

The Sustainability of Refugees and Migrant Communities in Turkey: A Content Analysis of Social Conversations on Turkish Twittersphere

Özen Baş¹, Emel Ozdora Aksak², Christine L. Ogan³

¹Kadir Has University

²Bilkent University

³Indiana University

Abstract

The research addresses what Turkish Twittersphere conversations reveal about public attitudes toward government policy positions on these issues. We examine the level of Turkish people's social distance to the more than 4 million refugees in the country as emerged in the corresponding posts on Twitter. A sample drawn from a total of 500,100 Tweets posted during a two-week period, between June 23 to July 8, 2022, containing specific words related to refugee groups were content analyzed according to a codebook derived from the social proximity attitudes of citizens of the host country toward issues like granting of citizenship, the allowance of permanent residency, and refugees' role in the workforce. Findings reveal that Twitter conversation is in line with the social distance attitudes found in public opinion polls. The research has practical contributions for policymakers as it can help reveal the authentic responses of individuals towards migrant and refugee populations.

Keywords: conversations, host communities, social proximity, sustainability, Twittersphere