Online Hate on YouTube: Anti-immigrant Rhetoric Against Syrian Refugees in Canada and Turkey

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Background

With the increase in migration and immigration movements around the world, YouTube as a social media platform is becoming a medium in which perceptions about immigrants are being expressed.

On the one hand, there has been an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric with groups of people such as the Syrians being targeted by hate speech and presented as “others” (Burnap & Williams, 2016; Van Dijk, 2000). Catalyzed by social media, scholars have started to explore the correlations between such online hate speech and offline attacks (Müller, & Schwarz 2017).
Framework

The central objective of this paper is to analyze anti-immigrant rhetoric towards Syrian refugees in the framework of Barker’s (2001) ‘new racism’ (cultural racism) on YouTube. This mediated-cultural racism is, in principle, based on the idea that third world migrants are a group of “others,” who disrupt the taken-for-granted stable national identity and economy in immigrants’ countries such as Canada and Turkey.
Method

We mobilized content analysis on users’ comments on a selection of YouTube videos produced in Canada (English Canada) and in Turkey. While Turkey hosts the most significant number of Syrian refugees worldwide (3.7 million in 2018), 40,081 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada (as of January 2017), meaning the latter resettled more refugees than any other country in 2018 (Statista, 2019).
The Data

- We analyze the first 10 most watched videos on YouTube from each country, in English and Turkish language
  - Only those videos which allowed user comments were included
  - Collected through a search for “Syrian Refugees” for Canada and “Suriyeli Mülteciler” for Turkey
  - See Appendix A & B
- Our sample covers users’ comments published between November 20th, 2018 and November 20th, 2019
  - Total of 6,898 = 1,072 from Canada and 5,826 from Turkey
- Our data was extracted and analyzed with the help of MAXQDA2020
Codes & Themes

We analyzed 20 documents, coding 3,185 hate speech related content, resulting in a catalogue of 45 codes and 11 sub-codes (see Appendix C & D). These codes were then grouped into 6 main themes:

1. Economic, cultural & religious concerns
2. Privileged discourse
3. Xenophobia
4. Insecurities
5. Insults
6. Politics

We developed and catalogued the codes and themes in accordance with the previous hate speech and refugee literature (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Henry & Tator 2002; Krzyzanowski, 2010; Musolff, 2008, 2017; Kohl, 2011; Hart, 2010).
Results – Economic, cultural & religious concerns

**CANADA**
- 48.9% Destroying our economy
- 27.1% Islamophobia
- 18.8% Destroying our culture
- 0.0% Compare to other countries
- 5.3% Immigration policy

**TURKEY**
- 49.0% Destroying our economy
- 22.5% Immigration policy
- 15.0% Compare to other countries
- 0.0% Destroying our culture
- 13.4% Islamophobia
Results – Privileged discourse

CANADA

- 52.5%
- 35.0%
- 0.0%
- 12.5%

- Free money from government
- General Privilege content
- Better than us
- Can travel to Syria
- Our soldiers die for them

TURKEY

- 49.4%
- 21.2%
- 18.9%
- 11.6%
- 11.3%
- 8.8%

- Free money from government
- Better than us
- Can travel to Syria
- Our soldiers die for them
- General Privilege content
Results – Xenophobia

Canada

- 96.3%
- 3.7%

Turkey

- 79.6%
- 11.0%
- 9.3%
Results – Insecurities

CANADA

- 24.3%
- 26.0%
- 9.8%
- 2.1%
- 2.9%
- 17.1%
- 15.0%
- 12.1%

- Illegals
- Remain in camps
- Invasion
- General safety concerns
- Terrorists
- They are Rapist/Pervert
- They must be killed
- Source of disease
- Civil war reference

TURKEY

- 34.8%
- 18.1%
- 12.3%
- 8.0%
- 13.0%
- 5.1%
- 5.1%
- 2.9%
- 0.7%

- Invasion
- Illegals
- Terrorists
- They are Rapist/Pervert
- Civil war reference
- General safety concerns
- Remain in camps
- Source of disease
- They must be killed
Results – Insults

CANADA

TURKEY

- Insult general
- Cowards
- Lazy
- Treators
Results – Politics

CANADA

57.4%

41.0%

TURKEY

63.3%

18.8%
Results – Canada-Turkey overlap
Results – Wordcloud for Canada
Results – Wordcloud for Turkey

Top 10 words: Syrians, Ours, Turkey, Syria, God, Them, Why, Justice and Development Party, Votes, Go Back
Conclusion

Our initial findings show the following of the total sample, 44% of the comments contained xenophobic, Islamophobic, hate or fear content:

- **English Canadian sample:**
  - 43.6% negative (Xenophobic, Islamophobic, Hate, or Fear content), 2.3% positive and 54.1% neutral or unrelated content.
  - The videos analyzed in the Canadian sample were mainly from right-wing authors due to main stream content providers such as CBC disabling comments to their videos despite having higher total number of use.

- **Turkish sample:**
  - 44.5% negative, 1.6% positive and 53.9% neutral or unrelated comments.
  - Similar percentages of negative, neutral and positive comments in the samples from both countries, with negative comments comprising almost half of all comments.
  - The comment “Go home” or its paraphrases stood out in both the Canadian and Turkish samples.
  - Positive comments, though supporting Syrian refugees, often portrayed them as “desperate” or “helpless”.
Conclusion – cont’d

- In both countries, refugees were mostly depicted as “others”, “unwanted group of people”, “milking the country’s resources”, and as “a threat” to national culture and economy.
  - Canadian commentators preferred European or "moneyed" and “legal” immigrants labeling Syrians as “illegal”.
  - While Turkish commentators positioned themselves as “superior” to Arabs and portrayed Syrians as “deprived of civilization”.
- Another difference was that Turkish commentators feared becoming a “minority” in their own country, accusing Syrians of being privileged in Turkey.
Thank you

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References


# Appendix – A List of Top 10 Canadian Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>VIEWS</th>
<th>LIKES</th>
<th>DISLIKES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request for docs on Syrian refugee vetting nets chilling response</td>
<td>Rebel News</td>
<td>18,354</td>
<td>1,299</td>
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<td>Sheila Gunn Reid</td>
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<td>Teen refugee &amp; family face a hard adjustment to Canada</td>
<td>CBC Docs</td>
<td>14,776</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>Sedra</td>
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<td>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada Welcomes New Canadians.</td>
<td>Rogers tv</td>
<td>11,244</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>I Debunk Justin Trudeau's Syrian Refugee Answer at the BC townhall</td>
<td>CanadaPoli</td>
<td>8,294</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Justin Trudeau Turns His Propaganda Machine Up To 11 - Syrian</td>
<td>CanadaPoli</td>
<td>2,895</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Refugee Edition</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>How Toronto FC is helping Syrian Refugees in Canada</td>
<td>Major League Soccer</td>
<td>2,095</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>A West Virginia man speaks about refugees and the effect on locals</td>
<td>RISE CANADA</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>CBC propaganda - Syrian Family imports sick, illiterate parents into Canada</td>
<td>AJ Elicits</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>The Trudeau Years 2015 2019 Pt 3 Syrian Refugees</td>
<td>CCN Cross Canada News</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>Syrian refugees, Elections Canada controversy, yellow vests and</td>
<td>AJ Elicits</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>degenerate Teachers - #clownworld</td>
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## Appendix – B
### List of Top 10 Turkish Videos

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<th>VIEWS</th>
<th>LIKES</th>
<th>DISLIKES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Soramazsın: Suriyeli İ 2. Bölüm</td>
<td>321GO</td>
<td>1,003,656</td>
<td>16,733</td>
<td>2,317</td>
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<td>Ekrem İmamoğlu Suriyeller ile ilgili projesini açıkladı</td>
<td>Yurtttaş TV</td>
<td>581,220</td>
<td>10,863</td>
<td>1,322</td>
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<td>Suriyeller Eylem Yaptı Halkımız İsyan Etti !</td>
<td>İlave Tv</td>
<td>310,405</td>
<td>5,433</td>
<td>789</td>
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<td>SURIYE MÜLTECİ MESELESİ</td>
<td>Haluk TATAR</td>
<td>102,698</td>
<td>5,947</td>
<td>273</td>
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<td>AK Parti'ден Teşkilata Suriyeli Talimatı</td>
<td>TGRT Haber TV</td>
<td>83,052</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>209</td>
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<td>Sarkis Kassarjian: Suriye rejimi mültecilerin dönmesini ıster - DW Türkçe</td>
<td>DW Türkçe</td>
<td>74,913</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>137</td>
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<td>Suriyeli mülteci sorunu: Sosyo-ekonomik boyutu</td>
<td>ATILLA YEŞİLADA</td>
<td>74,556</td>
<td>2,179</td>
<td>146</td>
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<td>Ersan Şen'in Suriyeli Mülteciler Hakkındaki Çarpıcı Açıklamaları!</td>
<td>GERÇEK BİLGİ</td>
<td>66,679</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Suriyeli Mülteciler Kurban Bayramı İçin Ülkesine Gidiyor</td>
<td>İhlas Haber Ajansı</td>
<td>60,133</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>108</td>
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<td>MÜLTECİ KAMPINDA BİR GÜN ! (Türkiye’de İlk)</td>
<td>BEROO</td>
<td>54,397</td>
<td>4,323</td>
<td>229</td>
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Appendix – C
Codes in Canadian sample

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<td>Burden</td>
<td>11.86</td>
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<td>Islamafobia</td>
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<td>Insult general</td>
<td>7.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government responsible</td>
<td>7.42</td>
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<td>Illegals</td>
<td>7.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destroying our culture</td>
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<td>Conspiracy theories</td>
<td>5.30</td>
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<td>General safety concerns</td>
<td>5.08</td>
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<td>Terrorists</td>
<td>4.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free money from goverment</td>
<td>4.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are Rapist/Pervert</td>
<td>3.60</td>
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<td>Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go home</td>
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<td>General Privilege content</td>
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<td>White Canadian</td>
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<td>Invasion</td>
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<td>Many children</td>
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<td>Destroying our economy</td>
<td>1.91</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Profanity</td>
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<td>I don't want Syrians in my Country</td>
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<td>Compare to other countries</td>
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<td>War is over, why are they still here?</td>
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<td>Better than us</td>
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<td>They must be killed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source of desease</td>
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<td>Fake news</td>
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<td>Proud</td>
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<td>Civil war reference</td>
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<td>Lazy</td>
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<td>We deserve this</td>
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<td>Treators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hate Arabs</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
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<td>Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowards</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are people too</td>
<td>0.21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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## Appendix – D

### Codes in Turkish sample

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<td>Free money from government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invasion</td>
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<td>Many children</td>
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<td>Hate Arabs</td>
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<td>They are Rapist/Pervert</td>
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<td>Hospitality is enough</td>
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<td>Go home</td>
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<table>
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<th>Codes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Can travel to Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare to other countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our soldiers die for them</td>
<td>1.40</td>
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<td>Destroying our culture</td>
<td>1.29</td>
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<td>General safety concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fake news</td>
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<td>Water Pipe image</td>
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<td>General Privilege content</td>
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<td>We deserve this</td>
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<td>cheap labour</td>
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<td>Remain in camps</td>
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<td>They are people too</td>
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<td>War is over, why are they still here?</td>
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