blocked comments • Critical comments • Comment on HIV status • Political comments
Self-censorship	No for HIV	General self-censorship Online self-censorship Swearwords Unsafe space Fear Silence
Surveillance	No for HIV	Blacklist General surveillance Political surveillance Identity exposure No privacy

Table C.6 Coding Frame for Hate Speech in Online News

Existence of hate speech	There is hate speech Consequences of hate speech • Isolation • Reaction of society • Society's perspective Hate speech in comments There is no hate speech • Ignorance • Not on purpose
Problematic issues	Supporting hate speech Promoting prejudice Misleading Stigmatization Discrimination Incorrect information Incorrect data Incorrect language Causing fear Wrong representation Violation of rights Association with sex trafficking Association with immorality Association with LGBT

Appendix D. Transcriptions of In-depth Interviews

Respondent 1 and Respondent 2

Do you follow the news about HIV?

Respondent 1: This is how I follow the news: I receive all of the news about HIV and AIDS in my e-mail through Google Alerts. This way, I see at least two-three news items that appear in online media everyday.

Respondent 2: I receive news from LGBT Associations websites. They digitalize news that takes place in national press. That's how I access news.

Are there any specific news sources that you follow?

Respondent 1: There are a couple of English websites that I follow for following the developments in the field of AIDS. There is not much on the Turkish websites anyway. The news items on these sites are usually like "5 women were caught in Aksaray, and 2 of them have AIDS"

Respondent 2: I specifically follow KaosGL. But they don't write about HIV in particular, but usually, they write positive or negative comments when there is an issue related to HIV. I also use Google Alerts.

Which tools do you use to follow online news?

Respondent 1: I usually follow online news through my cell phone or my laptop.

Respondent 2: I follow online news through my cell phone or my computer at work.

What kind of news do you prefer to read in online news sites?

Respondent 1: In news sites, I read the news in general. There are some online newspapers I read daily. I follow the daily topics and current events from the world. There's no news related to HIV/AIDS on those sites. I don't especially search the news about HIV/AIDS, but if I see it by chance I read it. I read the news that I receive from foreign sites and alerts. Those are enough for me.

Respondent 2: I only read the news that news sites put up as spots. The top 10 news, for example… I check out what's on the country's agenda but I don't specifically search for news about HIV.

When you come across a news item about HIV, do you participate in any way?

Respondent 1: If there is negative reporting, I definitely write a comment. But if there is nothing that bothers me or wrong, I don't do anything. I just read it and it's done. But if there is something negative, misinforming the public, misused terminology or violation of rights, I would write a comment.

Respondent 2: I may comment or send an email to writer of the news and write him there is something wrong in the content of news. And I did that in the past.

Did you get any feedback from these warnings?

Respondent 2: Only a few times, the news got removed.

Respondent 1: I've experienced something like this: a few times, the comments I wrote didn't appear in the comments section. When you write a critical comment, it may not get approved. The fact that you write a comment doesn't mean that your comment will get published. Another thing I experienced is this: I shared my HIV status in a scientific meeting. Later on I read news about myself in an online newspaper which contains that I'm HIV positive, I'm an AIDS patient, my full name. and this spread very quickly. I wasn't aware that the press was there at that meeting but they were. Then we got the news removed by talking to the chief editor and other people in charge.

Isn't that a violation of rights?

Respondent 1: They said that I was right and they apologized. They removed the news and there hasn't been a problem in removing the news.

When participating, do you use your own name?

Respondent 1: I participate anonymously.

Respondent 2: I participate anonymously. If my participation is not related to my health situation, I use my name, but if it's related to my health situation I prefer to stay anonymous.

Does the behavior of other participants disturb you?

Respondent 1: Yes, I come across brutal and stigmatizing comments. I see this not just in the comments but also in the news.

Respondent 2: Especially during the first years of my case, I got angry and nervous but I don't react like that any more. I think that people don't know anything; they just say anything they want to say. The wrong or insulting things I read doesn't take anything away from me anymore.

When you encounter situations like this, do you get into a discussion?

Respondent 1: we are over certain things now. Since we encounter people wit diversified mindsets, we got used to their reactions. Generally I'm a person who stays calm tries to explain what is right. I don't remember getting into an argument over the Internet. There were times where I wrote a comment correcting wrong information or language but I can't say that this is a discussion. This is something I do in order to correct media's handle of the issues about HIV/AIDS and how people perceive this.

Do you produce any content related to HIV?

Respondent 1: I have a blog, but I haven't checked it for a long time.

Respondent 2: I write in Kaos. Even if it's not a regular thing, I write an article around 1st of December.

Do you share the news that you read online?

Respondent 1: I don't have much of a relationship with social media, but I only share positive news or success stories. If a negative situation ends in success – if for example, a violation of a certain rights has been corrected – then I may share it. But I usually prefer to share news that would give hope to HIV positive people. Sharing negative news is like this: People's lives are already difficult enough. I wouldn't want to upset or hurt them by putting it in front of them.

Respondent 2: I usually share news on Twitter. Sometimes I share negative or wrong news and make fun of it. For instance, I share a news item like this and say "we are in 2017, look at the news they make" and I do this on my personal account.

Do you think that online news sites provide a space for discussion or debate?

Respondent 1: I don't think news sites offer such a place. But we have a Facebook group, where we can discuss issues between us. In news sites, people write comment under the news and they don't visit the page again. Even when you write them an answer you don't get feedback from them. That's why I don't thin it offers a place for discussion.

Respondent 2: A discussion can only be possible in the Facebook groups mostly consisting of HIV positive people with fake accounts. For example, we have a group with 15 HIV positive people, where we can have a discussion. But it is a closed group.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

Respondent 1: All of us have this reality of self-censorship in our lives. But I'm not saying this for HIV/AIDS. I can write anything I want about HIV/AIDS.

Respondent 2: There is no freedom of expression for last 10 years.

Do you think there is censorship?

Respondent 1: We can't talk about censorship regarding HIV/AIDS. There is no censorship or self-censorship. I can say anything I want about this issue. I can criticize government politics and I can write these any way I like. But about the other issues of the country, I feel the need to apply self-censorship.

Do you feel under surveillance on the Internet?

Respondent 1: No, I don't feel that way because I'm a person who has shared these with my social circle, my work and my family. So there is not much that can be threatening for us.

Respondent 2: No.

Do you think there is enough news about HIV/AIDS?

Respondent 1: I think not. I see news generally around World AIDS Day and they are usually about the number of patients in Turkey or statements of doctors. Other than that, it's mostly news about prostitution.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

Respondent 1: Almost everyone has a cell phone so they have access to the Internet.

Respondent 2: everyone I know has access.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

Respondent 1: when I look at the news about HIV/AIDS, I can't say that I see hate speech. Maybe there used to be in the past but not in recent years. I see news that violates rights though. For example, in news I read recently, a child was infected with HIV in a village in Urfa because of the blood he got from Kızılay. In the photograph, they put a black line over the kid's face but you can see his parents and they even wrote the name of the neighborhood. You have given the name of the village; what difference does it make if you put a black line on the kid's face? You are just exposing that child. That is a violation of rights.

Respondent 2: There is hate speech in the comments rather than news, even more than you would want to hear. There are also swearing and insulting. But I didn't read any news which has direct hate speech in it. Sometimes there may be in the news about prostitution. I mean, in a news that says "prostitutes sleep with everyone and transmits AIDS to all of you," that news has hate speech in its content.

Respondent 3

Do you follow the news?

Actually I don't follow the news. Not any more. Especially I don't follow the news on the television. But I read couple of newspapers on the Internet. Also there is social media but the correctness of news there is debatable.

Which websites do you use to read the news?

I look at news portals like Cumhuriyet and CNN. I also follow the minority portals such as Şalom owned by Jews. There is also another newspaper owned by Armenians. I am also interested in the news about Israel. I also check out news portals in Europe. I follow the news about minorities because I'm interested. In order to check the correctness of what is said and what is not said in Turkey I follow the European news sites. In addition, there are news sites I follow concerning my status and recent treatment.

Which tools do you use to access news?

I follow the news portals through my phone or PC. I never use television. I don't have anything to do with television because the issues I want to get information about are not presented in the way I want. I only used the Internet. I don't buy newspapers either.

Do you participate in any way in online news sites?

I used to write more comments. Now they started not publishing comments. They approve it less and publish it less. I think there is kind of censorship there.

Can you give an example?

Usually they don't publish the comments I make about my status. Because there is inappropriate language use and sensational news and these are usually discriminating. When I point this out, my comments are not published. I try to correct it but I either don't get a response or simply don't get approved.

Have you ever done anything to correct this situation?

They don't have an intention like this. The all present the news in an indecent way. From Cumhuriyet to Hürriyet and Milliyet, all of them use a very discriminative language and they use it on purpose. I think they do this consciously just to make sensational news like saying that someone injected a needle with AIDS. And the use the word AIDS. There is no such thing as HIV positive or people living with HIV in the news content. And journalists don't want to be educated about this. Of course they're dealing with the country's impostants news. If the population of Turkey is 70-80 million, what significance do 10 thousand have? That's why presenting these news in a correct manner is not important to them because what journalist call 'them' is 10 thousand and 'not them' is 80 million minus 10 thousand. They don't even show this sensitivity to much larger groups who are marginalized in society. These people never tried to use correct language about Jews or sex workers or anyone else. How would they do it for HIV/AIDS?

Do you participate with your own name?

I used to do it both with my own and my nickname. Especially about our status, I use my nickname. For example, I attended the conference. I took place with my nickname there. Because, the names of the attendees were on the website of the conference. This may be unpleasant. Of course, it is based on the wish to not be exposed. Some people don't care about this.

Does the behavior of other participants disturb you on the Internet?

Wrong or incorrect comments may bother me. For example a part leader established an association called 'People with AIDS'. What can you say after that? Even some of the doctors have prejudices. All in all, it's not just in media; it's everywhere and this reflects on media. We can't separate the behavior of society and the behavior of media; media tries to meet the expectations of society. In order to sell, they make news according to people's expectations and value judgments. If you don't speak up, they hold you down; if you do speak up, they don't hear you.

Do you produce any news content online?

I wrote stories related to my own life. Also, I make news in Facebook related to HIV/AIDS, about treatment and developments and I make translation.

Do you share online news?

I share the news that I make. But I usually share them on my Facebook account. Also, I share negative news related to people living with HIV to show bad things are happening. There is also situation like this: People want to hide that they read such news. For example thousand people read the post I share but they don't like it or write a comment. According to me they don't want to be related to this. So they are not participating.

Is there any news that you share because of discriminatory language?

Of course… For example, they made this news. A child died in an accident. They shared all of his photos saying that he had AIDS. They tested everyone at the accident site. They also put the pictures of his family, as if the child committed a crime. He died but he couldn't get rid of his situation. I share such news but who reads what I write? Only people who are in my status or people who are suspicious or curious read what I write. And I don't think I can reach to a lot of people.

Do you think online news sites of a milieu for debate?

In order for online news to do that, there should be democracy; there should be freedom. I don't think that is the case.

Have you ever been a part of discussion in news sites?

Maybe in the past; but not anymore… There is no need. Who sees it? There used to be scoring for comments or people would write something under your comment. But that doesn't exist anymore. Especially there are no comments for political issues. For example look your friends' posts in Facebook. Compare the posts, which are "open to all" and the ones "open to my friends only". Whenever the ones with "open to my friends only" turns into "open to all" than that means there is hope. That is a sign for me. I am not talking about personal posts. Whenever general posts turn into "open to all" than we will realize that fear has gone.

Can we say that there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

No. Even if there is, we see the consequences. You can express yourself freely, but its consequences show that there is no such freedom.

Have you ever experienced any problem about censorship?

Not besides my comments. I have posts on my Facebook account. But those are not comments related to politics. So I have not faced such a problem. But there is

self-censorship for sure. People actually prevent themselves and think that " I shouldn't say this or that."

Do you apply self-censorship?

Not about the issue related to HIV/AIDS because there is no politics there. I mean its political value is not that high. Only access to treatments may be related with the policy of government. But it is not a dangerous subject for politics. But you think about what you share like "what to say", "what not to say", " how to say it" and "who can see it".

Do you think you are under control or surveillance on the Internet?

I think everyone is so. It is not only directed to HIV. I think all people can make the blacklist very easily by technology.

Do you experience any problems in accessing news about HIV/AIDS?

No because I don't have a language barrier. That's why there is no problem.

Do you specifically search for news about HIV/AIDS?

No I am not specifically searching for them. There are some associations that I a member of; so receive e-mails from them as newsfeed. I don't search for news specifically. I subscribe to a newsletter and it comes to me directly.

Do you think there is sufficient news about HIV/AIDS?

The news can be evaluated from the point of sufficiency and also truthfulness. There is news but how much of it is true? The fact that there's news doesn't mean that news is ture, unbiased and has a correct source. There are a lot of news items but it should be true and source of the news should be known. For example, there is news related to herbal medicine but people using this medicine die. According to me, people who read this news are also important. Even if it is true news the people

reading these news may not understand it. News should address the intellectual level of its readers.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet and online news?

There is access to the Internet but not everybody wants to access news. It's not they can't access but rather they don't. There are a lot of people who doesn't care. They don't read the news because their use of the Internet is very different.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

I think there are news that support hate speech. I've never read anything that directly involves hate like 'let's kill all of them'. But I think there are news that trigger prejudices. They always say "HIV does not kill but prejudices do". I see statements in news not generating hate but supporting prejudices. I think there is hate speech towards minorities, gays and sex workers but not about HIV.

Do you do something when you come across such news?

I send an email to whoever wrote the news. Also I put everyone to cc, editor or whoever is responsible.

Did you ever receive an answer to these e-mails?

No, I did not. They don't even care.

Respondent 4

Do you follow the news?

I try to follow the news.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

I follow the news more from online sites. Mostly, I read the news on Hürriyet and Mynet. When I don't have anything else to do, I frequently visit these sites and read news.

Which tools do you use to access news?

Frankly, I don't read the news on my phone. I don't like it. Usually I read the news when I am in front of my computer. I guess I spend 15-20 minutes everyday to read the news online.

Do follow or search for news in particular about HIV/AIDS?

I don't think there is healthy data in news related to HIV and people living with HIV in our country. So I don't search for news related to this issue. Especially there isn't such news on news sites. If I get to see one by chance I read it to see where it has violation of rights. Other than that, I prefer to read the news that I can get information about actual agenda of the country and the news related to art, which is my special interest.

Do you participate in any way in online news sites?

I don't feel the need to comment because I see very speculative comments under news items, and I choose not to be a part of these exhausting processes. If there is any information I can take personally, I take it and move on or I evaluate different perspectives there in my own way.

Do you use your own name while participating?

I participate with my own name for general topics but for HIV, I have concerns about appearing with my full name in online platforms. I prefer to take place in online platforms about HIV anonymously except for one group on Facebook.

May I ask why you prefer to stay anonymous?

I experience social anxiety about privacy, especially discrimination and stigmatization even though I try to face my worries. I have some worries because I don't want to become a disadvantaged person in my carrier or my personal journey. Other than this, because I believe we are not a society that has existing healthy information about HIV and AIDS or that tries to find healthy data or make a research about this; I don't want to be targeted by anyone or experience discrimination. I suppose, I feel sensitive about it.

Do you feel disturbed by the behavior of other participants?

Whatever the topic is, it makes me very uncomfortable to see that people who make comments constantly prefer a language that is targeting, accusing, discriminating and marginalizing for any group in society, any community or any individual because of their HIV, their gender, their sexual orientation or their political stand. I find it very out of line that people make judgments about lives of humans with such big prejudices and I describe it as a violation of human rights.

Do you produce any news content about HIV/AIDS?

I personally try to make translation to share healthy data with our society about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health by following articles produced by international research centers. If it is something that interests me, I try to disseminate it through my social media accounts or I share these translations with associations and institutions that work in this area in order for them to reach more people.

Do you share the news you read online?

I could say very rarely. I am thinking what kind of news I shared so far. Because the news I read usually has a content that violates certain rights and marginalizing language. That's why I am sensitive about spreading it and I prefer not to spread such news. But if I can trust the correctness of the knowledge and the wording, then I can share it. Unfortunately I didn't get to see such news in online newspapers in our country. Unfortunately, even while making news about people having bad experiences and victimization I see that the language used causes the

victimization of the person and the family. This makes me unhappy. And there is no respect to privacy. Of course to make news and share it and spread it is a freedom of speech but while doing this if you cause violation of rights you should stop and think about it. I always see a side. I mean belonging to a side but it is becoming difficult to be on the objective side.

Do you think that online news offers a space for debate?

I don't participate in discussions and I don't find it very healthy. I don't think it is healthy to argue about such important subjects on the Internet.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

I believe the answer is absolutely no. First of all I think that there are serious problems related to freedom of the press. We can think of any decision-making mechanism about this. Because there is marginalizing and one sidedness, the sides force each other for serious discrimination. And this reflects to the whole society. Therefore the sides in the society have directed weapons to each other. I mean this in a figurative way. Everybody is alerted, inclined to fight with each other. So I am thinking that a certain pressure occurs over the society. So unfortunately we are experiencing some sort of pressure on the Internet like the one we have experienced when we were young in our families worried about what other people might say.

Have you ever experience censorship on the Internet?

Not me in person but I know people who has.

Can you give an example?

I don't want to give an example. In fact, even at this moment I am forced to apply censorship.

Can this be explained with self-censorship?

Exactly; because personally, we feel in an unsafe space. Because we feel this way, our freedom of speech doesn't exist. So we are forced to apply self-censorship to feel safe because we don't want to be hurt due to some ridiculous reasons.

Do you feel that you are under surveillance on the Internet?

Yes, I definitely know that the contents of our posts on social media are kept under control. But I don't want to talk about this.

Do you think that there is enough news about HIV and AIDS?

I absolutely don't think so. Because this is a taboo in the society-I actually don't want to express it this way- it is almost impossible to reach healthy data through the Internet. Although there are so many studies, researches and articles made on the international scale, it is very likely that you encounter twisted news even when they are use this data. That is why as a person living with HIV, I to share healthy data with our society.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

There used to be hate speech, but I don't believe there is direct hate speech anymore. I believe because of ignorance, there are stigmatization and discrimination, and use of statements that would promote hate, but I believe this is done indirectly and unconsciously. There is, however, use of wrong information, wrong data, wrong tone or language, and violation of privacy.

Respondent 5

Do you follow the news?

I do not follow the news very much. I read them only if I come across one.

Where do you come across them?

I usually find them on social media. There are groups about HIV on Facebook. I follow the news from there. I am a member of 2-3 groups.

Which tools do you use to follow the news?

I use my cell phone.

Do you access the news related to HIV through groups on Facebook

I wouldn't say it is that. I already have been living with HIV for 20 years. Instead of trusting the news I prefer to ask my doctor.

Do you show any participation on the Internet?

I don't participate related to HIV. But if someone needs help I get in touch with him just to help him. Other than that I don't use the Internet to get information because the Internet platform is full of information pollution. For example, I met someone a year ago. He was about to go mad. He told me some day: "Sister, we have six more months to live. Is it true?" I just laughed. If it's true, how am I still alive living 20 years with HIV? There is a lot of wrong information on the Internet.

Is the Internet useful in anyway for you?

I'm just spending time. It is useful for that.

Do you use your own name on the Internet?

Yes, I don't have a problem with that because the people I'm close with know that I'm HIV positive. But people who are not on my close circle doesn't know. For example, my landlord or the people in my neighborhood don't know. I don't think they would let me live here if they did. This is the biggest problem. Even my own family doesn't accept me. I get excluded this way. Actually when I think about what I share on the Internet, I don't share anything about HIV because I don't know how people are going to react. That's why, I suppose, I can use my own name.

Can you tell me a little bit more about the exclusion you experience?

I've experienced some really big problems for a while. As a last resort, I've decided to have someone make a news article about me and I did. A news agency ade the news and it was published in all newspapers. and then, the owner of the hotel that I was staying in kicked me out. I've also experienced being exposed. A man exposed me with my photographs on a website saying that this woman is transmitting AIDS. I2ve pressed charges right away but the prosecutor didn't think of it as a crime. So I couldn't do anything else.

Does the behavior of other people on the Internet disturb you?

What is disturbing for me is not the behavior of people I don't know but people that are close to me. My own family excludes me. Is there anything beyond this?

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

Yes, the do.

Do you think that there is enough news or information about HIV on the Internet?

I used to follow the news. I can't say that there is enough news but rather there are a lot of wrong information. That's why I stopped following the news. The news out there really bothered me because they describe AIDS as a fatal transmittable disease. Whereas the food I make can be eaten; the dishes I was can be used. These kind of wrong information affects us. Also, I don't think people care about this issue. They either just read the news and move on or they don't even read it. This disease is known as gay disease, prostitute disease or the disease of people who have been with too many partners. They don't even understand when you say that you are HIV positive. Ans when you say that you are carrying the AIDS virus, all they are thinking about is whether you are doing that profession as well.

Respondent 6

Do you follow the news?

Yes, I do it twice a day, usually in the morning and the evening.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

I look at news on the television in the morning and in he evening; and during the day, I look at them on the Internet in my office. There are some websites that use. I visit that website a couple of times.

Which news sites do you follow?

I use NTV. I use Mynet. Also, there is a news site called Son Dakika. And locally, there is a website called Ege Haber in İzmir, I use that.

Then can we say that you consume news through television and the Internet?

Yes, but that wasn't always the case. I recently quit using Facebook and Twitter. Under normal circumstances, I used to follow everything from there. But when I stopped using them, I started using news sites and television to keep up with current events. Because of my job, I have to be aware of what's going on in the country.

Do you follow the news about your status?

I generally follow the current events. About HIV/AIDS, I use the website of PozitifİZ. There is a page on Facebook; I follow that. I also follow Pozitif Yaşam Association on Facebook and Twitter.

Do you show any participation on these news sites?

I constantly write comments, I write comments everyday.

What kind of news do you write comments for?

I can't write comments underneath political news anyway because the turn off comments for them. Besides that, I write comments about all kinds of news. I can write a comment both for tabloid news and technology news. But these days, I specifically leave comments on news about violence. I have written some solid comments under news on violence. I do not know how much they are being read but I satisfy myself.

Do you use your own name for this participation?

80 percent of the time, I write with my own name. For the 20 percent… if there is politics involved, I mean I I'm writing a political comment, I don't use my own name. but for tabloid news, for example, I write with a ridiculous nick name that contains irony in it. For example, for news about education, I write with the nickname "uneducated"; but the way I write it, it's apparent that I'm not uneducated but the name above the comment appears to be uneducated. It feels good to do this. But my intention here is not to be anonymous, but rather show a reaction I guess. I'm leading a very open life anyway. I don't hide my sexual identity, my life style, the company I work for or that I'm positive in anyway. I'm a completely open person.

Does the behavior of other participants disturb you in online news sites?

Yes, they do. If that's the case for example, I leave a comment under a news item that I normally wouldn't do. I feel like I should say this to him/her.

Do you write comments for news about HIV?

Yes, I do. Very recently, there was a news item about woman who wasn't accepted in the hospital to give birth because she is HIV positive. I visited all of the news sites and wrote comments on every one of them. And I did this by saying that I'm HIV positive. And I received some reactions on these websites. What I mean by website is other comments that others wrote under my comments.

Can you give an example for these comments?

The underlying meaning of all of them was this: this is a dirty thing. All of them were insults. There were people who were afraid to be living on the same land as me or afraid to be buried under with me. Apparently, we are going to be limed before we are buried underground. How sad is it that they can write a comment saying that the imam who prays for me would be committing a sin without even knowing anything about my beliefs or my religion? But this is very normal for me. Am I bothered by it? Of course I explode at some point; I'm a human. But what do I do? I curse for example. But instead of exploding outside, I write a comment and feel relieved.

Do you produce any news content about your status?

No, there is nothing I do in that way.

Do you share online news in anyway?

Of course, I share news through my Instagram account or through Whtasapp. If it is a news about HIV, we have this Whatsapp group here, I send it to them and find out their opinions. If there are news about a topic I defend or I politically agree with, then I send it to three to five of my friends. And I constantly receive news like this from them during the day.

What kind of news do you share?

Usually I share news about developments. For example, a doctor in Armenia found a vaccine. This is a huge development. I found this news and searched for others and sent them to my friends.

Do news sites provide a space for discussion?

Of course they do. In news sites I use, I can see what other people think and how they respond to my thoughts. The fact that people with different ideas can be in the same place, even if it is to insult one another, is very important. I think it presents a milieu for discussion.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

We don't have freedom of speech in any part of our lives. We are not even free in our own beds, let alone be free about speech. Freedom of speech is not possible in this country when we are not even free in our private lives. We don't have any freedom since the moment we are born let alone freedom of speech. We are individuals educated, guided and shaped by certain things. It's religion for some people and other things for others. I don't think any of us has freedom of speech. We do have freedom of defamation. We express ourselves through defamation. Is this called freedom of speech? No, it is not. In my opinion, if there were free speech in this country, there would not be so many intellectuals in prison; they would be still out there defending my opinions. Of course there is something political about this. People's freedom of thought is based on the political leader of the country and so is the freedom of expression. That's why none of us has freedom of expression.

Have you ever ben censored in online news sites?

I experience this everyday. My comments are not published because they first go to the editor. Only after the editor approval, they can be published. Unfortunately, I have a lot of comments that are not published.

What is the content of your unpublished comments?

It depends on the website and their political standpoint. The things I write about political leaders are not published depending on the website. But it's always political comments. When I curse, for instance, they get published. But if I write something about the leaders of the country, they don't.

Do you apply any self-censorship?

Yes, but I do it mostly about cursing. I do curse, but I try not to write it there or I simply imply it.

Do you think there is censorship or self-censorship about HIV or AIDS?

No. I've never seen a reaction about HIV/AIDS in any part of my life. It's just that other people's insults about HIV get published but when I write insulting things about certain people, they don't get published.

Do you think that you are under surveillance on the Internet?

As an HIV positive person, I don't think that we are under surveillance or that someone is following us; but politically, it is as if we are all wearing a chip. That's why I moved away from social media a little bit. We see that people are getting arrested because of one tweet.

Do you specifically search for news about HIV/AIDS?

Yes, I do. I use search engines like Yandex or Google but it's not very possible to find news in Turkish or news sites or information sites in Turkish. Under normal circumstances, when you type the word AIDS, you may come across news like "a transvestite jumped from sixth floor and fell on a man" in Turkish news sites. But in a news site from England, you can find a news item about the new treatment found in Armenian hospital and that it is beneficial in certain ways and when the treatment will begin. It's not possible to find news like this in Turkey. ın Turkey, you can only see the news about that transvestite that jumped from the building with the word AIDS written in giant letters.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

Yes they do and I believe that most people around the world has access.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

Not against my personality but when I read the news or visit websites, I know that there is hate speech against my positive identity in a serious level. However, this is not a bad think. The reason for this to be perceived as bad is based on thinking that this is a sexually transmitted disease. And of course there is the thing about having intercourse with monkeys. Of course people think this way because the news presents it this way. There is nothing against my personality but about our diagnosis, about this virus that we obtained, the situation is very bad. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to find good news.

Respondent 7

Do you follow the news?

I don't follow the news very much because I don't want to hear bad things anymore. But of course I can't isolate myself from the outside world. So even though it's rare, I read the news.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

I usually use the Internet. Because I'm in front of my computer all day, if I'm going to read the news, I do it on my computer.

Which news sources do you follow?

There are not any sources that I follow in particular but in order to read news, I suppose I look at Hürriyet first. other than this, if I come across a link, I may visit that website and check it out. But they're usually news sites. In addition, if I need to get information in an urgent manner, for example if I hear from someone that there has been a bombing, then I look at Twitter to get news. But only in a situation like this… Regularly, I don't use Twitter very often.

Which tools do you use to read these news items?

Like I said, I usually read the news from my computer. Only if I need to get news on an urgent matter, then I use my phone. Other than that, I don't have the habit of reading news regularly on my phone.

Do you follow the news that only concerns your status?

I don't have the habit of following the news in particular. I read the news if I come across one whether it's about HIV/AIDS or not. But I don't especially search for news about HIV/AIDS. There are websites of associations; I find information there but I don't know if we can call it news.

Do you show any participation in online news sites?

I don't write comments or something else about HIV/AIDS because I don't wan to deal with it. These kind of processes are a little exhausting for me. Like I said, sometimes I don't even want to read the news. Other than that, if a see a survey, for example, that I find interesting, I would participate; but I've never seen a survey about AIDS so far.

While participating, do you use your own name?

I don't participate much anyway; but even if I were, I would do it anonymously because not everyone around me knows that I'm HIV positive. I wouldn't want to be exposed like this. But for example, I use my own name on Facebook, but I don't share anything about HIV or AIDS there.

Do you produce any news content about your status?

I told my story in a blog but it's not something I do regularly. Plus, I suppose it doesn't count as news. I just explained how I got infected and the process after that.

Did you share this on your own accounts?

No. It was a piece that I wrote with a nickname anyway and I didn't share it with others saying that I wrote this because most people around me doesn't know that I'm HIV positive.

Do you share the news that you read online?

Since I don't read a lot of news, I can't say that I share them. Besides I find it unnecessary to share. I mean, what is the point? If someone wants to read it, they would open the news site and read it anyway.

Do you think that online news sites provide a space for discussions?

No. I find it a little meaningless. I mean, someone writes a comment and then you write one. So? Who is reading it? Only the person who writes the next comment reads it but that's not a discussion. When you write a comment, you don't even turn on the page again to see if someone replied you. Plus, what can you really discuss about this topic in online news sites? People only write their opinions and according to me, that's not a discussion.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

Of course there is freedom of expression but we should look at what happens after you use your right to freedom of expression. I don't know how an ordinary citizen can use his/her freedom of expression right while even journalists are getting arrested because of what they say. I mean, there is still freedom of expression about non-political issues; but I think saying something about politics is impossible.

Does this mean that we can talk about self-censorship about this?

Yes, of course. I suppose it is self-censorship. Being afraid of what might happen to us if we say something, and then not saying it…

Do you apply self-censorship about HIV/AIDS?

I've never thought about it but it may count as self-censorship that I don't share anything about this subject. It's not a situation like I really want to write something but I don't. IT's just that I don't say anything because I don't want my HIV status to be revealed. Perhaps this means that I'm restricting myself. In this sense, then, I can say that I apply self-censorship in terms of HIV/AIDS.

Do you think that you are under surveillance with what you write or share?

Not in a way that someone is directly spying on me; but in general, I'm concerned that my status will be exposed. I guess that's why I don't share much about this issue. For example, even when I wrote that blog piece, I was worried that whether someone would find out that it was me who wrote it from my IP address or something like that.

Do you find the news that you can access sufficient?

I think there could be more news about HIV. About treatment, about developments… It is always news on an event about HIV/AIDS. Instead of this, it would be better if there were more news that would be beneficial for us.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

Of course they do; but I don't know if everyone looks at online news.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

I can't say that I observe hate speech very much. I mean the news itself doesn't bother me very much. It's just that some news are about prostitution, but they write it as if the impostant thing there is the who sell themselves have AIDS. But in fact, the news is about something else. I don't find it right. Other than this, I suppose I can't say that there is direct hate speech in the news.

Respondent 8

Do you follow the news?

Yes, I do.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

Mostly from the Internet… Sometimes at home if the news channel is open on the television, but I don't specifically turn on the news on television. If I'm going to read the news, I do it on the Internet.

Which news sites do you follow?

I look at Mynet, for instance, and also Hürriyet but rarely. Other than that, if there is a link to news on Fcaebook or Twitter, I open that link and read the news on whichever website it's on.

Which tools do you use to read these news items?

I mostly use my computer to read the news. But if I'm checking out Twitter on my phone for instance, and see a link, I click it read the news from my phone.

Do you follow the news items that only concern your status?

No, I generally follow the current events of the country. Looking at news about HIV/AIDS doesn't have much of a meaning anyway. If I want to get information, I sue foreign sources but they are not news sites. there are websites of associations, where I can generally find current developments or in a simple way, I just ask my doctor.

Do you participate in news sites?

Sometimes I write comments but not just about HIV/AIDS. I write comments on those kind of news as well but only with the purpose of correcting wrong information. Other than that, I can't say that I participate a lot.

Do you correct the information in the news content?

Yes, mostly… For example, in a recent news item, they've written that Turkey has entered the risky countries category. As far as I know, this is not the case. So I left a comment about this.

Do you reply other comments on news sites?

I don't usually temp to do that because I don't want to engage in a fight. There are very hurtful comments and I can't deal with that. My comments are mostly directed at news.

When you write a comment, do you use your own name or stay anonymous?

I use my own name because I don't say that I'm HIV positive there. I just share my knowledge like a conscious citizen.

Do people around you know that you are HIV positive?

They do; most people around me do. But still I don't walk around saying that I'm HIV positive.

Do you have the opportunity to make news about your status?

No, I've never tried to do that. The only thing that I write on the Internet related to news is comments.

Do you share the news that you read online?

I share them this way: we have a Facebook group as HIV positive people. Sometimes, if there is and important information in news I read, I share it with my friends in that group.

Do you share them on you own account?

No, not really. I'm not activist person about HIV. Not all of my friends in social media know about my status. I mean I don't particularly try to hide it but I don't want to make an extra effort to mention it either.

What kind of news do you share?

I share news about positive developments. Besides this, there is a lot of ridiculous news. I don't share them. I share the news only if I think that it would be helpful.

Do you think that online news sites provide a space for discussion?

I don't know if one can call it a space for discussion. Online news sites may provide a place for people to express their opinions but I don't think that it's an appropriate milieu for discussion. Especially in news about AIDS, it turns into unilateral swearing instead of a discussion. Those who read the news list different ways of how bad we are underneath the news. In my opinion, this cannot be a place for debate.

Do you think that there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

It depends on the subject. I think there is freedom of expression in terms of HIV/AIDS. I've never heard anyone saying that they couldn't express what they wanted to say. Bout about politics, for instance, we know very well that none of us has freedom of expression.

Have you ever been censored on the Internet?

No, but like I said, I don't write extreme things. I only correct the things I know as a conscious citizen.

Is there any situation where you applied self-censorship?

About HIV/AIDS, there is not. If I want to write something, I write it. But sometimes you feel reluctant to wirte a comment under news about politics because it feels like someone is always controlling these and that they are going to catch us.

Then do you think that you are under surveillance?

I don't want to act that paranoid but we hear that people go to jail because of one post they share. But I don't think this applies to HIV positive people but it may happen about political issues. Why would the government want to follow us on the Internet? It knows all of our HIV status anyway.

Can you find news regarding your status?

Actually there is news about HIV but not many. I mean I usually see sensational news. They make news saying that "their numbers have increased too much" or "someone has AIDS and he/she infected another in this way". Finding news that has beneficial information for us doesn't seem very possible.

Do you specifically search for news about your status?

I don't specifically write AIDS to Goggle and search for news. I read it if I come across one. But, for instance, if news I read mentions a new treatment method, I try to find more information about that; but this doesn't happen very often in news sites. I can usually find this kind of information on the websites of associations that work on this issue.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

They probably do. With smart phones, I don't think there is anyone who doesn't have access to the Internet.

Do you think there is hate speech in online news?

I don't know if it's hate speech but I think there is a situation caused by wrong information. I mean, when there is an information in the news saying that "their number has increased too much," people are more scared. In fact, this is a situation, which can be easily taken under control with early diagnosis. But we learn these things only after we are diagnosed. In general, maybe because there is a situation where HIV positive people are either gay or sex workers, news is obliged to present it like this; but I don't think this is right.

Respondent 9

Do you follow the news?

I do, yes.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

Right now, I read news on the Internet.

Are there any websites that you specifically follow?

I look at the pages of well-known main newspapers. Hürriyet, Sözcü, HaberTürk, Sabah, Milliyet, CNN… I also read same news on different websites.

Which tools do you use to read the news?

Mostly my phone. Well, my phone and my computer.

What kind of news do you read?

Generally, I read the news about current events. I also read columns and check out news details. Besides, I use the search engines of news sites and see what other news are there about this subject.

Do you search for news specific to HIV and AIDS?

Of course. By the way, since I'm a one-year diagnosis, when I experience a problem about this subject, I look at various positive blogs and websites for articles. But this is mostly to get information. For news, I can say this: You know what is out there as news. There isn't much information. However, when there is a news article about HIV, I read it for sure. But these are generally scandalous.

Do you participate in anyway in online news sites?

I don't do anything on the Internet. I did something like this: I wrote a book not about the health part but about the psychological part of this. I told the story of my life, my thoughts, my traumas, and my personal life without giving any personal details, but it's not published yet. I've sent it to an editor and I'm waiting for a pre-assessment.

Then we cannot talk about participation in online media, can we?

No, I don't show any participation in that sense. Besides, I don't have any social media accounts either. I mean I don't use them in an active way.

Does the behavior of other participants disturb you?

You mean like comments? I do not read comments on purpose, but I still look at them; and of course there are things that bother me but I think it is very natural because not everyone has to think the same way. Frankly, I find it normal.

Do you share the news that you read on the Internet?

Yes I do. I do it through Whatsapp.

What kind of news do you share?

They could be about careers or about personal life like the story of someone who has been diagnosed with HIV.

You mentioned that you do not show much participation but do you think that news sites offer a medium for discussion?

I believe that excessive amount of information does not mean good information. Correct information should reach correct people in a correct way. Doesn't everyone have the right to know everything? Of course they do but I think that information pollution distracts us from where we need to reach. Because of this information pollution, we don't see the things we should see or it distracts us from the things that we need to focus on. I don't think being able to access everything is that advantageous.

Can you give an example?

Speaking of HIV in specific, people already have a lot of wrong information. In addition to this, this kind of thinking and wrong information can reach a whole new level through media.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

I think there is sufficient freedom of expression. I mean both in our country and in the world, freedom of expression became an open-ended concept. But of course, what kind of freedom is this? Can we actually express the right things and do our expressions find their right place? Do they reach the right people?

Do you think there is censorship on the Internet specific to HIV/AIDS?

There might be. There are a lot of taboos in the first place. Although we do not experience any limitation by the state in terms of health related issues, I think a lot of the other related issues are either blocked or ignored in media because of these social taboos.

Do you find the news that you can access sufficient?

Absolutely not. I'm a university graduate. I think I know a lot and read a lot but it turns out that I knew nothing until I was diagnosed. First of all, I learned that my point of views was completely wrong. I think this is because HIV is associated with different things on the basis of social morality. After being diagnosed, we call it diagnosis, not disease; and I really understood why. Reality and the things we learn from media are very different. That is why I can say that news are definitely insufficient, blocked, not shown and not shared.

Do you feel that you are under surveillance or control on the Internet?

All the time… That's why I closed all of my social media accounts. Only because of this reason, I've never used Facebook.

Well, do you feel the need to apply self-censorship?

I think people has the need to apply self-censorship but I overcame this by writing. Sharing your thoughts is not just sharing a photo or a sentence on social media. I preferred to put my thoughts into paper. Instead of thinking that your thoughts could be seen everywhere on the Internet or they could be censored and not share, expressing my thoughts in a medium that has a narrower scope allowed me to share my thoughts in a more liberating way.

Do you think that everyone has access to online news?

Everyone with a phone has access and everyone has smart phones now. This is actually what I've been talking about earlier. Everyone has access to everything at all times, but how much of a freedom is it that everyone can write anything? And how much privacy do we have left? Frankly, it bothers me that people know everything. This has become an addiction.

Do you think there is hate speech towards you in the news?

I think there is hate speech. This bothered me for a long time and I suppose this was the reason for me to move away and isolate myself: the reaction and perspective

of society… But now I'm passed it mostly because I'm much healthier than before I was diagnosed. I don't see it as a problem anymore. In general I would like to say this: access to information is very problematic. People evaluate it wrong and their perspectives are different. They don't know anything about this subject and they don't make an effort to learn. This needs to be fixed. For example, cancer patients can share their disease with others and continue with their lives; it should be like this for HIV, as well. Frankly, I wouldn't want to get cancer. If I had a choice, I wouldn't choose cancer because if you're conscious, HIV is easier to cope with. But unfortunately, we don't get society's support.

Respondent 10

Do you follow the news?

I try to follow the news. I mean I don't specifically open the news and read them, but I can say that I follow them in general.

Which medium do you use for consuming the news?

I read news on the Internet. I don't buy any newspapers. I suppose the only print media I purchase is magazines, but they don't have news content. I always read the news from newspapers' websites.

Which online news sources do you follow?

I can say that it's usually mainstream media. I mean I look at the websites of newspapers like Hürriyet, Milliyet, Sözcü. In addition, if I want to check out a foreign website, I visit BBC and the Guardian. But I can't say that I visit these websites everyday. I do this only when there is something on world's agenda that I want to get information about.

Which tools do you use to access these news sites?

I usually follow daily news from my phone; but there are times that I read the news from my computer. Or if I'm searching for news about a specific subject, I mostly do this on my computer.

Are there any news sources that you follow about HIV and AIDS?

Not as a news source but there are websites that I check to get information. These are mostly websites of associations. I's not very possible to find current developments in regular news.

Do you participate in any way in online news sites?

I can't say that I participate much. I suppose I settle with just reading the news.

Are you a member of these news sites?

No, I think membership is required just for commenting. Since I don't do that, I'm not a member.

Does the behavior of other participants disturb you?

I don't know if I can call it disturbance. Of course I read what other people write in comments but I find it normal now because what they write is based on ignorance.

Do you have the opportunity to make news about your status?

There's a blog called 'Positive Diary'. I wrote about my own story there, but I don't write anymore.

Did you use your own name in the blog?

No, I used a nickname. You never know how things on the Internet spread. That's why I didn't want to use my own name.

Do you share the news that you read in digital media?

Yes, sometimes I send the news to my friends through Whatsapp. These are usually news about HIV. I don't feel the need to share news about other issues. Only if I see something that I think a friend of mine would be interested, I may send to them, but it's not something I do very often.

What kind of news do you share with others?

Usually I share the news about a news situation about treatment. For example, if I see news about a new vaccination, I send it to people who I think would benefit from this news.

Do you think that online news sites provide a medium for debate?

I can't say that it does for me because like I said, I don't participate in a discussion. But it may do so for people who participate. At least, it gives them the opportunity to express their thoughts on something they read.

Do you think there is freedom of expression on the Internet?

Like I just said, I don't know if we can call it freedom of expression, but in my opinion, people get the chance to express what they're thinking. It's better than nothing. I don't write anything now, but maybe one day, I'll want to write about something that I read. Then, it's good to know that I can do this.

Do you think there is censorship in online media?

I don't know much about this issue. It never happened to me. Besides, I don't think there is censorship about HIV and AIDS. Why would they be censored? I would say that may be insults are censored but it is not the case either because we see insults in comments all the time.

Do you apply self-censorship?

I don't write anything. Does that count as self-censorship? Bıt the reason for not writing is not fear. I just don't feel the need to write.

Do you think that you are under surveillance or control on the Internet?

There might be surveillance practices online but I think it is not specific to HIV positive people. It is apparent on the Internet what everyone is doing. I don't think people are trying to hide it. On the contrary, there is no such thing as privacy anymore. Everyone is trying to show off their lives to other people. That is why we present it very openly even if we are being followed or monitored.

Can you find news items that are of your interest?

There are news on the Internet but news about HIV are not helpful for us. It's always news about an event. News items are like someone with HIV did this, and that person has AIDS. Or there are news about Wordl AIDS Day that come out around 1st of December. So we can find news but its content should be evaluated.

So, can we say that there is sufficient news?

We can't. Like I said, there's news but its content is not beneficial to us. What would I do with the number of people living with HIV in Turkey? Should I feel good about myself that our number is increasing? Instead, tell me about the new research that's being conducted; but unfortunately, that doesn't exist. In order to find that information, I have to make an effort myself. They're not directly presented in the news.

Does everyone around you have access to the Internet?

Yes they do. We are in the age of the Internet. Everyone has access in some way.

Do you think there is hate speech against you in online news?

I can't say that there is hate speech. There used to be in the news… there were news that directly degrade and treat as second-class humans. But now, I think there is misleading news rather than hate speech. Because news doesn't present proper information, society doesn't get informed about HIV. That's where the problem appears. Aren't all of the prejudices against us are based on ignorance? News should be telling the truth.

BIOGRAPHY

Simge Süllü Durul was born on 21 April 1988 in Eskisehir. After graduating from Private Atayurt High School in Eskişehir, she spent a year in Oregon, USA as an exchange student. She received her bachelor's degree from Department of Philosophy at Bogazici University in 2010, followed by her master's degree in communication from Kingston University London in 2011. In 2012, she started the PhD program of Media and Communication Studies in Galatasaray University. Her main area of research involves hate speech, discourse, media ethics and online journalism practices.

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