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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN TURKEY: PAST PRACTICES, PRESENT  
CONDUCT, FUTURE POTENTIALS

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## **PREFACE**

To the precious star of my life; to my daughter, Mira

Getting this dissertation to the point it has reached today can be seen as a process of finding the missing pieces of a puzzle over the years. I would like to first start with my experience with interdisciplinary studies. My interest in different fields introduced me to political science during my graduate studies. And this process gave me the idea of drawing knowledge from different areas and understanding how relationships among the countries and cultures of the world are based on interconnectedness. Later, this interest in such fields, cultural studies and diplomacy has evolved into a study in which I focus on the impact of digitalisation as a great power that surrounds us in various aspects. From this point of view, in 2016, I wanted to explore digital diplomacy and its conduct in Turkey, which was seen as a relatively new field in diplomacy studies back then. Therefore, with that in mind, I aimed to discover new concepts and practices related to these subjects, which back then had not yet received much attention in our country. Another reason underlying my desire to research this field is that in such a world order that can be defined as technology-driven or hugely affected by technology, it did not seem possible for individuals or countries to be indifferent to changes.

With all these thoughts running through my head, my interest in this subject matter was raised after I attended the 1<sup>st</sup> international conference on digital diplomacy held in Israel in 2016. I had the opportunity to meet and have discussions with many respected scholars who contributed to the study of the subject. However, a big question mark awaiting me at the point where I arrived would remain for a long time. After the conference, I was sure that I had found the topic I was going to work on for my dissertation. Obviously, I was going to try to investigate, understand, and discuss the practice of digital diplomacy in the local context. However, I was having a hard time finding the turning point that would be set the basis for my study and characterise it. In the meantime, I had been working to form the background of the study until July 2016 but I had not known that I was going to

find the answer to the question that I was looking for in the same month. In Turkey, I witnessed the information sharing with the international and local public on Twitter by the Turkish government regarding the process that took place after the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, and the evaluation of the situations that arose after it. In other words, all the signs of digital diplomacy became visible with the contribution of the actors who implement digital diplomacy in this process in Turkey. This way, although I could not see the whole picture clearly at the time, I reached the answer I was looking for and formed the framework of my thesis. In the next period, while doing my research, my primary goal was to explore the dominant discourses and guiding themes that shape the state narratives used in the practice of digital diplomacy in Turkey.

When I was thinking about researching digital diplomacy, my ultimate goal was to explore the dominant discourses and prominent themes emerging after the July 15 coup attempt regarding the implementation of digital diplomacy in Turkey. In this context, I am really happy to have completed my long-term study. Also, in this process, I feel very lucky to have the opportunity to analyse the posts shared as a result of a series of unfortunate events that I personally witnessed.

As a PhD student of Media and Communication Studies Doctoral Program at Istanbul Bilgi University, I would like to express my gratitude to all my professors who contributed to my education.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Erkan Saka for providing me with a unique opportunity to work with him. He provided his expert guidance and encouragement. Beyond his illuminating academic support, I cannot thank him enough for his mentorship and the continuous support he gave at all levels during the troubled times I had.

As the work and completion process of the study was long, the number of thesis monitoring committees that I had with the committee members. I would like to give special thanks to my professors for giving valuable and constructive feedback. My sincere thanks also go to my distinguished professor, Filiz Aydoğan

Boschele, for her thought-provoking questions that help me find my way during the long writing process. I also would like to thank Assoc. Prof. İtir Erhart for helping me realise that I should look at things from different angles thanks to her valuable comments, suggestions and expertise. Last but not least, I also would like to thank other distinguished dissertation committee members Assoc. Prof. Suncem Koçer Çamurdan and Dr. Barika Göncü not only for their time and patience, but also for their invaluable contributions to my study.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my brother, Serter, and my parents Memnune and Tahir Akbuz, for their unconditional love and support. I am endlessly indebted to my dear mother, who gave me the greatest support in completing my PhD, always making me feel that I can do whatever I want in the best way possible. I also thank my father, my silent supporter, for all the support he has given me, which is priceless. Words cannot express how grateful I am to the other family members, including my sister-in-law, Nece, my lovely niece, Masal and my twin nephews Deniz and Ateş.

Furthermore, I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my husband, Sefa Efe Ezgin, for his never-ending love, understanding and support for the last seven years that we have been together. Last but not least, I thank my beloved daughter, Mira, for coming into my life and making me think that everything is possible in this world. The world has become a better place thanks to you.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**AFAD (DEMP):** Ministry of Interior, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

**BaşbakanlıkKDK (OPD):** Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy / The Office of the Ombudsman Institution of Turkey (Official Twitter Username)

**Byegmeng:** Prime Minister's Office (Official Twitter Username)

**CMC:** Computer-mediated Communication

**DAESH:** Acronym for “The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant”

**DOT:** The US Digital Outreach Team

**e- :** Electronic

**EU:** European Union

**FETO / FETÖ:** Fetullahist Terrorist Organisation

**FM:** Foreign Minister

**GPO:** Government Publishing Office

**ICTs:** Information Communication Technologies

**ISIS:** Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

**MFAs:** Ministers of Foreign Affairs

**MIA:** Missing in Action (a military term)

**NATO:** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NYT:** New York Times

**P.M.:** Prime Minister

**PKK:** Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)

**PYD:** Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)

**RT:** Retweet

**RTC:** Real-time Communication

**SMS:** Short Message Service

**SNS:** Social Networking Sites

**TBMM:** Turkish Grand National Assembly

**TRNC:** The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

**TSK:** Türk Silahlı Kuvveleri / **TAF:** (Turkish Armed Forces)

**UEIA:** United States Information Agency

**UK:** United Kingdom

**UN:** United Nations

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Programme

**UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

**U.S.:** United States

**USIA:** United States Information Agency

**VK:** Publisher

**Washington DC:** The District of Columbia (capital city of the United States)

**YTB:** Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

## **ABSTRACT**

The primary goal of this study was to look into new diplomatic activities carried out on the digital platforms in Turkey. As a result of digitalisation, social media has presented appealing opportunities for diplomacy worldwide, so this dissertation focused on digital diplomacy conduct specifically after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt by addressing digital diplomacy activities of Turkish statecraft based on the analysis of Twitter posts. In a nutshell, digital diplomacy as a new type of diplomacy was examined from several angles with regard to views on conceptual definitions, implementation of different diplomacy types such as public and digital diplomacy. Then, at the national level, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of digital diplomacy in Turkey from a historical perspective and its development into diplomacy through Twitter. Afterwards, to understand how diplomacy is performed in Turkey on Twitter, the analysis phase's methods and techniques were used in the analysis phase since the analysis part was analysed thoroughly. Based on the Framework Analysis methodology implemented in this study, the Twitter posts from five accounts, the holders of which act as the leading actors exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey, were analysed for the periods corresponding to July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Finally, the last part of the research was dedicated to interpreting and discussing the findings acquired from the analysis of the data. This part of the research aimed to investigate how the Turkish state has exercised digital diplomacy since the coup attempt concerning newly emerging state discourses. More specifically, in this part of the dissertation, prominent themes obtained from Framework Analysis were evaluated and revealed that Turkish state narratives have overlapping features with Populism.

The study's primary findings revealed that it's worth discussing the major themes with regard to several key notions of Populism by emphasising the parallelism between these themes and Populism concepts. It is critical to investigate Populism's reflections on digital diplomacy in Turkey in the aftermath of the coup attempt in 2016. The findings can be summarised as follows concerning the results

obtained from the Twitter accounts of five government agencies that practise Turkish digital diplomacy.

When the dominant themes identified through the analysis of Twitter posts were interpreted in light of core elements of Populism, these features were thought to be firmly linked to the Turkish state discourses that mainly arose from or were reinforced by the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. In that sense, this dissertation attempted to explain the connection between the key themes and Populism concerning several concepts such as democracy, national will, unity and solidarity, power and heroism.

In general terms, this dissertation is thought to be the first to explore digital diplomacy in Turkey from various angles, with a central focus on dominant themes that emerged in the process after the July 15 coup attempt, with a specific focus on the Turkish state discourses in digital diplomacy. Another significant contribution of the study is to provide a thorough examination of digital diplomacy conduct in Turkey by analysing the messages through Twitter delivered by various government bodies, which exercise digital diplomacy, within a wide period of time, from July 15- August 10, 2016, to July 15- August 10, 2020.

**Keywords:** Digital diplomacy, Twitter diplomacy, Public diplomacy, Social platforms, Turkish digital diplomacy

## ÖZET

Bu tezin temel amacı, Türkiye'de dijital platformlarda yürütülen, yeni diplomasi faaliyetlerini incelemektir. Dijitalleşmenin bir sonucu olarak, sosyal medya dünya çapında, diplomasi bağlamında çekici fırsatlar sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu tez, Twitter paylaşımlarının analizine dayalı olarak, Türk devletinin dijital diplomasi faaliyetlerine değinerek, özellikle 15 Temmuz 2016 darbe girişiminden sonra görülen dijital diplomasi uygulamalarına odaklanmaktadır. Özetle, yeni bir diplomasi türü olarak dijital diplomasi, kavramsal tanımlara ve kamu diplomasisi ve dijital diplomasi gibi farklı diplomasi türlerinin uygulanmasına ilişkin görüşlere bakarak çeşitli perspektiflerden incelemektedir. Ulusal bağlamda ise, bu çalışma, Türkiye'de tarihsel bir perspektiften dijital diplomasinin kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını ve Twitter diplomasisine doğru gelişimini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, Twitter üzerinden Türkiye'de diplomasinin nasıl gerçekleştirildiğini anlamak için analiz aşamasının yöntem ve teknikleri, çerçeve analizi bölümünde detalı bir biçimde paylaşılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de dijital diplomasinin önde gelen aktörleri olan beş hesaptan yapılan Twitter paylaşımları 2016, 2017 ve 2018 yıllarının 15 Temmuz - 10 Ağustos tarihlerine karşılık gelen dönemler için Çerçeve Analizi yöntemi kullanılarak ayrı ayrı analiz edilmektedir. Son olarak, araştırmanın son kısmı, veri analizinden elde edilen bulguların yorumlanmasına ve tartışılmasına ayrılmaktadır. Araştırmanın bu bölümü, dijital diplomasi alanındaki hakim devlet söylemlerine ilişkin olarak, Türk devletinin darbe girişiminden bu yana dijital diplomasiyi nasıl uyguladığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Daha spesifik olarak, tezin bu bölümünde, Çerçeve Analizi'nden elde edilen öne çıkan temalar değerlendirilmekte ve Türk dijital diplomasisindeki devlet söylemlerinin, Popülizm ile örtüşen özelliklere sahip olduğu ortaya koyulmaktadır.

Çalışmanın temel bulguları, ortaya koyulan temalar ve Popülizm kavramları arasındaki paralelliği vurgulayarak, Popülizmin birkaç temel nosyonuyla ilgili olarak çalışmanın analiz bölümünden elde edilen ana temaların tartışmaya değer olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu anlamda, araştırmanın sonuçları uyarınca 2016

darbe girişimi sonrasında, Popülizmin Türkiye'deki dijital diplomasiye yansımalarını araştırmak kritik önem taşımaktadır. Türkiye dijital diplomasisinde yer alan beş adet devlet kurumunun Twitter hesabından yapılan paylaşımların analizine dayanarak elde edilen bulgular aşağıdaki şekilde özetlenebilir:

Twitter paylaşımlarının analizi ile belirlenen temalar, Popülizmin temel unsurları ışığında yorumlandığında, bu temaların esas olarak 15 Temmuz 2016 darbe girişiminden doğan veya güçlenen devlet söylemleriyle sıkı bir şekilde bağlantılı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu anlamda, bu tez, 'demokrasi', 'milli irade', 'birlik ve beraberlik', 'güç ve kahramanlık' gibi çeşitli kavramlara ilişkin temel temalar ile Popülizm arasındaki bağlantıyı açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Genel anlamda, bu tezin, 2016 darbe girişimi sonrasında ortaya çıkan baskın temalara ve özellikle Türkiye'nin dijital diplomasi devlet söylemlerine odaklanarak, Türkiye'de dijital diplomasiyi çeşitli açılardan keşfeden ilk araştırma olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu tezin bir diğer önemli katkısı, 15 Temmuz - 10 Ağustos 2016 ve 15 Temmuz - 10 Ağustos 2020 tarihleri arasında, dijital diplomasi'nin yürütülmesine katkı sağlayan çeşitli devlet kurumları tarafından Twitter üzerinden verilen mesajları geniş bir süre içinde analiz ederek dijital diplomasi'nin Türkiye'deki uygulamalarının kapsamlı bir analizini sağlaması olarak görülebilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Dijital diplomasi, Twitter diplomasisi, Kamu diplomasisi, Sosyal platformlar, Türk dijital diplomasisi

## INTRODUCTION

The age we live in can be associated with the speed of communication and interaction among individuals through various tools, which is resulted from extensive connectivity. People constantly generate, send and receive data every day. When people want to express their views compellingly, social media primarily help this need of today's people. Thanks to endless digital tools and applications, it is now possible to communicate with anyone, anytime and anywhere globally, which means that the borders, geographical barriers, and restrictions have disappeared in the sense that we know. Therefore, information technology and the proliferation of communications among people create considerable shifts for statecraft, too. In this context, when countries' communication and contact with each other are considered, the first concept that comes to mind is diplomacy. These changes and developments in information technologies have inevitably affected the nature of diplomacy over time. On this basis, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the practice of international diplomacy has also been undergoing substantial changes resulting from globalisation and technological developments. Steger (2003) underlines that "globalisation researcher" dealing with globalisation issues try to tackle integrating and combining various strands of knowledge with doing justice to a gradually active and interdependent postmodern world (xii). In other words, in today's world, the variables on the research axis are directly influenced by technology and digitalisation. The tools, which can change the communication channels and even the effect they can also create, have the capacity to shape international relations as they can be viewed as valuable to interpret and make sense of the new connections formed among the states in this context.

Global economic integration between countries has significantly increased their interdependence thanks to these developments and technological upsurge. Therefore, in a world where they are interconnected and interdependent in many aspects, the efforts of countries to represent themselves and convey their messages have perhaps never been more prominent. In addition to communicating with each other and giving their messages, governments carry out their activities through various tools of diplomacy to achieve many foreign policy objectives, such as

promoting the country and crafting its image. In addition, the emergence of a number of issues that the states cannot resolve on their own has increased the interdependence of countries. In this context, it can be said that the efforts of countries to maintain their relations should only be considered in an international framework with specific reference to diplomatic relations. It is possible to see this interdependence of countries in all social, cultural, economic and environmental issues. From this point of view, it is seen that even countries with powerful economies are adversely affected by any financial crisis that occurs in the world, since all countries have to comply with the rules of this global economic system in some way. However, the economy is not the only issue that needs to be acted on jointly by the states. It does not seem very realistic for countries to cope alone with global-scale problems such as environmental crises and their consequences, tensions among ethnic groups or between states, all kinds of conflicts and terrorism. Therefore, under the dominance of today's media, considering the interdependent nature of the relations of states, it has been seen that the methods and strategies of traditional foreign policy could not fully meet the need, thus paving the way for some changes in the new era of diplomacy.

Sandre (2015) explains the evolution of diplomacy by underlining that it has constantly changed over hundreds of years, highlighting the areas it deals with, ranging from wars to peace contracts, raids to summits and even to Twitter. But in making this statement, he claims that especially when it comes to the evolution of diplomacy, the tools, focus, and priorities of diplomacy are more than its definition and fundamental features (xvii). From this point on, if we focus on the importance of the tools used in diplomacy, we will vividly see the importance of understanding how diplomacy practices have evolved with the changing world order and technological developments. As a consequence, it can be said that the changes seen in the practice of diplomacy are formed based on new international environment to adapt to the important changes in digital communication. This international atmosphere requires addressing the aforementioned issues that require joint actions of countries. "The purpose of diplomacy is to strengthen the state, nation, or organisation it serves in relation to others by advancing the interests in its charge"

(Freeman, Marks and Sally, 2020). As a result, new types of diplomatic activities have emerged that require expertise to address such issues in line with the opportunities offered by the digital world. Accordingly, as a result of digitalisation, social media and technology have offered maybe challenging but attractive opportunities for diplomacy.

### ***Digital Diplomacy in Turkey***

In consideration of the evolution of diplomacy in the world, it can be argued that in this age of widespread connectivity, digital tools have also changed and transformed the diplomacy practices in Turkey. Digital diplomacy, which is a relatively new field in international relations, has effects on the Turkish statecraft regarding dynamics of communication technology.

With the governments becoming effective communicators, Turkey has somehow been articulated to these changes by adapting to the new diplomacy practices. As a developing country, Turkey needs to adapt to new conditions; therefore, using digital tools efficiently is extremely important for Turkey to have strong international relations with other countries and its publics. That is why Turkey tries to communicate with its counterparts through traditional diplomacy. In addition, Turkey tries to integrate digital tools in communication with the global and domestic publics. Citizens in many countries have come to be seen as strategic stakeholders for their governments to help them deal with traditional foreign policy issues, support the economy and even enhance the national prestige. In that regard, Turkey's digital diplomacy can be considered critical since the topic has gained importance as a tool to promote the foreign policy of a country. That is why this will be the topic of this dissertation.

Considering the above reasons, I will address and analyse the practice of digital diplomacy in Turkey based on the Turkish approach to digital diplomacy, specifically after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt employing the framework analysis method. In this dissertation, how the Turkish government and its related bodies adapt digital diplomacy to their context and engage with social

media to communicate with the public using Twitter will be specifically investigated. This dissertation seeks to address whether, the Turkish state has aimed to adapt itself to digital age by incorporating new tools in its digital diplomacy activities based on the analysis of Twitter posts. The overall purpose of this dissertation will be to contribute to elaborating the theoretical basis of digital diplomacy and exploring the components, which affect Turkish digital diplomacy conduct through a framework analysis concerning the state narrative emerging after the July 15 coup attempt. In this context, it will try to answer the following research questions.

1. How and why the conduct of diplomacy has changed over the years, both in global and local context considering Turkey?

Sub-questions

- How has traditional diplomacy evolved into digital diplomacy?
- What are the general patterns of change in diplomacy and the main features of digital diplomacy?
- To what extent the changes in diplomacy have been involved in digital diplomacy practices in Turkey?

The first question aims to examine diplomacy practices in history concerning digital diplomacy in global and local contexts.

2. Main Question: How did the Turkish state apparatus respond to the issues arising on the attempted coup night of July 15, 2016, through the messages on Twitter accounts of various state institutions, bodies and actors conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey comparing messages shared during July 15 – August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018?

#### Sub-questions

- Which theme(s) that become prominent in the Twitter posts have been given importance by the state officials in communication with the international and domestic publics? Why?
- How has the Turkish state performed digital diplomacy to communicate its decisions and goals by executing its strategies on Twitter since the coup attempt?
- What are the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of Twitter posts?

The second question intends to investigate how digital diplomacy has been adopted and implemented in Turkey by explicitly referring to the time - period covering July 15 and August 10, in 2016, 2017 and 2018. It also aims to explore the manners in which digital diplomacy has been implemented by the government bodies exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey.

- 3. Main question:** How has the Turkish state exercised digital diplomacy since the coup attempt with reference to newly emerging discourses?

#### Sub- questions:

- How did the implementation of the digital diplomacy tool affect Turkish digital diplomacy practices after the coup attempt?
- How has Turkey's diplomatic communication formed after the coup attempt? Has it contributed to any specific movements or political ideas flourishing? How?

The third question aims to gain a deep understanding of the current Turkish digital diplomacy practices emerging after the July 15, 2016, coup attempt.

In all chapters of this dissertation, created by focusing on the research questions, both central and sub-questions, answers to these questions are sought by adhering to the digital diplomacy context in Turkey. With that in mind, the aim of

Chapter 1 is to introduce a critical review of digital diplomacy, exploring the fundamental concepts of digital diplomacy to form a basis for this study. By looking at the relevant literature and different perspectives on the subject, views on the definition, analysis and implementation of diplomacy will be highlighted. In the introduction part of Chapter 1, different conceptual definitions of digital diplomacy and discussions about it will be presented. Next, public diplomacy and its change in the digital age will be discussed in detail. Afterwards, the history of digital diplomacy will be presented, and the transformation of diplomacy practices will be examined in this context, which will pave the way for understanding digital diplomacy in Turkey. In addition to these, another issue to be addressed in the last part of Chapter 1 will be the conduct of diplomacy through the social media platform called Twitter, also known as Twitter diplomacy. In terms of the focal points of other Chapters of the study regarding how digital diplomacy is performed in Turkey, Chapter 1 will be concluded after discussing some topics regarding Twitter diplomacy, especially in times of crisis, and the role of Twitter during these times. In this way, Chapter 1 will provide insight into the analysis background required for the following chapters of the study on the effects of digital diplomacy practices and Turkish statecraft.

Chapter 2 seeks to examine the methods and techniques used in the analysis phase since the analysis part that will show how digital diplomacy is carried out over Twitter in Turkey will constitute the backbone of the dissertation. In the most general context, it can be said that in the analysis section in Chapter 3, the posts of five official institutions conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey will be examined within the specified periods (from July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018) on their Twitter accounts. In order to understand how diplomacy is performed, in Chapter 2, relevant information will be given based on the methodology implemented in the research regarding the qualitative research approach adopted and how it will be carried out. More specifically, in this part, the research questions that focus on the research objectives will be mentioned to provide a general overview on the research topic. Following this, the research design section will explain why this method is the most suitable for answering the study's research

problem and clarifying the matter. The section in which the steps for the conduct of the method required for the analysis processes will also be explained in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 reports thorough research findings to establish the factors that determine the dominant themes emerging after the July 15 coup attempt. This also sheds light on those themes that form the Turkish state narratives in digital diplomacy based on the analysis of posts gathered from five official Twitter accounts exercising digital diplomacy. This section seeks to find answers to the second research question and its sub-questions, focusing on the main themes that can be included in the dominant state discourse emerging during the conduct of digital diplomacy. The focus will be on understanding how the Turkish government carried out digital diplomacy practices after the July 15 coup attempt and how it has shaped its communication with the domestic and foreign public. Firstly, I will explain how the data analysis process starts upon entering the collected data into the NVivo program after the data collection and preparation stages are completed. Next, I will also share the analysis report created due to the analysis of each account's posts made at the specified time intervals in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in this Chapter. Finally, in the report content, I will share the evaluation process for the posts made from each account in 2016, 2017 and 2018 with specific reference to examples displayed in tables, figures and clouds.

Chapter 4 will be the conclusion of the dissertation aiming to answer 3<sup>rd</sup> research question, mainly investigating how the Turkish state has exercised digital diplomacy since the coup attempt regarding newly emerging discourses. In this chapter, a summary of the study will be presented. Apart from the analysis report shared in Chapter 3, research findings will further be discussed, and a detailed interpretation of the themes derived from the shared posts will be made. While making inferences, especially prominent discourses that have overlapping concepts seen in digital diplomacy in Turkey based on the analysis part will be clarified and evaluated. In order to make the data and findings of the research more meaningful and reliable, the final Chapter will also include an analysis and evaluation part regarding the tweets made from the same five government institutions' Twitter accounts covering the periods (July 15 - August 10) in 2019 and 2020. Overall, all

conclusions in this section are relevant to the results derived from the analysis section of the study. The Chapter will be concluded by the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research.



## **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 A Critical Review of Digital Diplomacy**

#### **1.1.1 Introduction of the Chapter**

This Chapter aims to determine the fundamental concepts associated with digital diplomacy by identifying and framing the main arguments of digital diplomacy in the global and local context in Turkey. By focusing on the relevant research questions and the studies carried out in the area of digital diplomacy, Chapter 1 aims to explore a variety of explanations and practices concentrating on the use of digital media in diplomacy reference to past and present diplomacy practices. With that in mind, this Chapter starts with different definitions and discussions about digital diplomacy causing scholars to research in a number of ways.

Following this, the issues arising from digital diplomacy over the years will be clarified with specific reference to Public Diplomacy and its transformation in the digital age. Upon discussing the historical evolution of digital diplomacy with an emphasis on digital diplomacy practices, the process that leads to the conduct of digital diplomacy in Turkey will be briefly discussed, corresponding to the current perception of diplomacy in the digital age in literature.

Finally, the wide use of Twitter in diplomacy and its role will be highlighted by drawing attention to how states respond to crises using Twitter. In this context, the thesis tries to aim to present a comprehensive understanding of the history and development of digital diplomacy on the one hand. Thus, it also aims to provide the necessary basis for the analysis of digital diplomacy practices in Turkey as the research also aims to provide an in-depth look at how the changes in digital diplomacy have an impact on Turkish statecraft.

## 1.1.2 Literature Review: The Foundation for Research

### 1.1.2.1 Definition of Digital Diplomacy

Information technologies help propel the 'industrial age' forward to a 'networked era' thanks to a major transformation they created in society (Dentzel, 2017). There is a real-time communication (RTC) referred to as a telecommunication mode where the users exchange information right away. That is why this has affected how international relations develop, as in many other areas. In that sense, the intensity and differentiations in the international agenda expose diplomats and institutions that practice diplomacy to these changes. Choucri (2012) declares that regarding the word "digital", cyberspace has become an important part of the world where we live, with the internet and millions of computers connected by the internet. This new virtual reality in the world affects almost everyone. It points out the same international policy topics on the Internet, as the prefixes to the Internet domain do not fundamentally change the meaning of the word, although they differ such as e-, net, and cyber. The explanations regarding above-mentioned prefixes by Kurbalija (2015) have been summarised in the table below.

**Table 1**

*Internet Terminology: Prefixes*

Prefix	Prefix Etymology and Use
<b>cyber</b>	It dates back to ancient Greek. Cyber means "governing" With the growth of the Internet, the word cyber has also increased and is currently used in the "security terminology". However, there has been no widespread use since the early 2000s.
<b>e-</b>	'Electronic' and "e-commerce" uses the abbreviation e-, which is one of the internet prefixes. It is also included referring to "action lines in the declarations of the World Summit on the Information

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	Society (WSIS, Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005) as follows: e-learning, e-health, e-employment, e-business, e-government, etc”.
<b>digital</b>	That "Digital refers to '1' and '0' – two digits which are the basis of whole Internet world" is frequently used in the government and policy-related documents such as; digital diplomacy, digital agenda, etc.
<b>net</b>	The prefix Net was quite popular mostly in Germany, but then it nearly vanished. Thanks to the increasing significance of "net neutrality", it has reappeared.
<b>virtual</b>	Virtual refers to the "intangible nature of the internet" as it is "ambiguous". It is not preferred for international reports and policy documents.

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Diplomacy practitioners need to embrace digital tools in their daily practice to be competitive as the advent of the Internet enables to increase the voices involved in international policy-making and enhance information exchange. In doing so, discussions about digital diplomacy as a newly emerging concept still continue, the most important reason for this situation is that rapid changes in digitalization constantly remain. It can be difficult to define a concept as broad as digital diplomacy, given the differences in the interests and target audiences of the states. The importance of digital diplomacy is becoming increasingly clear for international organizations and states, since they recognize the power of social media and ICTs (information and communication technologies) to sustain international relations. With this situation, it is seen that countries have various approaches to digital diplomacy. In that sense, the definition of digital diplomacy by the United Kingdom is associated with the use of the Internet to tackle foreign policy issues (Foreign Office Blogs) while it is viewed as a component of the statecraft in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by the U.S. Department of State. They assert that "These technologies are the platform for the communications, collaboration, and commerce of the 21st Century. More importantly, they are connecting people to people, to knowledge, and global networks" (the US Department of State).

According to the Foreign Policy Research Division of Global Affairs Canada, digital diplomacy is characterised as open foreign policy (Global Affairs Canada). As seen in these diverging views about digital diplomacy, it can be assumed that defining digital diplomacy is debated. In other words, there is no generally agreed-upon meaning or framework for the term. For the term 'digital diplomacy', no agreed-upon meaning or framework exists says Adesina (2017).

Besides the differences that countries show in defining diplomacy, it is seen that the views of scholars on the definition of digital diplomacy also differ. It is underlined that the practice of digital diplomacy is revolutionary, referring to the current spread of digital actions in foreign ministries (Bjola, 2015, p.1). In his report, digital diplomacy is defined as "the use of the web and ICTs to help carry out diplomatic objectives" (Hanson, 2010, p.3). Moreover, Hocking and Melissen (2015) point out that the importance of using social media in diplomacy should be thoroughly understood and they underline that digital diplomacy is not carried out only through social media tools related to familiar diplomatic issues (p.53).

When the number of voices in the international arena increases thanks to the internet, it is indispensable for diplomats to integrate digital tools into their daily practices. Holmes (2015) clarifies how technology has transformed the functioning of foreign ministries and government offices (p.13). Manor (2016) says it's not a new phenomenon for foreign ministries to use social media. Manor (2015) points out a major distinction between digital diplomacy and diplomacy 2.0 in his definition of digital diplomacy. "The use of social network sites by MFAs (Ministers of Foreign Affairs) for gathering and disseminating information" is associated with digital diplomacy by Manor (2015). However, diplomacy 2.0 has been seen as "follower-centric" and signifies that "ongoing engagement between MFAs and their followers", the "adoption of an architecture of listening among MFAs", asking for support "to the development of MFA and embassy websites, special web platforms and nation branding campaigns" and "crowd-sourcing". According to Manor, Ministries of Foreign Affairs benefit from SNS (Social Networking Sites) when performing digital diplomacy activities to magnify the effectiveness of traditional public diplomacy and nation branding actions. Basing

his argument on the SNS activities and foreign ministries' use of ICTs, Holmes (2015) discusses if these activities are related to a different diplomacy form or simply move existing processes online in the fundamental and unchanging sense of diplomacy (p.14).

Incorporating digital tools into policy mechanisms plays an important role in the emergence of new applications and even transforming existing ones as well as aiding existing applications to continue as they are. In that regard, Hocking and Melissen (2015) point to three interrelated aspects seen in the discussions of diplomacy. These three perspectives basically show how the digital revolution has been complemented thanks to significant changes in international negotiation processes. They emphasize that underlying 'offline' trends in the practice of diplomacy results in a complex situation. In parallel with this, it is stated that as the global media has hybridized, diplomacy has also hybridized. In that sense, "hybridity blurs the distinction between 'online' diplomatic activities and 'offline' diplomacy and negotiation" (6). In other words, the 'hybridity' of diplomacy has brought about some problems with the advent of digitalisation in the diplomatic field. The chapter entitled 'Hybridity and the integration of 'online' and 'offline'', in their report by Hocking and Melissen (2015) reviews this 'hybridity issue'. First of all, they state that the tools of the digital age are explaining current problems and procedures while producing new ones. At this point, they explain behavioural changes in the diplomatic realm by referring to many examples. Engaged with the foreign public in communication and diplomatic activities have added a complete newness in the digital age (p.11 – 12). The next theory is that "hybridity is the norm in the current media and diplomatic environments" (Chadwick, 2013). Existing forms of communication keep up with changes thanks to new technologies. With digitalisation, new 'online' ways of sharing the news have resulted from traditional media. Traditional media as it is known is adapting to new 'online' methods of distributing information. Therefore, It is suggested by Melissen and Hocking (2015) that diplomacy can be described with hybridity. Another view is that the most important way to overcome some of the problems caused by the digital era is closely related to the successful integration of "online" and "offline". In this context,

Melissen and Hocking (2015) emphasize the importance of the combination of “digital” and “analogue” and underline both present a number of limitations. They underline that there are major changes in the world of “offline” diplomacy that has commonalities with the “online” world that changes and develops every day (p.11 – 12). As a result, this will end up the redefinition of new diplomatic competencies. And this identification will take place during the integration of existing analogue and newly emerging digital domains that have a significant impact on government.

“Diplomatic processes” and “diplomatic structures”, are two levels that Melissen ve Hocking (2015) refers to while discussing diplomacy in the digital age regarding the context of changes in diplomacy. As they are linked to each other, when there are some changes in diplomatic processes, the latter, diplomatic structures are also affected and harmony between both is essential. In this respect, it can be said that the effects of digitalization are quite complicated (p. 6 – 7). The problem relates to the requirement for foreign ministries and other diplomatic organizations to operate online. The main issue is related to the changing 'diplomacy DNA' (p. 27). Parallel to this situation, ‘online’ and ‘offline’ diplomacy operations need to be developed to overcome each issue it contradicts with. At the end of the study, it is underlined that being a 'twitlomat' alone does not guarantee success in the field of diplomacy. On the other hand, it is revealed that ignoring the meaning and importance of digitalization would be just as unfortunate.

#### **1.1.2.2 Digital Diplomacy as a Form of Public Diplomacy**

Considering “digital diplomacy is conceptualised as a form of public diplomacy” as stated by Adesina (2017) a range of aspects such as cyber agendas, changing practices of foreign policy, information management and service delivery in consular affairs have been emphasised in the studies discussing digital diplomacy as well (p.1). In that sense, “Public Diplomacy” has an important role to play in diplomacy debates and attempts to describe diplomacy and comprehending transformation to digital diplomacy. In this respect, it is claimed that "Public Diplomacy" is one of the most striking political communication topics in the 21st

century (Snow and Taylor, 2009). On the other hand, this concept is not new to the field of international relations. The origin of the term public diplomacy dates back to the 19th century. And it basically addresses the processes by which states aim to attain the goals of countries through communication with foreign peoples of states (p.ix). How public diplomacy emerged in the first half of the 19th century has been explained in detail in his book by Iskit (2012). In this narrative, Iskit (2012) benefited from various examples of how monarchs had to give importance to 'public opinion' after the French Revolution. Although these monarchs did not need the people's approval for the government administration, including foreign affairs, they did need these relations to be established due to the rise of liberalism and nationalistic ideologies in Europe. (p.120). Public opinion "is the most powerful of all means; like religion, it penetrates the most hidden recesses where administrative measures have no influence" stated Metternich in 1808 drawing conclusions from the French example (Of the Necessity of Censorship of the Press). Metternich did not use the term 'public opinion' in its current sense even though it was not used until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the term he used, Metternich referred to the media, the 19<sup>th</sup> - century pamphlets that were really popular at the time, both local and international governments, universities as well as other educational institutions, the associations where the elite gathered.

After the revolutions in the 1920s and 30s, many countries started to use public diplomacy practices to foster a positive atmosphere for their foreign population. Diplomacy implementing bodies such as diplomats, foreign ministries in Europe had already understood the importance of reaching the public directly through embassies long before new diplomacy practices replaced the old (Kim, 2017, p. 1 - 2). Later, Géraud (1945) revealed that the emergence of old and new diplomacy first coincided with the question of alliances for international security, about twenty-five years ago. The initiatives of the countries at that time can be exemplified as follows; French cultural attachés were posted to French embassies abroad, 'Voice of America radio station' was set up by the United States, and the BBC world launched broadcasting in different languages. According to Cull's (2009) claim, public diplomacy was re-evaluated and rejected as a slogan after

World War Second. He also points at the subsequent call for a return to private diplomacy. In later times, public diplomacy grew into a notion that is increasingly linked with propaganda (p.21).

By the beginning of the 21st century, public diplomacy has evolved from a “direct marketing perspective to a new form of diplomatic engagement” and wider cooperation with other actors (Kersaint, 2013, p.3). This created the new form of public diplomacy that is a “term to describe the efforts by nations to win support and a satisfactory image among the general public of other countries, usually by way of news management and carefully planned initiatives designed to foster positive impressions” (Comor & Bean, 2012, 204). It should be noted that public diplomacy holds a bigger responsibility of conducting and implementing a more effective foreign policy within the traditional diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century even though the term has been extensively discussed and used.

Power is “the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants” claims Nye (2004) as it is quite indispensable to public diplomacy. In this regard, Public diplomacy can be said to have a long history in terms of its role to enhance a country's soft power. The “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment” that involved “culture, values and foreign policies” (p. x- 11). Later, Nye's (2011) definition of Public Diplomacy was expanded into “the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes” (p.20-21). The results of soft power was focused on by Nye (2002, 2004, 2011) while he was working on the concept itself. Given that there has been such an evolving soft power definition by Nye, it can be argued that the concept of power has developed over the decades. It is believed that the capacity of the states to implement foreign policies via Public Diplomacy can surpass the expectations of traditional diplomacy by appealing to governments and organizations.

Regarding the new form of diplomacy, it can be said that the union of states has replaced the alliance and common practices among the states seen in the past.

On the other hand, with the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, another form of diplomacy, known as digital diplomacy, was witnessed to rise. This can be interpreted as a transformation of public diplomacy into digital diplomacy. For this reason, it is extremely important to understand how these two concepts are interrelated. Moreover, the concept also refers to “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies” (Tuch, 1990, p. 3). In the traditional sense, public diplomacy has been regarded as a set of relationships between a nation-state and foreign institutions, the ultimate purpose of which is to create a positive image of itself on the world stage.

Another definition of public diplomacy concept by Zaharna (2010) that can also be identified as a sort of international public relations is as follows; “the actual communication activity by a political entity” (p. 79). Public diplomacy includes the preferred management and methods used in public relations in order to have an impact on the foreign public. In this context, the important role of information technologies in the relations between countries, institutions and companies has become quite understandable. In this way, in a world where global relations are accelerating thanks to changes in communication technologies, countries and institutions are intertwined, it is inevitable for countries to become more aware of the importance of media tools. They eventually encourage efforts to enhance public diplomacy

Zaharna, Arsenault ve Fisher (2014) edited a book including a compilation of articles with reference to the progress on information and communication technologies, which would provide an extensive perspective on understanding the theoretical basis to see the link between digital diplomacy and public diplomacy. The feature of the study, which focuses on different understandings, provides the opportunity to see this subject with uncertainties regarding its definition more clearly. According to the definition in the book, it is possible to deduce that there are references to public diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This approach in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is based upon the collaboration of people who are interconnected. Since communities communicate via several networks, this positions 'relational strategies'

as fundamental. Zaharna (2010) contend that there has been an alteration in public diplomacy, which is described as “connective mindshift”. The "shift" mentioned here is about the strength of connections and the nature of these relations that can be seen as a pivotal component of public diplomacy analysis. It has already been mentioned that there was an increasing interest in public diplomacy at the dawn of the 21st century. Therefore, not all of the approaches mentioned here are completely new in the literature. However, it can be said that the ideas and views in this book have certainly brought innovative approaches to the field of public diplomacy.

It has been mentioned about the changes made to the ‘networks’ that people communicate with. With regard to this, Zaharna (2010) argues that “connectivity and interactivity have become the defining features of the new media, as well as the defining communication activity of their users” (p. 87). This basically points to the changes taking place on the Web, an operating platform for its users for the exchange of communication participation, dialogue and sustaining relationships. Graffy (2009) emphasizes that the activities carried out as a part of public diplomacy have personalised in this new platform. Individuals have had the chance to communicate with public diplomacy agents they saw as their peers rather than the “impersonal states” using several media tools such as social or blogging platforms. Thus, beyond one-way communication, new approaches such as interaction and staying connected via information exchange have come to the fore.

In the light of the above discussions, it would not be wrong to claim that the conduct of digital diplomacy is seen as a part of public diplomacy. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that opinions are stating the opposite, claiming that risks are overshadowing different usage areas of communication technologies in diplomacy. Namely, In other words, from this point of view, it is underlined that considering digital diplomacy as equivalent or having the same functions as public diplomacy may lead to deficiencies in understanding the capacity offered by communication technologies. For this reason, some scholars also problematise the typical characterisation of digital diplomacy defining it as public diplomacy with the same functions. In this context, it would be appropriate to take a look at the argument of Holmes (2013), who thinks that by reducing public diplomacy to

digital diplomacy, there will be an obvious risk that will reduce the scope of diplomacy (p.5). According to Holmes (2015), digital diplomacy is “as a form of international practice”. In his definition, Holmes states that he never sees digital diplomacy as a public diplomacy strategy. However, he underlines that this is more of a tool which is used by states to bring about global change which concentrates on governmental activities based on the competence of various actors as well as individuals in the international system. Holmes (2013) defines diplomacy as “a strategy for managing change through digital tools and virtual collaborations” with an emphasis on the joint nature of diplomacy that gives way to ‘online’ and ‘offline’ both of which cannot be affected by digitalisation (p.15).

From a different perspective, Melissen and Hocking (2015) emphasise it seems cool to support Holmes' view on the dissimilarity between public diplomacy and digital diplomacy and suggest that “looking at it in reverse, public diplomacy principles and strategies are woven into most aspects of diplomatic activity” (p.31). Actually, at this point, it may be useful to take a look at what Manor has to say about the relationship between digital diplomacy and public diplomacy. He mentions that there are two main schools of thought trying to explain digital diplomacy. While one states that it is “a new tool in the conduct of Public Diplomacy”, the other one highlights its “ability to interact with foreign publics and actively engage with them thereby enabling the transition from monologue to dialogue” (Manor, 2015). For this reason, he argues that not only the viewpoints about digital diplomacy but also the interaction between the public should be incorporated to have the best definition for digital diplomacy contending that “Digital Diplomacy is the growing use of ICTs and social media platforms by a country in order to achieve its foreign policy goals and practice Public Diplomacy” (parag. 9).

The definition of digital diplomacy in the book edited by Bjola and Holmes (2015) can be considered to get an idea of other differences which digital diplomacy presents. It is stated in the book that digital diplomacy helps internal and external state actors in managing international change through various communication technology tools ranging from video conferencing to various social media

platforms. In that respect, this definition highlights three essential constituents of digital diplomacy. The first one is “the public-diplomacy component” addressing “the ways in which actors engage with outside audiences in order to project a particular message or image” (p.208). The next one is “the information-accessibility component” which is about the way in which foreign ministries organise information assets to be used by the relevant parties such as diplomats and private or public institutions. The last component is “the data-analysis component” which is closely related to how practitioners of diplomacy gather data to see local differences in public opinion and political systems. Based on the comments and explanations made, it is possible to say that Melissen's (2015) idea of bringing together the basics and tools of public diplomacy into a whole constitutes the elements of diplomatic actions.

In her report that she prepared for Aspen Institute, Kalathil (2014) both try to define the relations on diplomacy and technology and deals with related concepts such as public diplomacy in the form of digital diplomacy. The report summarises the perspectives of participants from the Aspen Institute on diplomacy and technology, who were previously informed about the subject. She draws attention to the fact that “communication technologies and access to information” changed the outer layer of international relations and she demonstrates that this, in particular, has changed the conceptualisation and implementation of digital diplomacy (p. 2). Kalathil (2014) emphasizes that while “non-state actors” are getting stronger, diplomacy includes relations between states and “state-citizen” and “citizen-citizen relations”.

“Diplomatic actors, institutions and processes are in the process of adapting—some faster than others—to these new realities.” (p.1). Based on such definitions, this can be asserted that the communication between the state and its citizens is also seen within this perspective with the advent of digitalisation. Increased transparency and volatility” for diplomacy are the most important phenomena that describe the emerging information age (Kalathil, 2014, p. 9).

Sandre (2015), in a sense, continues from where Kalathil left off, focusing more on what he calls Diplomacy 3.0. It can be seen as the emergence of a new foreign policy area where both governments and civil society take joint actions through communication, partnership, and collaboration. It is actually about Diplomacy 3.0's transformation of "foreign policy into a network-based environment where state and non-state actors interact horizontally with each other, and how much power you have depends on how much you stay connected" (xxviii).

The works of Grincheva in 2012 and 2014 can be studied differently. Grincheva (2012, 2014) examines digital diplomacy according to the psycho-technological" propositions of the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler. Stiegler claims that modern power technologies not only aim to discipline bodies and regulate living spaces, as Foucault points out but also want to control and shape consciousness (as cited in Grincheva, 2012). Grincheva (2012) says that the technologies used for digital diplomacy should be viewed from this perspective.

After focusing on the concepts mentioned about diplomacy and its definitions, we can now look at the history of diplomacy by referring to its fundamental elements affecting its transformation in time.

## **1.2. Historical Evolution of Digital Diplomacy**

History is also short for such a new concept, digital diplomacy. Due to different views, it is difficult to rank the events that constitute the foundations of digital diplomacy. However, it can be summarised in short regarding turning points that affect digital diplomacy practices to draw up a generic framework to learn about the origin of digital diplomacy and how it corresponds to critical diplomatic moments in the digital age.

**Table 2**

*The Turning Points in “the History of Digital Diplomacy”*

<b>The year</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
<b>1984</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> analysis on public diplomacy in<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a “computerised world.” written by Hansen (1984)</li><li>- “Public Diplomacy in the Computer Age” on the public diplomacy practised by the United States Information Agency (UEIA) written by Hansen (1984)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>1994</b>	<p>After ten years from the first analysis on public diplomacy, an official email sent from Bill Clinton to Carl Bildt; an exchange between the Heads of Governments took place on February 5, 1994. The exact messages are given below:</p> <div><p><i>“Dear Carl,</i></p><p><i>I appreciate your support for my decision to end the trade embargo on Vietnam, and thank you for all that Sweden has done on the question of the POW/MIA’s.</i></p><p><i>I share your enthusiasm for the potential of emerging communications technologies. This demonstration of electronic communications is an important step toward building a global information superhighway.</i></p><p><i>Sincerely,</i></p><p><i>BILL”</i></p></div>

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*“Dear Bill,*  
*Apart from testing this connection on the global Internet system, I want to congratulate you on your decision to end the trade embargo on Vietnam. I am planning to go to Vietnam in April and will certainly use the occasion to take up the question of the MIA’s. From the Swedish side, we have tried to be helpful on this issue in the past, and we will continue to use the contacts we might have.*  
*Sweden is—as you know—one of the leading countries in the world in the field of telecommunications, and it is only appropriate that we should be among the first to use the Internet also for political contacts and communications around the globe.*  
*Yours,*  
*CARL”*

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**2003** LinkedIn launched. A team coming from SocialNet and PayPal, which Reid Hoffman recruited, started LinkedIn.

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**2004** “Facebook is founded, and Flickr is launched. From a Harvard social-networking website to a global internet phenomenon, Facebook is the world’s most popular social media platform; the first social network to surpass one billion registered accounts and has 1.71 billion monthly active users as of September 2016. Ludicorp founds Flickr. It soon becomes the world’s leading photo-sharing site, and Yahoo acquires it in 2005”.

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**2005** YouTube was established by former PayPal employees; Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim.

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<b>2006</b>	<p>Twitter, an “SMS-based communications platform, ” has turned out to be “the top microblogging site” and the most valuable digital diplomacy tool launched by Jack Dorsey.</p> <p>Also, YouTube is acquired by Google, WikiLeaks – as a non-profit media organisation formed to publish a set of original documents from various unspecified sources.</p>
<b>2007</b>	<p>The Maldives opened 1st virtual embassy though Sweden was the first country declaring that a virtual embassy in Second Life would be opened, a “virtual site with a strong online community”. Sweden follows shortly after the Maldives.</p>
<b>2008</b>	<p>Arturo Sarukhan was the 1st Mexican Ambassador to Washington, tweeting from his personal Twitter account.</p> <p>The tweet as follows;</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“Great to be the 1st Ambassador to the U.S. with a personal Twitter account; a good way to talk directly to America about Mexico!”</p> </div> <p>The first official Twitter account of the current President of the US became The White House (@WhiteHouse).</p>
<b>2010</b>	<p>Jan Koum and Brian Acton launched Whatsapp, which was formerly made as an app for iPhone.</p> <p>Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator, had a Twitter account as “the 1st high-rank U.N.official”.</p>
<b>2012</b>	<p>“The White House Tweetup” (a gathering up of the users of Twitter with the same interest) was held.</p> <p>“victory tweet” from Barack Obama becomes the most retweeted ever.</p>
<b>2013</b>	<p>Pope Francis started posting messages on Twitter with his account, @Pontifex, that Benedict XVI launched in 2012.</p> <p>The U.S. Embassy situated in Pakistan was the 1st “Diplomatic Facebook Page” that reached one million followers.</p> <p>“Embassy of Israel in Washington creates and hosts on their website a fake parody LinkedIn profile for Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.”</p>

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- 2014** For the people who travel and are interested in nuclear diplomacy and probable internship positions, the U.S. State Department started official applications.
- @JohnKerry shared U.S. diplomatic activities
- On Twitter, offensive messages shared between @natomission\_ru and @CanadaNATO called “war of the map”.
- Russian Embassy (@RusEmbassyUAE) mocked NATO using “toy tanks on Twitter”. Shimon Peres attempted to make relations stronger with China using Weibo account, which grew fast. U.S. Embassy on V.K., with John F. Tefft as U.S. Ambassador to Moscow.
- The first country, Estonia, to distribute a “digital identity” (e-residency) for the people who do not reside in the country.
- 
- 2015** U.N. “Virtual Reality Series” aims to promote understanding among people by making the world's most urgent issues understandable for decision-makers and global citizens worldwide.
- A project titled ‘Digital Public Square Canada’ was initiated to improve freedom of expression and “open political dialogue” if there is a threat to civil society participation of citizens.
- Australian foreign minister Julie Bishop used Emoji Diplomacy only by using emoticons during an interview conducted by BuzzFeed News.
- To foster interactive diplomacy and diplomacy over digital tools, the U.S. Diplomacy Center and Microsoft formed a partnership.
- Obama shared tweets (@POTUS) with his own Spotify list. Also, he opened a Facebook account and commented on posts.
- U.K. Foreign Office became the first to have a Snapchat account.
- The U.N.also opened its Snapchat account.
- To raise awareness about the children in Nigeria who miss the opportunity to enjoy their childhood, UNICEF uses Snapchat for the 1<sup>st</sup> time.
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**2016**      The White House started using an official Snapchat account

Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, the Foreign Minister of Iceland, became the first Snapchat user as a foreign minister and used it when he paid a visit to India (April 2016).

‘WhatsApp diplomacy’ has arisen as a sub-category of digital diplomacy. It began to be utilised as a successful instrument for digital diplomacy, particularly during meetings, because it is seen as a secure communication platform.

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*Adapted from “History of Digital Diplomacy and Main Milestones” Serrano (2016, November 09).*

The Internet has become a powerful tool and brought novelties and dramatic changes in international relations. Therefore, social media platforms have shaped digital diplomacy practices to a great extent in terms of the ability of these platforms to offer opportunities to engage with citizens to convey any type of messages depending on the context in time. It can be suggested that the globalised world has become more centralised on fast-changing, affiliated, digital and global activities, which can be associated with digital diplomacy as well. It is now possible to talk about a continuous digital age effect regarding the changes in many subjects such as the changing world, diplomatic crises, global issues, economic and political developments.

To have a better conceptual understanding of digital diplomacy in the Western world, some cases can be useful. A committee formed in 2002, officially started the digital diplomacy activities of the US Department of State. After that, the U.K. and Sweden are considered to be the firsts. In 2012, most politicians use social media tools actively. In 2012, Burson-Marsteller, an international public relations and communications agency, publishes a report. This report, called Twiplomacy, includes evaluations of the Twitter performances of world leaders. (Twiplomacy, 2016). In 2013, Facebook recognised Kosovo as a country before the U.N. (The New York Times, 2013). In 2013, two of the eight main

recommendations in the policy recommendations report presented to the Obama administration by the Rice University Baker Institute are about digital diplomacy.

The first report to identify the U.S. Department of State's increased e-diplomacy efforts is the Hanson report (Hanson, 2012). While it was being written, there were more than 150 US State Department full-time e-diplomacy employees in 25 different centres in total. Moreover, around 900 officials benefited e-diplomacy as a tool during their US mission posts abroad. The report found that e-diplomacy was used in public diplomacy in eight different program areas –areas such as Information Management, Public Diplomacy, Internet Freedom dominate over others in terms of staff and resources– and provided a conceptual framework to make sense of this effort. The fact that many foreign ministries have been slow to adapt to e-diplomacy suggests uncertainty about exactly what e-diplomacy is, what it can do, and how its effects will occur. This report, prepared as a result of a 4-month project in Washington DC, seeks answers to these questions.

The topic of e-diplomacy is discussed right after the introduction. Without a particular definition, the most widely utilized definition of e-diplomacy is the novel communication technologies to realize countries' diplomatic missions and objectives. Hanson (2012) states that it is an inclusive definition yet he underlines that it should not be perceived as the sole use of digital media tools in e-diplomacy. In the report, it is stated that information is gradually more digitised, and accordingly, many diplomats continue their activities on online platforms. Briefly, the report can be classified into three categories: 1-Real-time surveillance; 2- Identifying or raising important, influential people online; 3- Being able to speak and interact directly with large audiences. The report introduces many concepts to reflect the emergence of new diplomacy, including the development of e-diplomacy.

Cull's (2013) work on the historical role of the Internet in U.S. diplomacy is essential. He states that the full use of online technologies known as 2.0 has been relatively slow in the history of digital diplomacy. In his article, Cull (2013) examines the first studies of the United States Information Agency (USIA) on the

computer and online communication (1953-1999). The study traces the work of the units within the ministry taking over the activities of public diplomacy in 1999. It is emphasized the Ministry avoids the risk of adopting the web at first and then all the other features associated with Web 2.0 and points at this transformation as the reason for the difficulties experienced. The Department of State emphasises one-way broadcasting rather than relational media but also makes it possible to advocate the functions associated with listening and exchanging diplomacy. The article also highlights the challenging role of a representative - the Ministry of Defense - who plays an important role (digital and non-diplomatic) in the digital and different forms of technical support during the process. The article discusses the recent developments in the Department of State's digital media approach and its ability to overcome many institutional constraints that have been encountered so far. The article ends by drawing attention to the emergence of a non-governmental model (known as SAGE), which will find a new way of combining the priorities of new public diplomacy for interrelation and the capacity of Web 2.0 technology in this context.

In another study describing the history of Web 2.0, Dale (2009) points out that the tendency to switch to new media started in the 1990s when the Internet became a daily tool in the business world and at home (p. 2). In the last few years, Dale (2009) explains that social media has become accessible worldwide, with the example of the differentiation in Facebook's intended use since 2004 (p. 2). This study emphasised that the Obama administration came to power with a solid new media potential after running the campaign in U.S. history that most closely followed technology. In the Chapter titled "Obama Approach", Obama's use of technology perceived as a public diplomacy instrument, is analysed with examples. (Dale, 2009, p. 4).

In addition to the U.S., another study analyses the use of new media in authoritarian regimes such as Iran. The "Risk Analysis" section of the study explains that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives are increasingly using social media technologies. Guidelines officially published in September 2009 by the Council of Heads of Federal Informatics under the title "Guidelines for the Safe

Use of Social Media by Federal Departments and Agencies, v1.0” is also discussed in the study (CIO Council, 2009).

Dale (2009) says that in the wake of the global disgrace of the Bush administration, the U.S. used digital diplomacy as well as public diplomacy in particular during the Obama administration (p. 4). During Obama's term, the U.S. Department of State used digital tools and began to defend the freedom of the Internet as a necessity. A report published by the United States on this topic is also summarised and evaluated (Fontaine and Rogers, 2011).

### **1.2.1. Digital Diplomacy Practices**

DOT (The U.S. Digital Outreach Team) is an example of the initiatives with an aim to offer direct communication with people residing in the Middle East by sharing posts on online platforms through US foreign policy. In recent years, there have been many changes in American public diplomacy methods practised in the Middle East. These changes have transformed from one-way written and verbal media communication to a more interactive model, including the governments. This paper assesses the potential of this new model through an analysis of DOT, the “U.S. government's Web 2.0 public diplomacy initiative”. During the analysis, the debate on Obama's Cairo speech in July 2009, also including DOT, was used as a case. DOT consists of a public staff team of 10 people having their social media accounts such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. However, many share posts on the discussion platforms which are quite popular. The Bureau of International Information Programs has stated that DOT has to “explain U.S. foreign policy and prevent misinformation” (Khatib et al., 2021).

In another case study (Zhong and Lu, 2013), U.S. public diplomatic communication on China was examined. For evaluating the effectiveness of the American consulate, Tencent, one of China's mainstream and microblog sites, was examined. As indicated in the study, posts shared on the embassy's blog and an interview with the embassy's public diplomacy official are both analysed. The basic features of public diplomacy were revealed by examining the US embassy's use of

social media employing content analysis and interview methods. The study also states that the common values and interests of the states may be of interest to the new public diplomacy sphere in addition to sharing experiences and building relationships between societies and people.

Cain (2010), on the other hand, investigates the use of “Web 2.0 technologies” in the formation of “Gray Literature” since it is used by the Government of the US. The role of “Gray Literature” has developed significantly with the growth of e-government, especially in the Bush era. (Gray literature is a term used to refer to materials and research produced by organisations other than traditional, commercial or academic publications and distribution channels). Bush's White House foreign policy, described by Secretary Condoleezza Rice, was transformational diplomacy. In line with efforts to deal with e-diplomacy, the development of the Internet has enabled academics, researchers and activists to express their ideas immediately. The article states that the power transformation in the White House administrations from Bush to Obama puts great emphasis on the use of third party applications (YouTube) as opposed to the closed network technological options (Diplopedia). The article notes that “Federal institutions are increasingly publishing information only in electronic formats and failing to inform the Government Publishing Office (GPO) about new editions that should be included in the compilation library and cataloguing programs” (Cain, 2010).

In his study, Hallams (2010) examines the functionality of more advanced government models concerning generating information for e-government and intra-state communication. She focuses on U.S. diplomacy policies towards the Islamic World while comparing the Bush and Obama administrations. The article describes how digital diplomatic efforts were used after 9/11 for national security, in order to win the approval and trust of the people, make counter-terrorism propaganda and ultimately create soft power. Based on these efforts, it is revealed that the Obama administration is more interactive and very willing to use the potential of the internet.

Huxley (2014), on the other hand, examines the situation in Finland, which can be considered one of the good examples of digital diplomacy. In his review of 11 ministries, she observed that the ministries were not passive and showed both the cultural and political formation of the country in online spaces

Another study can be read as an impact analysis of digital diplomacy practices. In 2008-2012, the elections held when Obama was elected as president led to crucial moments in U.S. relations with other peoples (Hayden et al., 2013). This article examines the communication created between public diplomacy practitioner experts and the public and concentrates on the social media narrative during the U.S. elections held in 2012 together with Facebook posts within the framework of U.S. diplomacy efforts. In this article, information coming from the U.S. embassies in Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan is analysed to understand communication characteristics. These proposals for diplomacy revealed the nature of the public argument put forward by the media and the way the election served to develop contemporary US public diplomacy. The article states that the debate that emerged after the Obama's re-election announcement did not resemble discussions discussing U.S. foreign policy practices. On the contrary, it is stated that the messaging on the sites created an explanatory basis that spread rapidly among the users.

As Archetti (2012) shows about diplomats in London, it is stated that there is not a single route forward. Even though U.S. diplomacy is pioneering the current examples, new roads ahead, new tools, and new theoretical developments will be seen with new actors entering the field of digital diplomacy. As long as technological development and globalisation continue, the interaction between digital technologies and diplomacy will continue. On the other hand, Twitter's central position in diplomacy, as can be seen from the practices very clearly, should not be overlooked.

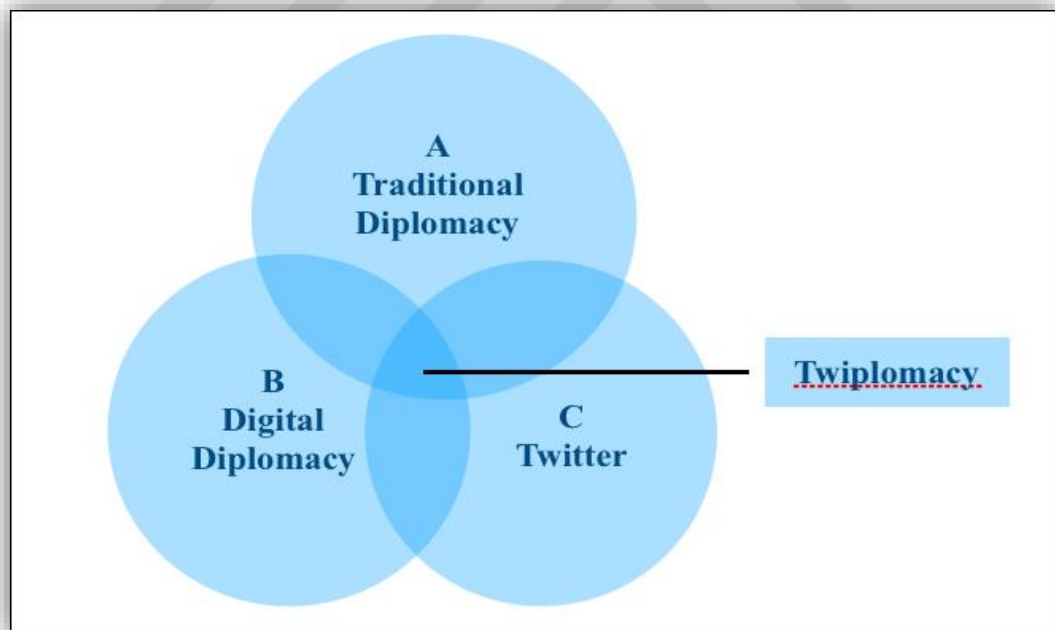
### **1.2.2. Digital Diplomacy in Turkey**

With the emergence of new diplomacy practices globally, it can be unthinkable for any country to remain indifferent to these changes seen in all aspects of diplomatic affairs. It can be argued that despite differences of countries in terms of the ways of how they use these new tools, their purposes, effectiveness and results of their use, at some point, they have to be involved in the new platforms offered by digital technologies. 'DiplomacyLive', which is a part of 'Sosyalmarka100' and a digital diplomacy project of the Digital Research Association, conducted the "Digital Diplomacy Rating 2016 Survey" by examining 1098 digital assets of 210 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the countries in the world. Within the context of this study, it was revealed that there are 742 accounts "in 195 websites, 13 blogs, 53 RSS, 43 mobile applications and 33 social networks". It was observed that of 210 ministries, 166 had "at least one Twitter account, and 120 had at least one Facebook account". It was discovered that there were "92 YouTube, 63 Flickr, 46 LinkedIn, 38 Instagram and 13 Blog accounts in the ministries", respectively. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs ranked 25 based on the results of this survey (Yücel, 2016, 760).

Given that, it can be interpreted that, as in many studies investigating the effects of diplomacy with digital technologies, actors that are primarily analysed are often foreign ministries to reveal how they are performing digital diplomacy. According to Yücel (2016), this ranking, which is not bad at first glance, indicates a tremendous difference in strategy, vision and implementation between the foreign ministry of the top 10 countries and Turkey (760). According to "The Soft Power 30" ranking, Turkey was ranked 28 in 2015, 30 in 2017 and 29 out of 30 countries in 2019 (2015, 2017, 2019). In 2016, Turkey fell out of the top 30 countries that is why it was not ranked. In light of all the data, it would be appropriate to increase the number of case studies better to understand the components of Turkish digital diplomacy conduct and explore the state's motivations behind the conduct of digital diplomacy.

### 1.2.3. Diplomacy over Twitter: Twitter Diplomacy

Twitter launched by Jack Dorsey's tweet saying, "just setting up my twttr" in March 2006 (Hernandez, 2012). As Twitter celebrates its 15th anniversary, it has now proven that it has functions beyond a simple communication platform. Since its foundation, it has played an essential role in many diplomatic activities. Communication with local and foreign citizens to crisis management as displayed in the previous 'practices' section, Twitter diplomacy, also known as "Twiplomacy" or "hashtag diplomacy", addresses the use of social media platform, Twitter, by the state officials to exercise public diplomacy (Kelemen, 2012). On the other hand, Twiplomacy, or Twitter Diplomacy as suggested by Rao (2017), is the merge of digital diplomacy with traditional diplomacy and Twitter is clearly indicated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

*The intersection of Traditional Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy and Twitter*

*Note: This figure demonstrates the domains of Traditional Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy and Twitter. Even though Twitter is a tiny player, as displayed in this*

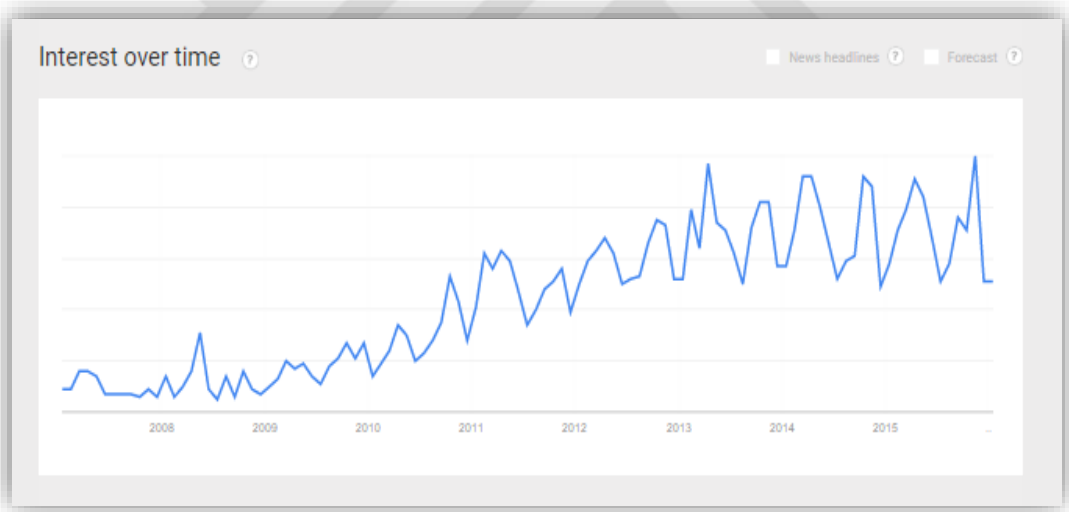
*figure, it has turned into a kind of 'paradigm shifter' considering how it has affected the definition of international diplomacy. From "Twitter Diplomacy: A Brief Analysis" by Chhabra, R., ORF Issue Brief No. 335, January 2020, Observer Research Foundation.*

According to Sandre (2013), 'Twitter Diplomacy' appeared due to the growing significance of social media. It has grown into an essential communication platform "for many presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and diplomats". With 280 characters on Twitter, institutions and actors who use Twitter can interact and communicate with their citizens. Thanks to this tool for dialogue, online engagement of the state officials and actors has been established for fixing relations or interacting. Twiplomacy report prepared by Burson-Marsteller, an international public relations firm, examined the Twitter accounts of 643 presidents, prime ministers and ministers in 161 countries (Twiplomacy, 2016). Therefore, while some heads of states reached mass followers, foreign ministers followed each other and established a virtual network. In addition to mutual correspondence with each other via Twitter, they soon realised that Twitter could be helpful for communication and interaction with the international and local public in times of crisis.

Considering the influence that social media has increasingly had in managing diplomatic relations, Sandre (2015) highlights the importance of the government's role to play in the new environment, referring to the changing foreign policy and diplomacy along with the technology as a facilitator for innovation in foreign policy (p. xxii). Even though it doesn't create innovation, it provides circulation of ideas moving between spaces and sectors. Given that "Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) are generally considered to be one of several departmental portfolios in a government (albeit one of the most important portfolios)", they have to make use of several social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook with an important role in complementing traditional diplomacy (Moses and Knutsen, 2001).

### 1.2.3.1. Twitter Diplomacy during Crisis

Digital technologies, which is described as “a means of communication that enables the publication, exchange and storage of information” (Westcott, 2008, p. 3), developed into valuable communication regarding diplomatic activities in urgent situations as well. It can be easily said that Twitter has been used in crises in various countries since its inception. The crisis management issue over social media has drawn a lot of attention in recent years. This issue has received so much attention that it has been searched more than 77,000 times this year alone on Google Scholar using ‘social media and crisis communication’ keywords (Wasim and Thompson, 2016).



**Figure 2**

*‘Social Media Crisis’ over the Previous nine years*

The examples indicated in Figure 2 (Wasim and Thompson, 2016) above underline that communication technologies and platforms especially Twitter is the most important platform where one could see an incident report. State officials and diplomats are not indifferent to addressing the crisis over Twitter. According to

Cassidy (2018), understanding the new diplomacy conduct on social networks is important to thoroughly understand all aspects of the new diplomacy practices, especially during a crisis. The role of diplomats increases during the crisis to make their voices heard and noticeable and helping their institutions achieve their goals, especially as a mediator trying to convey their ministry's message (p. 4). Based on this, it can be said that Twiplomacy is widely preferred in crisis response mechanisms to send a message to the international public.

In many cases, Twiplomacy can be claimed to have been a practical tool for shortening the time between a 'plan' and 'a response' (Duncombe, 20017). It would be appropriate to mention the use of Twiplomacy through a few examples regarding the crises arising in different regions or countries. Zeitzoff (2018), in his study of about role of social media in the Gaza crisis between Israel and Hamas in 2012, seeks to find out what kind of effects the reactions of both parties and the international public on social media were created during a global conflict. Although the findings are limited, the impact of social media on guiding public opinion can be observed easily, focusing on the data obtained from such studies.

In his unpublished master's thesis, Funk (2013) continues where Zeitzoff leaves off and looks at the role of social media in resolving regional conflicts and analysing and shaping global governance problems in the context of the Arab Spring. In doing so, he stresses that the same tools could be used for digital surveillance or terrorism, but their positive contributions outweigh the negative.

### **1.3 Conclusion of the Chapter**

Given this dissertation's focus, this chapter shows changing faces of digital diplomacy based on various discussions in the context of diplomacy. It is aimed to indicate the new diplomacy forms concerning Twiplomacy after the concept of digital diplomacy has been discussed extensively, moving on from the relationship between public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy. Overall, it can be stated that three aspects and notions related to digital diplomacy have been highlighted in this chapter; digital diplomacy public diplomacy's new form, historical evolution of

digital diplomacy, and diplomacy over Twitter with a specific reference to performing digital diplomacy at the time of a crisis.

Considering the exclusive importance of the role of Twitter in the context of this dissertation regarding digital diplomacy practices, the concept of Twiplomacy has been discussed in detail. It refers to the state officials who have a Twitter account and posted tweets during a crisis to form a basis for a framework analysis in this study. With the aim of concentrating on the role of Twitter within this research study particularly, all state organs or individuals that actively practice diplomacy on Twitter in Turkey will be examined regarding diplomacy practice at the time of a crisis in the analysis part of the dissertation.

In that sense, considering the relevant aspects of diplomacy over Twitter, this chapter aims to help one understand how digital diplomacy affects the affairs arising from the crisis and if it results in formulating the current practices.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explore the content of the scope of the research and focus on the methodology of the study. In the first phase of the study, the concept of digital diplomacy is addressed at a global and local scale in a historical process. It is aimed to form the basis of the research through a lens looking at different digital diplomacy practices seen in the historical evolution of the diplomacy notion. Afterwards, with a spotlight on the axis of conducting diplomacy on Twitter, the research's focal point, which is the Analysis of Twitter diplomacy in Turkey, is discussed. In the next phase, five state officials' Twitter accounts will be examined to understand how they perform digital diplomacy in Turkey in a broader context. Given what has been said, this chapter will underscore the discussions of the relevant information pertaining to the methodology employed for the proposed research. It starts with the research questions explaining the key research objectives to present with a brief overview of the research. Following this, the research design with reference to the reasons focusing on how the methodological framework is the best approach for this research to answer those research questions and address the problem statement for implementing the methodology based on a qualitative research approach. Finally, the research process with a discussion including the data collection, the phases of the research and conclusions reached will be explained.

### **2.2 Research Questions**

This thesis aims to answer three main research questions in different parts of the study. The questions are as follows:

RQ 1. How and why the conduct of diplomacy has changed over the years, both in global and local context considering Turkey?

- How has traditional diplomacy evolved into digital diplomacy?

- What are the general patterns of change in diplomacy and the main features of digital diplomacy?
- To what extent the changes in diplomacy have been involved in digital diplomacy practices in Turkey?

RQ 2. How did the Turkish state apparatus respond to the issues arising on the attempted coup night of July 15, 2016, through the messages on Twitter accounts of various state institutions, bodies and actors conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey comparing messages shared during 15 July – 10 August in 2016, 2017 and 2018?

- Which theme(s) that become prominent in the Twitter posts have been given importance by the state officials in communication with the international and domestic publics? Why?
- How has the Turkish state performed digital diplomacy to communicate its decisions and goals by executing its strategies on Twitter since the coup attempt?
- What are the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of Twitter posts?

RQ 3. How has the Turkish state exercised digital diplomacy since the coup attempt with reference to newly emerging discourses?

- How the implementation of the digital diplomacy tool affected Turkish digital diplomacy practices after the coup attempt?
- How has Turkey's diplomatic communication formed after the coup attempt? Has it contributed to any specific movements or political ideas flourishing? How?

## **2.3 Research Method**

### **2.3.1 The Scope of the Study**

In this dissertation, the effects of the use of Twitter as a social media tool in Turkish digital diplomacy and the dominant discourse elements that emerged in this way are examined. It can be asserted that this dissertation aims to create a digital diplomacy conceptual and theoretical framework to identify the reasons affecting the implementation of Turkish digital diplomacy concerning dominant narratives considering the analyses made in this dissertation. It furthermore aims to explain how and why the Turkish state practices digital diplomacy by examining various posts and messages shared on Twitter by Turkish state officials conducting digital diplomacy.

Both official and personal Twitter accounts of respective state institutions will be analysed considering the period corresponding to the 15th July 2016 and 10th August 2016. In order to provide an insight into the prominent themes which have emerged after this period, a comprehensive analysis of tweets is carried out regarding three specific time intervals covering 15th July 2016 - 10th August 2016, 15th July 2017 - 10th August 2017 and 15th July 2018 – 10th August 2018.

When I decided about the dissertation topic and started studying the frame of the dissertation, it was impossible to mention or reckon with the coup attempt as it had not happened yet. However, while the process was progressing, it became clear that this time between the 15th of July- 10th of August for the implementation of digital diplomacy emerged as a turning point for my study as well as Turkish digital diplomacy. For this reason, the time frame that I consider appropriate for the case study covers after the coup attempt to the end of 'democracy watch' against the coup attempt as the first period to examine in 2016. And then, I would like to take a look at the same periods in 2017 and 2018 that correspond to the anniversary of the coup attempt so as to see and compare the state narrative used while conveying messages via Twitter about noticeable themes repeatedly used by the bodies exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey.

### **2.3.2 Methodology**

The preferred and used method for this dissertation is qualitative because a qualitative methodology is needed to answer the research questions and do the analysis effectively and consistently. The focus of the research is based on a set of basic principles in order to analyse the implementation processes in Turkish digital diplomacy.

Initially, it is aimed to present an inclusive and explanatory digital diplomacy conceptualization on both a global and local scale in order to answer the first and somewhat the second research questions. In order to provide the necessary ground for this purpose, firstly literature review is completed and then data analysis is carried out.

In addition, to have a deeper understanding about digital diplomacy principles regarding its driving forces shaping diplomatic communication with the public in Turkey to analyse the dominant discourses, I preferred a qualitative approach. In doing so, I aim to focus on the key themes used on Twitter specific to Turkish digital diplomacy during the aftermath of July 15, 2016 coup attempt. That is why; I would like to investigate how state officials in Turkey conduct digital diplomacy in order to acquire comprehensive information about the second and third research questions. To apply the Framework Analysis, the context and features of three instances pertaining to the attempted coup taking place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 2016, the research section holding Twitter posts' analysis shared by state officials focuses on a time from July 15 and August 10, 2016, 2017, and 2018, respectively.

As explained before, this period was specially chosen for the analysis because the coup attempt is considered important in terms of Turkish digital diplomacy practice as the coup was seen against state institutions and realised using a massive, destructive power. Considering the impact of this act on Turkish digital diplomacy in terms of responses of the Turkish state via Twitter, it can be argued that this is worth evaluating the process.

Considering the aforementioned reasons, messages' flow shared by state institutions that play an important role in Turkish digital diplomacy practices was referred to and this coup event was taken as a turning point which may point to a

process that leads to the emergence of new state narratives. This is also thought to be beneficial in evaluating the results of the study.

As this study includes internet data and its interpretation, it is inevitable to decide upon a method that can be applied on the internet platforms. When the internet is thought to be an effective tool for research that facilitates access to large samples, it is necessary to view the internet as valuable for researching social sciences by using qualitative methods. On the other hand, qualitative research methods include diversity to a great extent. Jensen (2011) divides fundamental research methods in Internet studies into six categories. He makes a list starting with the quantitative methods, which involve online/ offline surveys, laboratory experiments testing web usage knowledge, the content analysis of sources of political knowledge or the search engines as meta-information (p.48).

The qualitative methods that Jensen (2011) refer to online/ offline in-depth interviews and participant observation can also be called digital ethnography, discourse analysis, and historical and aesthetic criticism. He insistently underlines the Internet research method because the Internet is a special kind of analytical object, and it produces its data. (p.42).

On the other hand, advances in computer technology have led to the proliferation of many “computer-mediated communication (CMC)” and social networking tools”. I have tried to review several methods to analyse tweets owing to the fact that the research field has been chosen as Twitter for the dissertation, I then decided to apply the methodology of Framework Analysis, which involves keeping the log of tweets and going over them in order to generate themes from them. In that sense, Framework Analysis is an appropriate qualitative method for analysing sizeable qualitative data sets.

Considering that conducting a reliable Framework Analysis would definitely contribute to realising the goals of the dissertation as a method, I have decided to use a qualitative data analysis method called framework analysis, which is a tool preferred in the social sciences for systematic identification of the data.

### **2.3.3. Procedures for the Analysis**

The Analysis of the Twitter posts has been carried out by using the Framework Analysis, which is a variant of content analysis using a matrix, suggested by Ritchie and Spencer (1994). This qualitative data analysis method can be also employed in policy research, too. This method was found and developed by two qualitative researchers Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer in London in 1994. Framework analysis can be different from other methods in some respects. For instance, even though Grounded Theory and the Framework Analysis are alike, the Framework analysis is necessary to be "adapted to research having specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample (e.g. professional participants) and a priori issues (e.g. organisational and integration issues) that need to be dealt with" (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994)

It is suggested that the Framework Analysis can produce some theories (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). Yet, the fundamental aim can be to "describe and interpret what is happening in a particular setting" (as cited in Srivastava & Thomson 2009). From this point of view, while conducting the analysis, I aim to find a number of conceptual themes emerging from messages shared in official Twitter accounts of government bodies contributing to the practice of digital diplomacy. In light of the above explanations at the beginning of this part concerning framework analysis as the research method, I would like to point out that it is used in the course of the study.

In the analysis phase of this study, all posts from five Twitter accounts were organised and aggregated for the following years; 2016, 2017, and 2018. They were then transferred to NVIVO-11 software, a qualitative data analysis program for framework thematic analysis. The analysis process has been conducted in NVIVO-11 software, where the collated data is transferred. The actions performed during the establishment of the analytical framework are recognising the posts, coding them, developing a theme within the scope of research questions, and interpreting the data within the framework. The context of the themes that Twitter accounts have developed has been identified, and codes were classified accordingly. The examined Twitter accounts during the qualitative analysis were presented below.

**Table 3***Analysed Twitter Accounts with the Most to the Least Posts by Years*

	Twitter Account	Number of Posts
2016	BaşbakanlıkKDK	438
	MevlutCavusoglu	388
	Byegmeng	264
	TRPresidency	218
	MFA – Turkey	60
2017	MevlutCavusoglu	258
	Byegmeng	244
	TRPresidency	156
	MFA Turkey	147
	BaşbakanlıkKDK	13
2018	Yurtdisiturkler(BasbakalikKDK)	120
	MevlutCavusoglu	113
	MFA Turkey	84
	Communications(Byegmeng)	72
	TRPresidency	72
Total number of Tweets		2647

*Note: BYEGM – Eng (Turkish PM) is currently referred to as @communications and BaşbakanlıkKDK (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy (OPD) as @yurtdisiturkler Başkanlığı.*

The codes used in the Analysis were generated from the posts shared in 2016 since it corresponds to the year when the attempted coup was staged in Turkey. Firstly, posts from five Twitter accounts were examined separately and then the recurring concepts and discourses were determined considering their frequency.

Later, posts from all five accounts were collated, and the most repetitive words and concepts were identified in 2016. Moreover, Twitter posts in 2017 and 2018 were analysed by taking the codes and categories generated from the Twitter posts made on the night of July 15, 2016, into consideration. New codes have been developed for words or concepts that are not seen in 2016 but emerged in 2017 and 2018 together with this part.

During the examination process of the posts, the related research questions were considered. That is why especially the posts which do not seem directly or indirectly related to the events that occurred on or after the night of July 15 were used only to accentuate the impacts on the posts' content. Therefore, no new codes have been generated from these posts that are not related to July 15th.

#### **2.3.3.1 Steps of Framework Analysis**

An important feature of the framework analysis method is that it provides flexibility throughout the analysis process allowing the researcher to gather and analyse the set of data and perform the analysis during the collection process. After that, the collected data is examined, charted, and organised according to the topics and themes that stand out during the analysis phase. Ritchie and Spencer's model (1994) comprises a five-step process, as displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4**


*The five-step process by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) while doing Framework Analysis*

1.	“Familiarisation”
2.	“Identifying a thematic framework”
3.	“Indexing”
4.	“Charting”
5.	“Mapping and interpretation”

#### **2.3.2.1.1 Familiarisation**

When I started the first phase of the study, I tried to collect the data myself, scanning each Twitter account; however, I had to collect data using a computer program due to the increase in the data over the years. As a result, an Excel spreadsheet has been used for logging all the data coming from Twitter posts shared by the accounts in the analysis.

The data collection process has been repeated for three years, from July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively. The logged data collated from all the accounts for three years can be seen in the following figures with regard to different components of the data. In this phase, the data was raw and had not been categorised or analysed with regard to any variables that can probably form the themes.

1	Date	Account	Tweet	Photo/video	Link	RT?	Retweet	Likes
2	2016-07-13	MFATurkey	Press release regarding the opening of an exhibition in the European Parliament promoting terrorism bit.ly/29wnAhX	-	<a href="http://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753155743747076096">http://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753155743747076096</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>		41
3	2016-07-13	MFATurkey	Press release regarding the Government of National Accord's move to the Prime Ministry building bit.ly/29Ri9LP	-	<a href="https://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753212031692599296">https://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753212031692599296</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>		3
4	2016-07-13	MFATurkey	Press release regarding meeting to be held for developing tourism relations between Turkey and Russia bit.ly/29H4ixG	-	<a href="https://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753284392089444356">https://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753284392089444356</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>		17
5	2016-07-15	Tanju Bilgiç	FM @MevlutCavusoglu & FM Mammadarov of #Azerbaijan are answering reporters' questions in a joint press conference.		<a href="https://twitter.com/TanjuBilgi/status/753884398311931904">https://twitter.com/TanjuBilgi/status/753884398311931904</a>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		6
6	2016-07-15	MFATurkey	Press release regarding the terrorist attack in Nice bit.ly/29NSFOE	-	<a href="http://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753915610824835073">http://twitter.com/MFATurkey/status/753915610824835073</a>			33
			Q&A Regarding the Comments of the spokesperson of the IIS		<a href="https://twitter.com/TanjuBilgi/status/75403245778410291">https://twitter.com/TanjuBilgi/status/75403245778410291</a>			

**Figure 3**

*A Sample Excel spreadsheet with a log of collected data from Twitter accounts in 2016*

1	Date	Tweet	Photo/video	Link	RT	BEĞENİ
2				Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu		
3	2017-08-10 21:28:02	Şampiyonası Erkekler 200 metrede		<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895758662333059072">895758662333059072</a>	9273	0
4	2017-08-10 21:27:53	finalinde altın madalya kazanarak	.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895758625448263683">895758625448263683</a>	489	2766
5	2017-08-09 19:40:49	<a href="https://t.co/2fOg4E2A8a">https://t.co/2fOg4E2A8a</a>	<a href="https://t.co/825363062788/pu/vid/1280x720/n4uAUIX02JHNK">825363062788/pu/vid/1280x720/n4uAUIX02JHNK</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895369292195258368">895369292195258368</a>	3294	0
6	2017-08-09 15:41:59	Odası Başkanı @MehmetSahinAlny	<a href="https://t.co/LW5AAoGAW">LW5AAoGAW.jpg</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895309189744119810">895309189744119810</a>	140	455
7	2017-08-09 09:58:54	Toplantısı, Başbakan Yıldırım	.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895222847949479936">895222847949479936</a>	723	0
8	2017-08-09 06:47:29	We want equal treatment without	<a href="https://t.co/677607522304/vid/1280x720/GrqaU8heXhckZCSX">677607522304/vid/1280x720/GrqaU8heXhckZCSX</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/895174678616170496">895174678616170496</a>	89	0
9	2017-08-08 16:44:58	Bakanımız @jsarieroglu'nu	C.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894962652912472068">894962652912472068</a>	103	455
10	2017-08-08 14:13:01	Yıldırım, Kırgızistan Başbakanı	2.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894924411761041408">894924411761041408</a>	646	0
11	2017-08-08 08:55:14	#EU Delegation to Turkey, and	wz.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894844438924677121">894844438924677121</a>	108	272
12	2017-08-08 08:53:51	Christian Berger'i kabul ettik,	Wh.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894844092110209024">894844092110209024</a>	164	447
13	2017-08-08 08:44:49	appointed Ambassador of #Russia,	4q.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894841817585373185">894841817585373185</a>	81	249
14	2017-08-08 08:44:00	kabul ederek yeni görevinde	l.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894841614501326848">894841614501326848</a>	133	442
15	2017-08-07 14:02:05	Yousef Al Zawawi of #Kuwait who	m-.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894559271505076224">894559271505076224</a>	89	263
16	2017-08-07 13:59:14	Büyükelçi Ghasan Yousef Al	.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894558555277316096">894558555277316096</a>	109	385
17	2017-08-07 13:26:01	Salhi, newly appointed Ambassador	jeW.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894550195295354881">894550195295354881</a>	74	257
18	2017-08-07 13:23:36	Mohamad Salim Al Salhi'yi kabul	DM.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894549590497783809">894549590497783809</a>	121	463
19	2017-08-07 06:00:26	hassasiyetin için teşekkür ederim.		<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894438060863127552">894438060863127552</a>	152	585
20	2017-08-06 16:34:47	Partnership w/ ASEAN is a turning	.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894235312964194304">894235312964194304</a>	156	339
21	2017-08-06 16:34:10	Ortağı olarak kabulü Türk dış	.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/894235157091241986">894235157091241986</a>	228	577
22	2017-08-06 16:29:28	Regional Dialogue Partner of ASEAN	D.jpg	<a href="https://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu/status/8942343077282800307">8942343077282800307</a>	202	580

**Figure 4**

*A Sample Excel spreadsheet with a log of collected data from Twitter accounts in 2017*

RTed	Text	media1	media2	media3	media4	RT	Like
MFA Turkey	Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a question regarding the tweet of the U.S. President Trump on additional tariffs targeting our country's steel and aluminum exports to the United States. <a href="https://t.co/0P0GB9f0Qg">https://t.co/0P0GB9f0Qg</a>					65	40
	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a question regarding the allegations made by the Greek Foreign Minister Panos Kammenos to media organs about the two Greek soldiers held in custody in Turkey <a href="https://t.co/26CPCXW8zr">https://t.co/26CPCXW8zr</a>					26	16
	Press Release regarding the visit of Foreign Minister of Russian Federation M. E. Sergei Lavrov to Turkey <a href="https://t.co/8688270qat">https://t.co/8688270qat</a>					38	22
	Statement of the Spokesperson, in response to a question regarding the phone call between Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Cavusoglu and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia H.E. Mr. Adel El-Cubeiry <a href="https://t.co/5c0Bm6793">https://t.co/5c0Bm6793</a>					22	13
	Press Release Regarding the 10. Ambassadors Conference <a href="https://t.co/UAHFrZz0K">https://t.co/UAHFrZz0K</a>					33	17
	10th Ambassadors Conference will be held on 12-17 August 2018 in Ankara and Konya. The theme of the conference is "Turkey's Entering and Humanitarian Foreign Policy in the Presidential System of Government" #HON2018 <a href="https://t.co/AlYmQ8BMT">https://t.co/AlYmQ8BMT</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/DHQAWhW0AAH6a.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/DHQAWhW0AAH6a.jpg</a>				82	57
Mevlüt Cavusoglu	We discussed the issues on the common agenda of Turkey-Iran with Mahmoud Vaezi, Head of the Office of the Iranian President. <a href="https://t.co/whnG8Benn4">https://t.co/whnG8Benn4</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/DkXN0F8AABa3x.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/DkXN0F8AABa3x.jpg</a>				131	189
Anadolu Agency	Turkey to open sports facilities for youth in Syria <a href="https://t.co/8TjwKJQa">https://t.co/8TjwKJQa</a> <a href="https://t.co/PTV1Vh0vQX">https://t.co/PTV1Vh0vQX</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/Di_dvK5ScAA2u8.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/Di_dvK5ScAA2u8.jpg</a>				22	6
	Press Release Regarding the South Sudan Peace Agreement <a href="https://t.co/76B3p0D5K">https://t.co/76B3p0D5K</a>					37	11
	We discussed the period ahead in the relations between our countries as well as current issues with Ambassadors Salem bin Mubarak Al-Ghaff of Qatar, Akio Miyajima of Japan and Wendy Hinton of #NewZealand. <a href="https://t.co/8cmBC0MUT">https://t.co/8cmBC0MUT</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>		98	160
Mevlüt Cavusoglu	We exchanged views on our bilateral relations and regional developments with Ambassadors Al-Zawawi of Kuwait and Rifai of Jordan. Also conveyed our thanks to Ambassador Julian Luis Tetamant for his contributions to Turkey-Argentina relations, upon conclusion of his tenure. <a href="https://t.co/H0S4TW0q2">https://t.co/H0S4TW0q2</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>	<a href="http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg">http://pbs.twimg.com/media/D68v0G4cAAM9c.jpg</a>		80	477
	Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy in response to a question regarding the denial of extradition of Turgut Kaya to Turkey by Greece						

**Figure 5**

*A Sample Excel spreadsheet with a collected data log collated from Twitter accounts in 2018*

As familiarisation with the data required a prolonged engagement and persistent observation, it was significant for me to immerse myself with the essence of data in order to become acquainted with the content (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this phase, the whole data gathered was read thoroughly and notes taken on coding were taken for later use that may describe the content; thus, it could be revisited in the following phases during the Analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This phase was all about getting to know the data before generating the codes.

After that, in the form of a list of tweets, raw data has been converted into texts that could be subsequently analysed in NVivo.

#### **2.3.2.1.2 Identifying a Thematic Framework**

This framework analysis stage is usually referred to as 'coding' in other qualitative methods, and it mainly comprises identifying key themes in the data. These are defined as 'nodes' (codes).

##### ***What is a code?***

Qualitative research can hold a term or expression which "symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2016, 3) that is a 'Code'. Namely, coding is "how you define what the data you are analysing is about" (Gibbs, 2007). Concerning the definition of the data that I will analyse later in the study, coding refers to identifying texts in tweets by searching and pinpointing concepts and relations between them. Therefore, coding that is referred to as nodes in the subsequent parts of the study is not just about labelling but also about the research idea.

After reviewing the list of codes, the construction of a thematic framework may begin. My purpose at this level was to organise the data in a meaningful and systematic way by addressing a specific research question and its sub-questions and then analysing the data with this in mind. As the data in this study only consists of Twitter messages, when compared to different forms of computer-mediated communication, such as comments shared on blogs, forums, or Facebook, the content in Twitter could be seen as a vague element to many researchers. They may eventually feel disconnected from the overall context. That is why I tried to identify key ideas or themes related to specific items so that the items could be classified and brought together considering their generality levels during a categorised classification of nodes and sub-nodes (themes and subthemes). "Although the researcher may have a set of a priori issues, it is important to maintain an open mind and not force the data to fit the a priori issues" (Srivastava et al., 2009, p.76). However, since this research has not been designed based on the priori issues, emergent issues will possibly form the thematic framework on recurring data. It is underlined that the thematic framework is dependent on the data; however, it offers

the researcher the opportunity to filter and clarify the relevant sections in later parts of the analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p. 186). Given this, each segment of data relevant to the research question has been coded and sorted by aiming to organise the data as much as possible for the subsequent parts of the study.

### *Node Structure*

First of all, significant characteristics of data throughout the entire data set have been coded. And then, the data associated with each code has been gathered together as a part of a systematic analysis.

The seven themes produced and codes (nodes) used in the analysis process are indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Key themes and sub-themes identified using the framework analysis*

<b>Key Themes/ Nodes</b>	<b>Sub-themes/ Nodes</b>
1. Nodes\\ Hot messages against the coup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\ Hot messages against the coup \Coup</li> <li>- Nodes\\ Hot messages against the coup \Coup\failed</li> <li>- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\Darbe giriřimi</li> <li>- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\Democracy</li> <li>- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\Democracy\2017-tweets</li> <li>- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\Democracy\defended</li> <li>- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\Democracy\security</li> </ul>

	- Nodes\\Hot messages against the coup\\Democracy\\State of emergency
2. Nodes\\ National unity and solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\unity</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\people</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\Qur'an</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\Nation</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\national</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\martyrs</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\onenationone heart</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity\\homeland</li> <li>- Nodes\\National unity and solidarity \\Democracy\\unity</li> </ul>
3. Nodes\\ Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks\\democracy watch</li> <li>- Nodes\\Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks\\15_julyepic</li> <li>- Nodes\\Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks\\Commemoration</li> <li>- Nodes\\Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks\\National unity day</li> </ul>

4. Nodes\\ Making an enemy of the coup plotters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\heinous</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\Feto</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\Feto\\#feto</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\Feto\\Shelter country</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\feto</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\feto\\terror</li> <li>- Nodes\\Making an enemy of the coup plotters\\threats</li> </ul>
5. Nodes\\ Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\\Hero</li> <li>- Nodes\\Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\\martyr</li> <li>- Nodes\\Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\\Heroes</li> <li>- Nodes\\Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\\Heroes\\martyrs</li> <li>- Nodes\\Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\\Heroes\\martyrs</li> </ul>
6. Nodes\\ Seeking international support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\\Foreign support</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\people's_victory</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\2018-cooperation</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\cooperation</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\delegation</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\developments</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\economy</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\projects</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Normalization\worldpeace</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\solidarity</li> <li>- Nodes\\Seeking international support\Terrorist</li> </ul>
7. Nodes\\ Activating the masses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nodes\\Activating the masses\sovereignty rests with the nation</li> <li>- Nodes\\Activating the masses\watch</li> <li>- Nodes\\Activating the masses\owner</li> <li>- Nodes\\Activating the masses\thanks</li> </ul>

### 2.3.2.1.3 Indexing

Indexing means that the researcher pinpoints fragments or fragments of data corresponding to a specific theme. It refers to the process in which there is a systematic application of the thematic framework or index to the data in the form

of a text. All the data gathered is read and explained using explanatory notes in accordance with the thematic framework. After that, the researcher selects the fragments, s/he codes the fragments. For this purpose, a numerical system has been suggested by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text, which links it back to the index (Bryman and Burgess, 1994, p. 180 – 182). For this very reason, using qualitative data analysis tools such as NVivo can be considered ideal for such tasks.

#### **2.3.2.1.4 Charting**

In the fourth stage, after the data presented as an indexed form in the previous stage, it is determined to organise the themes in the charts.

In other words, it is essential for the researcher to create an image of the data as a whole by selecting the interesting fragments where the themes are related, and the sub-themes come forward. That is why Bryman and Burgess (1994) claim that "Data are 'lifted' from their original context and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference" (p. 182). This process requires the analyst to place the data that is chosen from the context of the original content in the tables with headings and subheadings drawn along the thematic framework (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, p. 183). In that way, the researcher codes all the fragments gathered from the source. In this study, all the pieces and fragments of the data have been coded based on the Twitter posts collated from five accounts in the analysis.

#### **2.3.2.1.5 Mapping and Interpretation**

At this last stage, the main objectives of qualitative Analysis are addressed. After all the data has been sorted and charted based on the key themes, mapping and interpreting the whole data set begins bringing the basic features of the data together. "Although emergent categories, associations, and patterns will have been noted and recorded during the indexing and charting phases, the serious and systematic process of detection now begins". At this point, "the analyst returns to the key objectives and features of qualitative analysis outlined" (Bryman and

Burgess, 1994, p. 186). The researcher at this level is expected to be aware of those key objectives listed as "defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies" (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p. 186). It is a sort of charted material analysis for descriptions, similarities, differences, connections, major or minor changes over time.

In the mapping and interpretation stage of this study, I have tried to make sense of the data considering the context and the major themes formed as a result of the analysis of the tweets from five different accounts exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey. While doing this in the last stage, firstly, I described the themes created by NVivo. After that, the types of messages that I looked over created typologies. As another step in this stage, I continued creating categories that derive from the themes and sub-themes or fall within or between these themes. The section on interpreting the data gives way to a more comprehensive way to discuss the analysis findings to build a coherent interpretation of data.

## **2.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

As it is commonly known, in qualitative research, the researcher looks at the subject from a unique perspective only within specific frameworks. This chapter has portrayed the research questions, research methodology, Procedures for the Analysis, and Steps of Framework Analysis that this dissertation has adopted. In that context, the Framework Analysis appeared to be an appropriate methodological approach to examine language constructed by state institutions that conduct digital diplomacy in Turkey to realise the discourses if emerged since the July 15, 2016 coup d'état.

The Framework Analysis provided a five-step analysis model to analyse textual data concerning social phenomena where the discourse has been developed. It can be concluded that, by using this methodology to analyse the posts shared by the accounts to be examined with regard to digital diplomacy discourse in Turkey, it becomes possible to interpret the data obtained thanks to the analysis process

through studying themes formed, discourse employed and the hidden messages, if any, the words carry.



## **CHAPTER 3: FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS OF TWITTER MESSAGES SHARED IN 2016, 2017, 2018 AFTER THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This part of the dissertation aims to address the topics relevant to the 2<sup>nd</sup> research question, so this chapter presents the data analysis of the Twitter posts and their interpretation. After conducting a thorough search of the literature on digital diplomacy, I now expect to identify new variables, which could contribute to my evaluation in the last section of this Chapter pertaining to the practice of digital diplomacy in Turkey after the coup-attempt taking five official accounts' posts made in 2016, 2017, and 2018 into consideration.

Main Question: How did the Turkish state apparatus respond to the issues arising on the attempted coup night of July 15, 2016, through the messages on Twitter accounts of various state institutions, bodies and actors conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey comparing messages shared during 15 July – 10 August in 2016, 2017 and 2018?

#### **Sub-questions**

- Which theme(s) that become prominent in the Twitter posts have been given importance by the state officials in communication with the international and domestic publics? Why?
- How has the Turkish state performed digital diplomacy to communicate its decisions and goals by executing its strategies on Twitter since the coup attempt?
- What are the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of Twitter posts?

### **3.2 Analysis of Tweets from Five Government Bodies Conducting Digital Diplomacy in Turkey from the 15th of July to 10th of August in 2016, 2017, 2018**

It is now widely accepted that Twitter has become a prominent digital platform for textual communication and information. While Twitter exhibits plenty of accessible data on various topics, it also poses challenges for the researchers since it provides data and meaning embedded in a broader context. Considering its increasing use and popularity, Twitter has also started to be used as an alternative channel by the related parties executing digital diplomacy worldwide. Due to the inevitable impact of various social media tools like Twitter on the masses, digital diplomacy practitioners cannot remain indifferent to these tools. Diplomats, governments, and even world leaders want to use this platform for various reasons related to their diplomatic actions because Twitter is viewed as a great tool to disseminate information and communicate with the public. For this very reason, the effects and use of this social media tool, which forms the analysis part of this study, constitute the axis of the dissertation. At this point, I firmly believe that a thematic analysis of tweets' content determined by the official government bodies while realizing digital diplomacy after the coup attempt in Turkey on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016 can provide new insights. It can also be beneficial to a better understanding of digital diplomacy in Turkey.

This section presents Twitter posts' analysis from five different accounts regarding the steps followed to understand how these official Twitter accounts use language while performing digital diplomacy. In other words, the objective in this part is to study and analyse the discourse conveyed through Twitter messages to understand how Turkish digital diplomacy utilizes this social media platform. By analysing Twitter posts, depending on the findings that social media portrays, the data may aid understanding if new discourses have emerged regarding digital diplomacy practices in Turkey and provide insights into the increasing importance of digital diplomacy. The posts which the following official government accounts have shared are as follows,

**Table 6***Official Twitter Accounts of Government Bodies*

Official Government Accounts	URL
“Turkish Foreign Ministry”	<a href="https://twitter.com/MFATurkey">https://twitter.com/MFATurkey</a>
“Turkish Presidency”	<a href="https://twitter.com/tcbestepe">https://twitter.com/tcbestepe</a>
“Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy” (OPD) (Başbakanlık KDK)	<a href="https://twitter.com/BasbakanlikKDK">https://twitter.com/BasbakanlikKDK</a>
“Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu”	<a href="http://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu?lang=tr">http://twitter.com/MevlutCavusoglu?lang=tr</a>
“Turkish PM” (Bbyegm- Eng)	<a href="http://twitter.com/byegmeng">http://twitter.com/byegmeng</a>

The Twitter accounts will be analysed concerning several themes emerging from the accounts indicated in Table 6, and the evaluation report of the analysis will be shared in the following part of the chapter.

**Table 7**

*Key themes/ nodes identified as a result of the framework analysis*

1. Nodes\\ Hot messages against the coup
2. Nodes\\ National unity and solidarity
3. Nodes\\ Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks
4. Nodes\\ Making an enemy of the coup plotters
5. Nodes\\ Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt
6. Nodes\\ Seeking international support
7. Nodes\\ Activating the masses

### **3.3 Framework Analysis Report**

The final stage or report generation constructed on the analysis stages included selecting samples to show the elements of the themes. The issues raised within the themes have been identified in these fragments. Thus, this has provided a clear example of the point being made in this study. Therefore, the study's results section aims to give details, including the justification why I have chosen the recurring themes and seen them as necessary in the data. According to the years (2016, 2017, and 2018), interpretation and evaluation of the analysis have been shared in the following parts of the study.

#### **3.3.1 Analysis of the Posts in 2016**

In this section, first, related to the general contents of the posts made from five Twitter accounts, the word clouds will be given. All the tweets collated from relevant accounts, including retweets, have been used to build the word clouds. As a result, word clouds have been formed out of the 1368 tweets. The words and



used terms are related to the following concepts. Following themes become prominent considering all the posts made: democracy, freedom, thanking the citizens being on the streets, citizens defending democracy at the expense of their lives, the positive response of the masses to the declaration of the state of emergency, government's position regarding the measures taken, democracy watches, foreign and international public support against the coup attempt, heroism of the citizens who lost their lives or were injured, unity and solidarity of the people and opposition's support after the coup.

For instance, the statements of Erdoğan, who asked the nation to go out on the streets to protect democracy, were shared from this account:

President #Erdogan: "I asked the Turkish nation to defend democracy, and thousands of people took to the streets."

Erdogan stated that freedom and democracy will always be protected:

President #Erdoğan: "We have never compromised on freedom and democracy, and we will never do so. Everyone should know this."

The Citizens who took to the streets against the coup attempt and protected democracy and the national media that displayed a national stance during the attempt were thanked:

PM Yıldırım: "I thank every Turkish citizen who has taken to the streets to defend democracy. I'm so proud to be a part of this nation."

PM Yıldırım: "I thank the media outlets for broadcasting in line with the values of the Republic of Turkey and displaying a national stance."

FM @MevlutCavusoglu: "Democracy was protected by ordinary citizens who had gathered to oppose the coup."

It was emphasized that citizens defended democracy at the expense of their lives:

AFAD stands by the Turkish people & security personnel who defends Turkey's democracy at the expense of their lives.

There were also some posts about positive responses to the declaration of the state of emergency in the aftermath of the coup. It has been underlined democracy is not in danger:

President #Erdoğan: "State of emergency decision has been taken to protect democracy, state of law, fundamental rights and freedoms."

President #Erdoğan's interview with Al Jazeera: "Turkish democracy is not under threat."

Information was shared with the public on the state's attitude and approach regarding the measures taken after the coup attempt.

"No crisis should be wasted. Hence, we're restructuring the army to prevent future coup attempts. Turkish democracy is much stronger now"

Posts were made to increase the popularity of democracy watches and to ensure the continued participation of the crowds:

"#Turkish couples marry at 'democracy watches' against failed coup"

"Labour Minister @suleymansoylu: "This is a lesson in democracy for the entire world"

"Tourists and foreigners living in #Turkey join 'democracy watches' & support Turkish people"

“President #Erdoğan received bride and groom on democracy watch at the Presidential Complex”

Foreign and international public support against the coup attempt was shared:

“PM Sharif congratulated democracy awareness in Turkey & stressed support to the Turkish people and government”

“Turks & Muslims unite at democracy rally in US capital to show support for Turkish democracy”

The posts about heroism and commemoration of the citizens losing their lives or getting injured were among the prominent themes.

“President #Erdoğan paid a visit of condolences to democracy martyr Oğuzhan Yaşar's family”

“Mass Democracy and Martyrs' Rallies are being held all across #Turkey!”

“PM Binali Yıldırım welcomed citizens of #Turkey who opposed the coup and protected democracy at Çankaya Palace”

Posts were made about the rallies that would ensure the unity and solidarity of the people condemn the coup attempt and attended by the opposition:

“Turkey is defending its democracy”

“Chairman of the Republican People's Party Kılıçdaroğlu: You, the citizens of Turkey, wrote history by defending democracy risking your lives”

“Turkey is united against coups defending democracy.  
Ruling & opposition party supporters together in Taksim  
yesterday”

Word trees regarding democracy and the coup attempt in the tweets from the 2016-Byegmeng account are indicated in Figure 7 below:

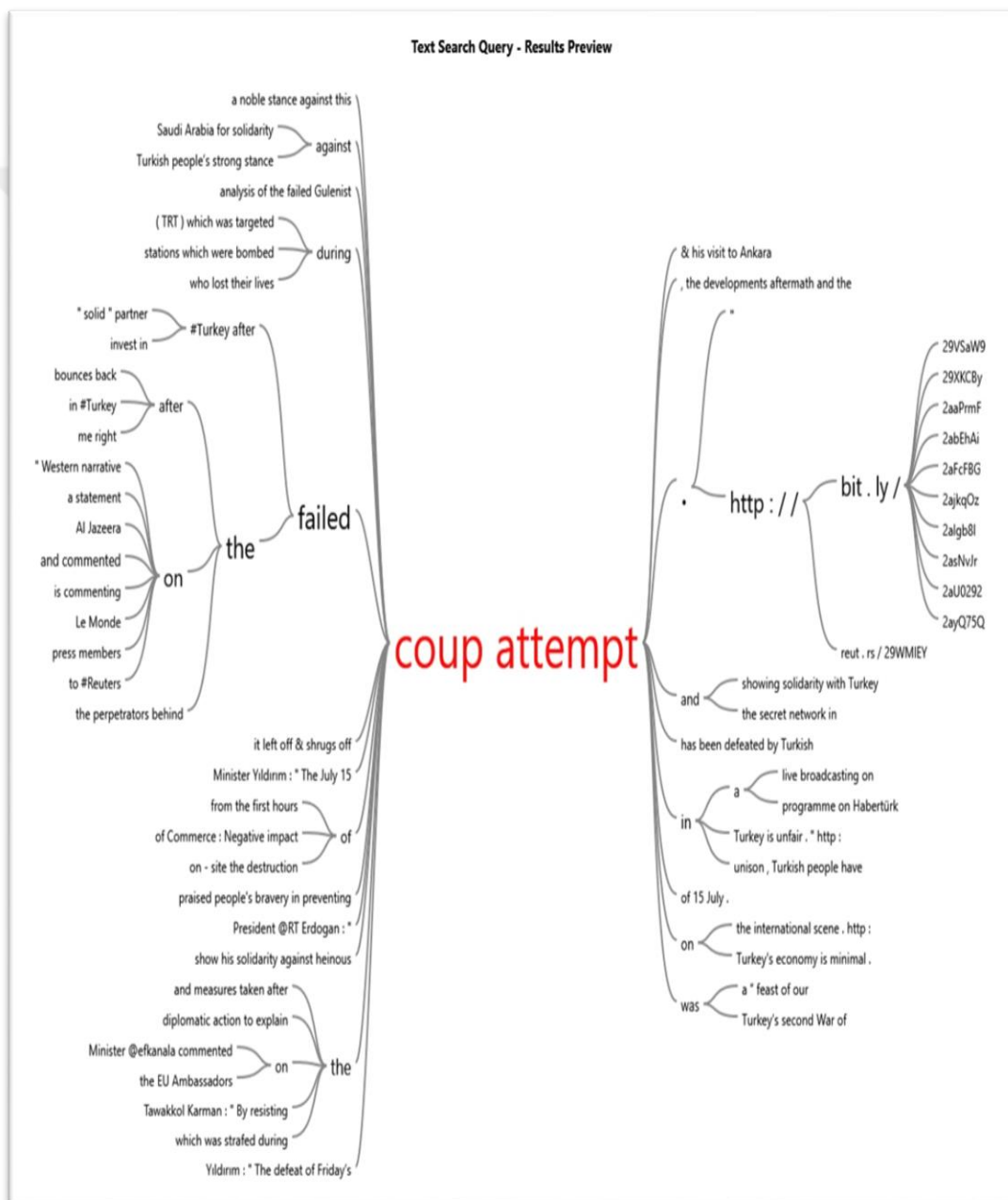
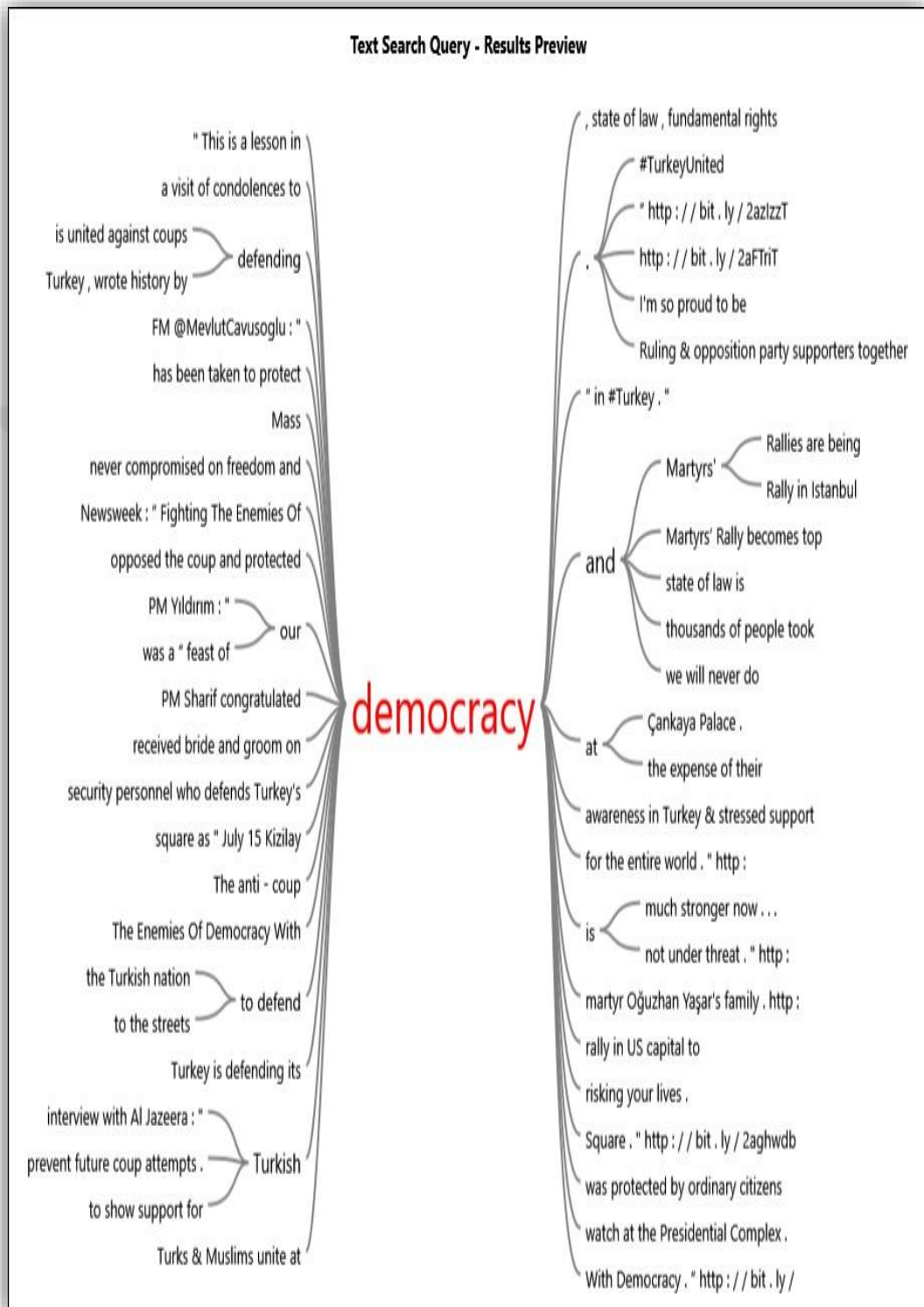


Figure 7

2016 Byegmeng coup attempt word tree



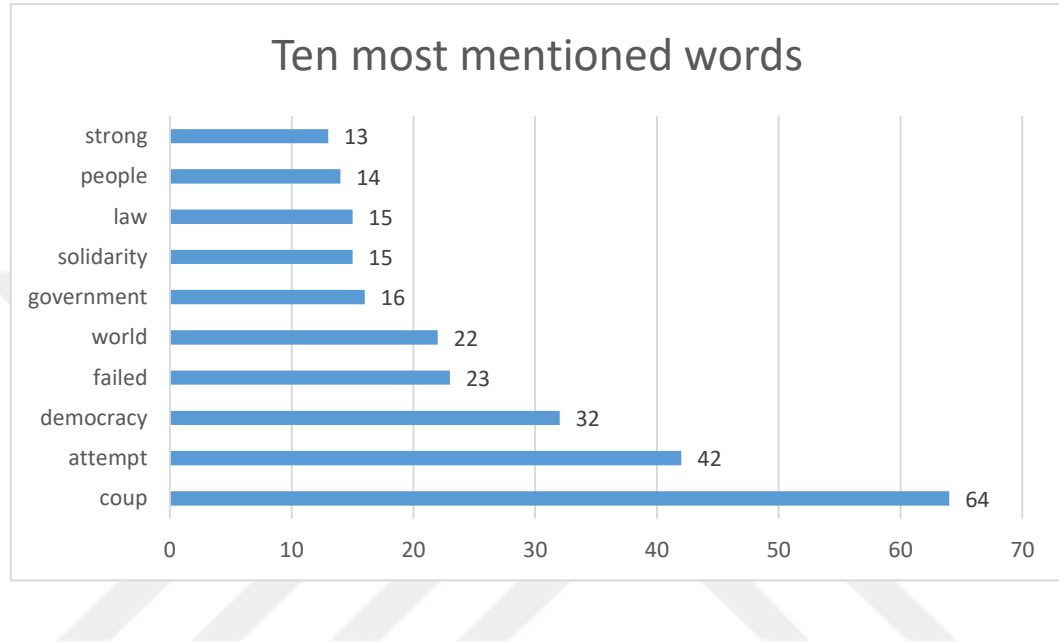
**Figure 8**

*2016 Byegmeng democracy word tree*

The ten most mentioned words by Byegmeng have been shown in Table 8

**Table 8**

*2016 Byegmeng ten most mentioned words*



As seen in the table, ‘coup’ and ‘attempt’ words with the same meaning in this context have become the most used words. They have been interchangeably and repeatedly used in the tweets shared by the officials, indicating a remarkable point in terms of language, with certain words chosen to communicate with the public after the coup attempt.

### **3.3.1.2 Mapping of the Posts Made by BaşbakanlıkKDK Account in 2016**

Below, you can see the words which have been most frequently mentioned in the messages shared by BaşbakanlıkKDK displayed in a word cloud for the general contents of the posts made from this account is given below. As mentioned earlier, the number of tweets shared for each account differs a lot. BaşbakanlıkKDK has become the account with the highest number of tweets - 438 tweets in total - in the analysis carried out in 2016.

The top themes dominating this account can be clearly seen in the example statements following the word cloud.



**Figure 9**

*2016 BasbakanlıkKDK post Word cloud*

*Note: This figure demonstrates the elements /nodes obtained from the posts. Big and bold words indicate the frequency and importance of the words.*

It is seen that the prominent themes concentrate on a few significant issues, which can be seen related to the failed coup attempt and how it failed thanks to unity and solidarity among citizens. The following constitute the focus of the key themes; ‘FETO (Fetullahist Terrorist Organisation) held responsible for the coup attempt in July 2016,’ ‘thelife in Turkey returning to normal’, ‘global support

messages coming from various countries, and ‘the messages on the honour of those who lost their lives’.

Sample statements below display messages connected to the topics mentioned above.

First of all, there are messages from the BasbakanlıkKDK account that the coup attempt in 2016 will not be successful and that those who attempted will receive the answers in the most severe way:

"Hopefully,in the end, the nation will win, democracy will win, coup plotters will be punished in the most severe way."

"We will never and never give up the trust that our nation has given us and hand it over to the coup plotters."

Special Forces Commander Zekai Aksakal: "These traitor networks are trying to attempt a coup, but they will not succeed."

It has been reported that the nation resisted the coup in unity and solidarity, and the coup failed:

"Fight all to the end for democracy, national will, peace, and fraternity. Those who attempted this coup against their nation were subjected to the real coup themselves”

“Democracy out of spite, peace despite national will, brotherhood out of spite Those who tried to make a coup against their nation were themselves hit”

"Those who attempt to blow our democracy and nation plotted the real coup themselves”.

Deputy Chief of General Staff Org. Dunder: "Turkey, hand in hand with the state and nation, has put down this coup attempt."

"These coup plotters and gangs of parallel terrorist organizations were forced down".

"This attempted coup indeed failed."

"The coup plotters and the parallel terrorist organization members have been defeated. This coup has certainly failed."

It was reported that the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization was responsible for the coup:

"Reaction from around the world is given to the coup attempt plotted by FETÖ"

President Erdogan: " After this coup attempt, I am calling out again: Now hand over this person in Pensilyanya to Turkey."

"After this coup attempt, I am calling out again: Now hand over this person in Pensilyanya to Turkey. "

"#FETÖ Coup Attempt in 6 Languages: What is FETÖ? What did it do? What is it aiming for?"

On July 15, when FETÖ plotted a coup, Muslims became one heart for Turkey.

#PresidentErdogan: We also discussed the July 15 coup attempt and FETÖ. This coup attempt revealed FETÖ's plans.

It is reported that life in Turkey has returned to normal:

"The so-called 'coup continues' perception carried out against Turkey is utterly a lie."

"The coup attempt in Turkey failed utterly"

“In Turkey, commercial life, social life, cultural life all have returned to normal”

"Deputy Prime Minister @NumanKurtulmus: Threat of coup has been totally eliminated".

Global support messages against the coup attempt have been shared:

“Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev condemned the FETÖ for the coup attempt: “We are always with the Turkish people and the state.”

Montenegro Islamic Unity Chairman Rifat Fejzic, who performed prayers on the day the coup attempt was put down: "Turkey is in our prayers."

“Muslims in India who once sent aid to Anatolia during the days of the Turkish Independence War are again shoulder to shoulder against the coup attempt”

“FETÖ's coup attempt was protested in Afghanistan”

“Foreign Minister @MevlutCavusoglu: Full support came from Russia to Turkey after the coup attempt”

“#The message against the coup attempt sent by Algerian Democratic Union Party leader and former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia”

“President @RT\_Erdogan: That Mr Putin calls us immediately after the coup attempt is significant for solidarity and psychology”

Various state officials have made statements to local and foreign press about the coup attempt:

“We evaluated the FETÖ's treacherous attempt and its subsequent results to international press representatives”

“Prime Minister Yildirim made a statement to the British Sky News about the attempted armed coup”

“Interior Minister @efkanala makes statements on the coup attempt on A Haber live broadcast”

“President Erdoğan gave an interview to the German ARD channel about FETÖ's coup attempt”

Posts to honour those who lost their lives during the struggle against the coup attempt were shared:

“Prime Minister Yıldırım visits Kazan, where a large number of citizens were martyred during the coup attempt”

"I congratulate you as tradesmen and craftsmen for your stance in favour of the nation against the July 15 coup attempt."

"I wish God's mercy to the police and civilian martyrs who lay down their lives for democracy."

The terms nation, national will, and democracy are associated in the posts shared:

"Hopefully, in the end, the nation will win, democracy will win, coup plotters will be punished in the most severe way."

July 15 was declared as the “Democracy and National Unity Day”. Being on the guard duty for democracy has been seen as equal to the

holy war. Citizens across the country have been called to the squares to continue their guard duty for democracy:

"July 15 is the day when the democracy watch is held. Today is the anniversary and the day of democracy."

"You were on democracy watch from last night till this morning. May your holy war be blessed."

"The name of this great nation is Turks that gave the necessary lesson by keeping the night watch for democracy against the attempted coup that tried to demolish the unity of Turkey."

"Yet more is needed; the task is not finished yet. From now on, we go down to Kızılay and continue our democracy watch."

"In 81 provinces, districts, villages, and everywhere, we will continue democracy watches."

"We would like to express our gratitude to all participants present for democracy watches"



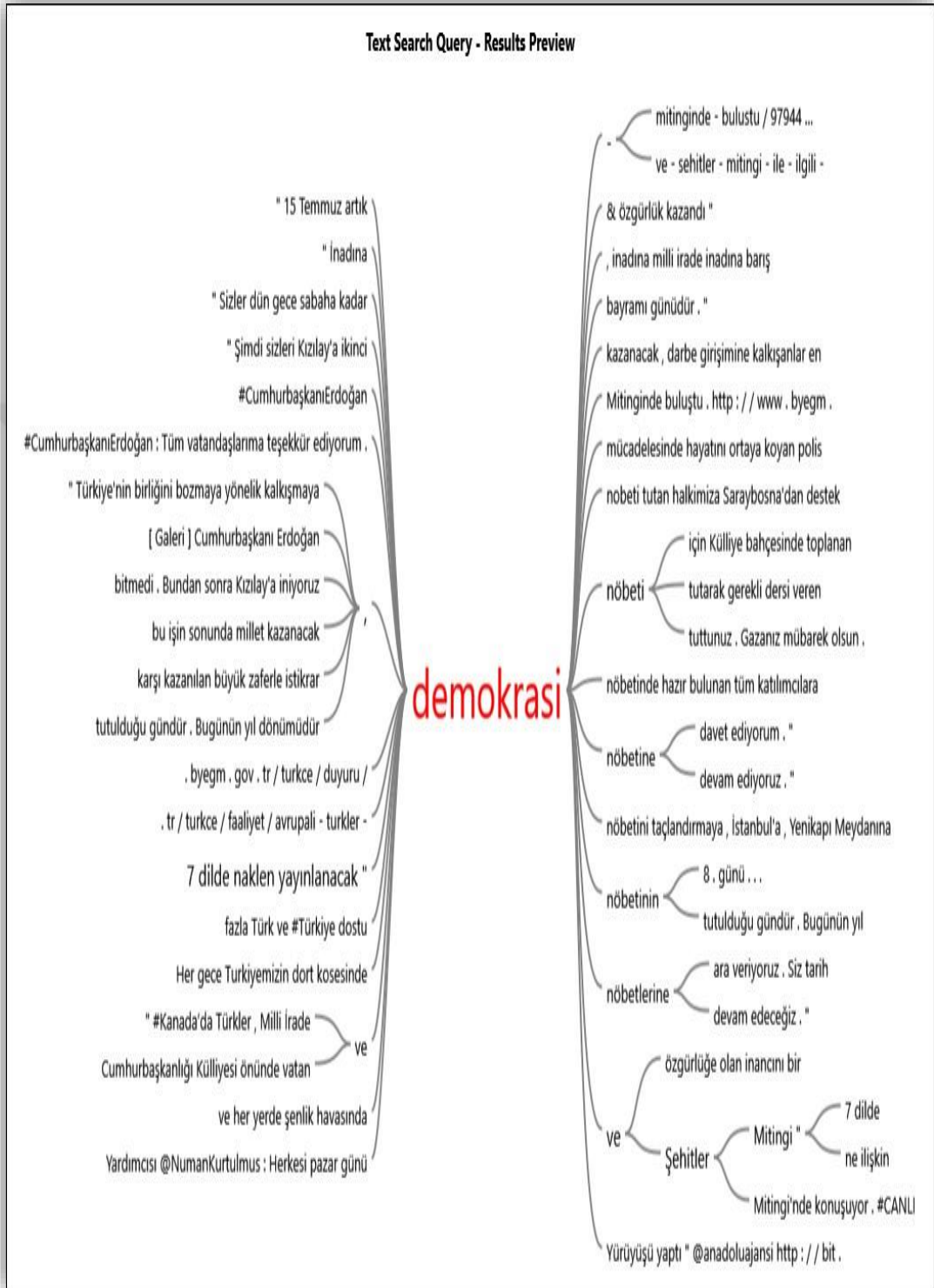
In this word cloud shown as Figure 10, one of the most repeated words, ‘coup’ has been associated and connected by branches to the other words, common phrases, and chunks used specifically by Başbakanlık KDK.

As this account preferred giving their messages in Turkish; therefore, the most frequently used words and phrases are all Turkish. For this very reason, the words and phrases displayed below are used together, showing us the connections preceding or following the word ‘coup’ in the messages shared by the Başbakanlık KDK account.

Preceding words and phrases can be seen as connected with FETÖ, democracy and nation winning over the coup, July 15<sup>th</sup> coup, President Erdoğan, Çavuşoğlu and other officials’ statements about the coup, the reaction of the government, and how this attempt became a failed one. When the following words and phrases are examined, the most repeated words are seen as follows;

‘failed attempt’, ‘one nation one heart’, ‘not surrendering’, ‘coup threat’, ‘plotters’, ‘how failed coup attempt has made people much stronger’, ‘the power of the citizens’, ‘a focus on coup related comments and statements coming from other countries’ ‘supporting the government’, ‘no more a threat to anyone’, ‘a big failure for the coup plotters’.

Another very extensively used word among the Twitter messages is “democracy”. ‘Democracy’ has been used in relation to many concepts and for delivering the message to the citizens. The concepts can be listed as follows; the link between democracy and July 15, democracy watch, freedom and democracy, calls for the democracy watches to take the streets, national will, and democracy, thanking all the citizens for defending democracy and international support for the democracy watch.

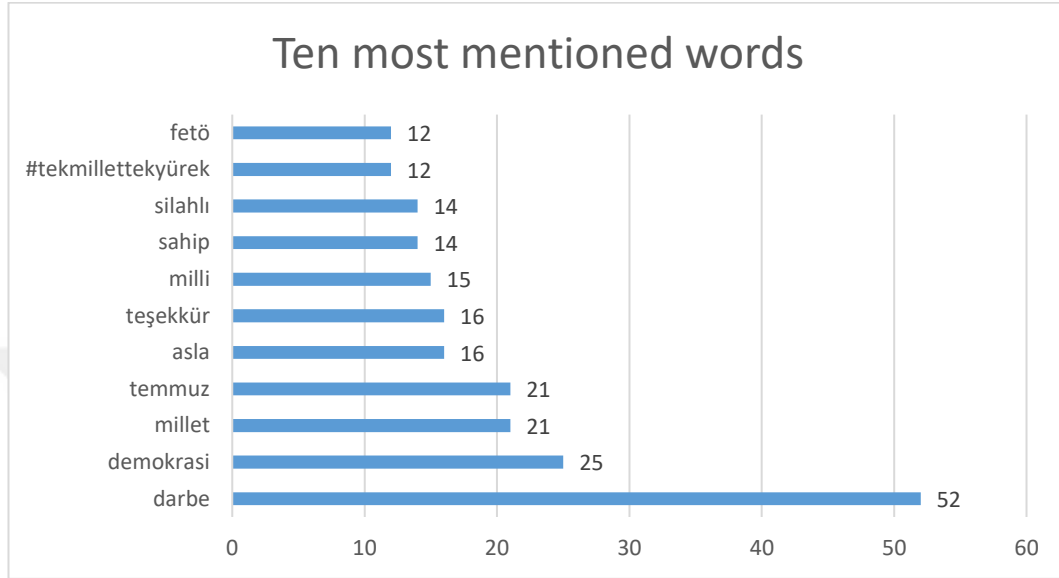


**Figure 11**

2016 BasbakanlıkKDK democracy word tree

**Table 9**

*2016 BasbakanlikKDK ten most mentioned words*



**Note:** English equivalents to the words are given below. As can be seen, the most mentioned words may not be exactly meaningful.

*Fetö: Fethullah Terrorist Organisation*

*Tek millet tek yürek: One nation, one heart*

*Silahlı: armed*

*Sahip: Owner*

*Milli: National*

*Teşekkür: Thanks*

*Asla: Never*

*Temmuz: July*

*Millet: Nation*

*Demokrasi: Democracy*

*Darbe: Coup*

From the list of 10 most frequent words, it can be seen that ‘coup’ and ‘democracy’ are related terms that are the most frequently used words. This also



It is noticeable that the messages shared from this account are different from those of other accounts. For instance, in this account, in addition to providing information to the world public, the objectives such as dissemination of official discourses and arguments of the state, expressing determination in the struggle with the coup, emphasis on coup plotters opening fire on civilians and preventing the support propaganda of the coup plotters abroad are prominent topics apart from the common themes shared with the previous accounts. Here are some examples;

“Did you applaud a coup last night? So did Hezbollah, PKK, Syria's dictator Assad & ISIS. Support democracy in Turkey. Global implications”

“Coups plotters cold-heartedly opening fire on civilians...still claim it's staged? #TurkeyCoupAttempt”

“On 15 July, we witnessed a bloody coup attempt targeting Turkish democracy and constitutional order claiming many innocent lives”

“NYT regrets much that the bloody coup attempt failed. Sorry but Great Turkish Nation will continue disappointing you”

“Cameras caught that moment of pro-coup soldiers' firing at a woman resisting them. #TurkeyCoupAttempt”

In particular, the expectations for support from the European Union were emphasized, and some statements of European spokesmen about the coup plotters were condemned:

“Our primary expectation from the EU & our allies is to support the democratic process in Turkey and strongly condemn the coup attempt”

“Therefore, no one, including @JHahnEU, can prejudge the ongoing legal process regarding the bloody coup attempt in Turkey”

“FM Cavusoglu: "Coup plotters cannot be granted political asylum." #TurkeyFailedCou #TerroristGulen”

“Former Swedish PM criticizes EU overreaction to the failed coup attempt in Turkey”

Western countries have been warned about the FETÖ terrorist organization. Information about the organization has been given. Western media reports were criticized, and the media has been invited to be objective:

“Informed SG @TJagland of facts about FETO and measures taken after the coup attempt”

“FM Çavuşoğlu: Western media must be objective when reporting on a deadly foiled coup in Turkey”

“We invite the world media to Turkey for an objective observation and analysis of the failed Gulenist coup attempt”

In addition to the differences mentioned above, similar themes to other accounts are also shared on this account. It was emphasized that the nation defended democracy in unity and solidarity, that they fought against the coup and coup plotters would be brought to justice:

“Coup attempt defeated by Turkish solidarity”

“Turkish people have rejected coup attempt against our unity, integrity and democracy & defended their will”

“Those involved in the coup attempt against our democracy will be immediately brought to justice”

“Citizens march on #BosphorusBridge in #Istanbul #Turkey, to show solidarity against the failed #coup attempt”

Expressions of support from foreign politicians were shared and thanked:

“Express our thanks to Ambassador Al-Shafi of #Qatar for his active efforts against the heinous coup attempt of July 15”

“Visit of my brother Al-Thani shows #Qatar's support to Turkey & Turkish people against the heinous coup attempt”

“Expressed our thanks to Ambassador Adel Siraj Merdad of Saudi Arabia for solidarity against coup attempt”

“Hosting my friend FM @JZarif of Iran who showed solidarity against terrorist coup attempt”

“Former Swedish PM criticizes EU overreaction to failed coup attempt in Turkey”

“We thank the Bulgarian Government for its exemplary solidarity in the fight against the terrorist organization FETÖ”

The coup attempt was proclaimed as a joint act of FETÖ and other terrorist organizations:

“President Erdogan: Pro-coup terrorist organization FETO has acted together with PKK, PYD and DAESH”

“President Erdogan: Coup plotters offered Hulusi Akar, the Chief of Staff, to talk with Gulen at that night”

Various calls were made to receive national and international support in the fight against the FETÖ terrorist organization, with posts in Turkish and English. Different evidence claiming the organization's relationship with the coup was shared. It has been advocated that this organization is a threat to Turkey and the whole world.

“FETÖ evidence in coup attempt”

“We received a visit from Zhang Ming, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of China. We care about China's will to cooperate in the fight against FETÖ”

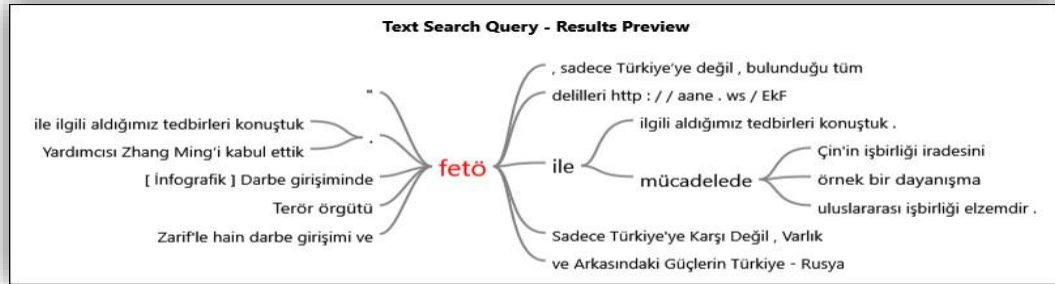
"FETÖ is a threat not only to Turkey but also to the countries where it continues to exist."

"FETÖ and the Power Behind is understood to have attempted to undermine the relations between Turkey and Russia."

“International cooperation is essential in the fight against FETÖ”

“FETÖ is a threat not only to Turkey but also to the stability and security of all countries where it is located. The importance of joint struggle is evident considering this common threat”

"The preacher who sold his soul to the devil broke a record of in mischief and hypocrisy."



**Figure 13**

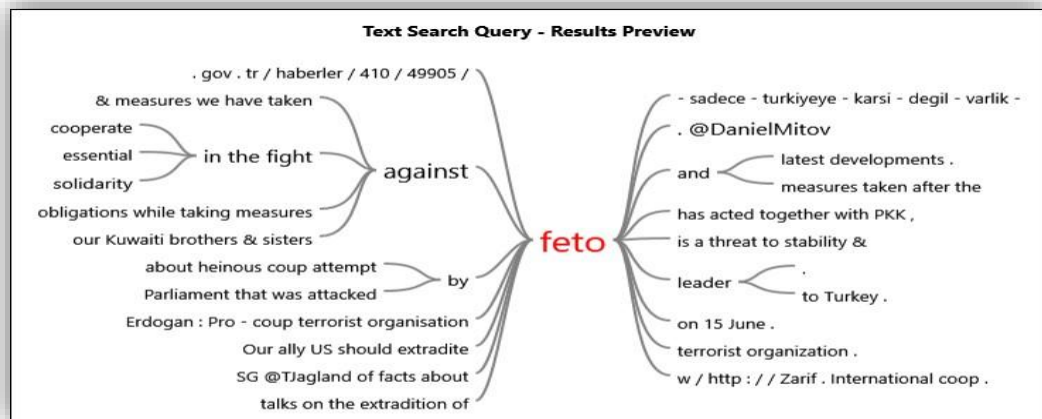
2016 MevlutCavusoglu FETÖ word tree

In English messages, the attempts made for the extradition of the coup leader Gülen were shared. In these posts, it was emphasized that the FETO organization is dangerous for all countries.

We are planning to visit US soon with a high-level delegation to have talks on the extradition of FETO leader.

“We exert every effort for the extradition of Gulen. Our ally US should extradite FETO leader to Turkey”

“FETO is a threat to stability&security of not only Turkey but all countries it exists. Common fight against this common threat is important”



**Figure 14**

2016 MevlutCavusoglu FETO word tree

Another point that draws attention is that the expression “one nation, one heart” was used as a hashtag - .#tekmillettekyürek (#onenationoneheart) - only in 2016. Compared to other accounts, it is clear that this hashtag was mostly used by the minister of the foreign affair, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Çavuşoğlu 17 times, Prime MinistryKDK 12, TCBeştepe 3 times). A call was made to the Yenikapı rally with shared messages, and the participants were praised and congratulated:

“I would like to invite all my citizens to be the # OneNationOneHeart to Yenikapı to show our unity and solidarity in the most powerful way”

“New fraternity doors will be opened for our country in Yenikapi as # OneNationOne Heart against the traitors today”

"Despite the games played on us, despite the seditions that we wanted to be put between us, you stood boldly."

“They thought we'd be divided but we were united as one...They thought we'd be scared but we turned into a giant... #OneNationOneHeart”

“Unprecedented 5M people attend historic Istanbul rally #TekMilletTekYürek”

Democracy was emphasized, and it was stated that the nation defended democracy:

“We will resolutely protect democracy and the will of our people. Nobody could prevent us from this journey”

“There should be no doubt: Our government and democracy will strongly continue with all institutions and mechanisms”

“Long live Turkey, democracy, pluralism in the Middle East”

“Turkish people have rejected coup attempt against our unity, integrity and democracy & defended their will”

“Turkey will never compromise on human rights, rule of law and democracy

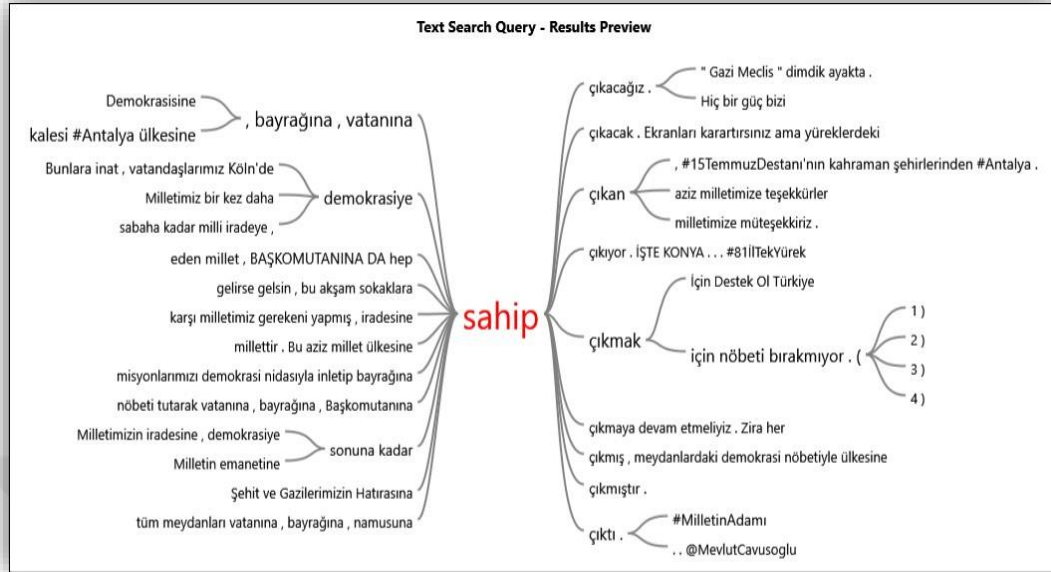
“The night that ordinary Turkish citizens became heroes, risking their lives to save democracy”

“Millions in #Istanbul...Millions in other cities. This is Turkish people standing up for democracy”

“Nobody should be in any doubt: our government and democracy in Turkey will continue to walk steadily along the road of democracy with all its institutions and mechanisms”

“The owner of this country is the nation. This sovereign nation has taken over the country and has frustrated the traps against its country with the vigil of democracy in the squares”

Since the expression of ownership was repeated in many contexts, it has been examined in the word tree. In addition, the themes of protecting democracy, homeland, taking the streets, country, flag, commander-in-chief, the memory of martyrs and veterans, honour, and national will have been frequently used in the posts.



**Figure 15**

### 2016 MevlutCavusoglu sahip word tree

In Turkish messages, the word 'democracy' is mentioned more in terms of democracy watches. Citizens were invited to defend democracy, and the participants were congratulated by extending their thanks to them.

“The owner of this country is the nation. This beloved nation has claimed the country's land and has voided the traps against its country with the democracy watch in the squares”

“On the democracy watch, we have a duty in #Samsun, the symbolic city of our struggle for independence”

“We are grateful to our nation, who filled the squares both at home and abroad and claimed the squares crying out for democracy”

“Our nation continues to be on guard duty for democracy. #Kızılay #Ankara”

“Democracy watches for freedom, democracy and national will continue in all the squares of Turkey”

“The nation owns the squares. With the voice of the national will, we continue to make heaven tremble and watch for democracy. Come on to the squares!”

“The Minister of Foreign Affairs @MevlutCavusoglu is meeting with us this evening at the National Will and Democracy Watch”

“On our democracy watch, our President @RT\_Erdogan called us on the phone and called #Antalya residents: CONTINUE DEMOCRACY WATCH!”

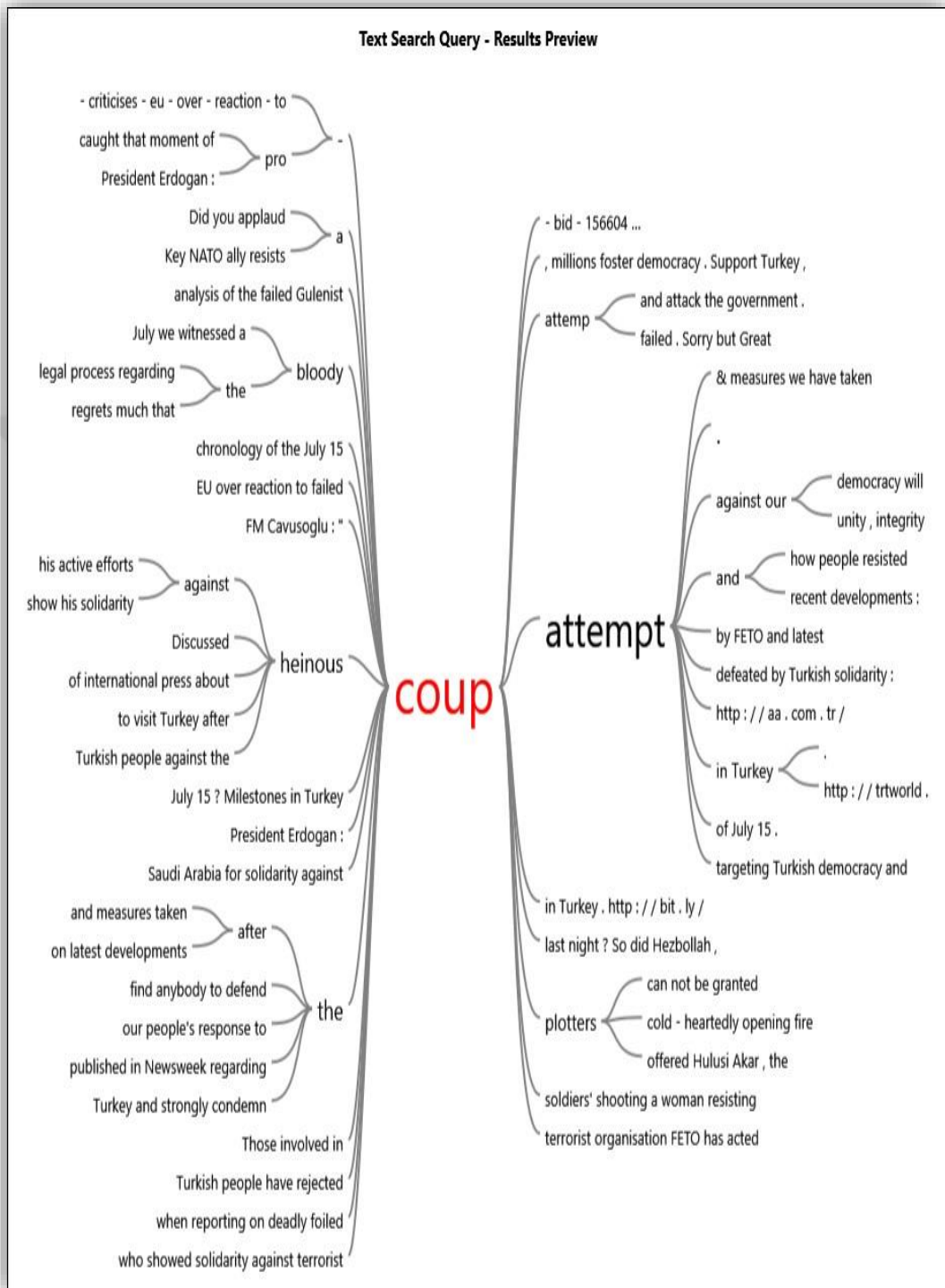
“We came together with our #Manavgat organization before setting out for #Konya for the democracy watch”

“Thanks to our beloved nation who took care of its homeland, its flag, and Commander-in-Chief by standing a democracy watch until morning”

The declaration of a state of emergency was announced, and it was stated that there should not be any concern about this issue:

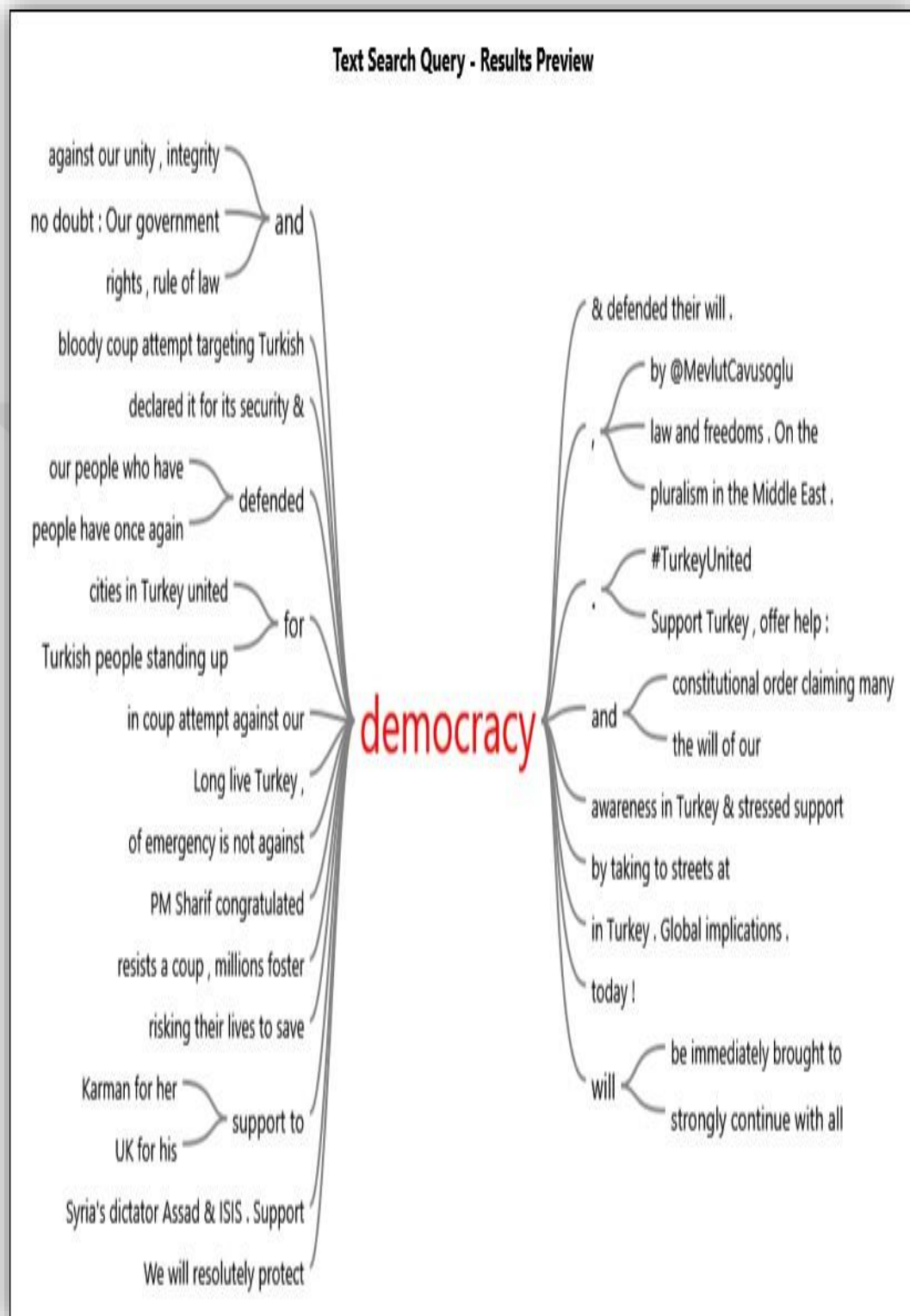
“State of emergency is not against democracy, law and freedoms. On the contrary, it is declared to protect & strengthen these values”

“State of emergency is declared in Europe & in other parts of the world if needed. Turkey declared it for its security & democracy”



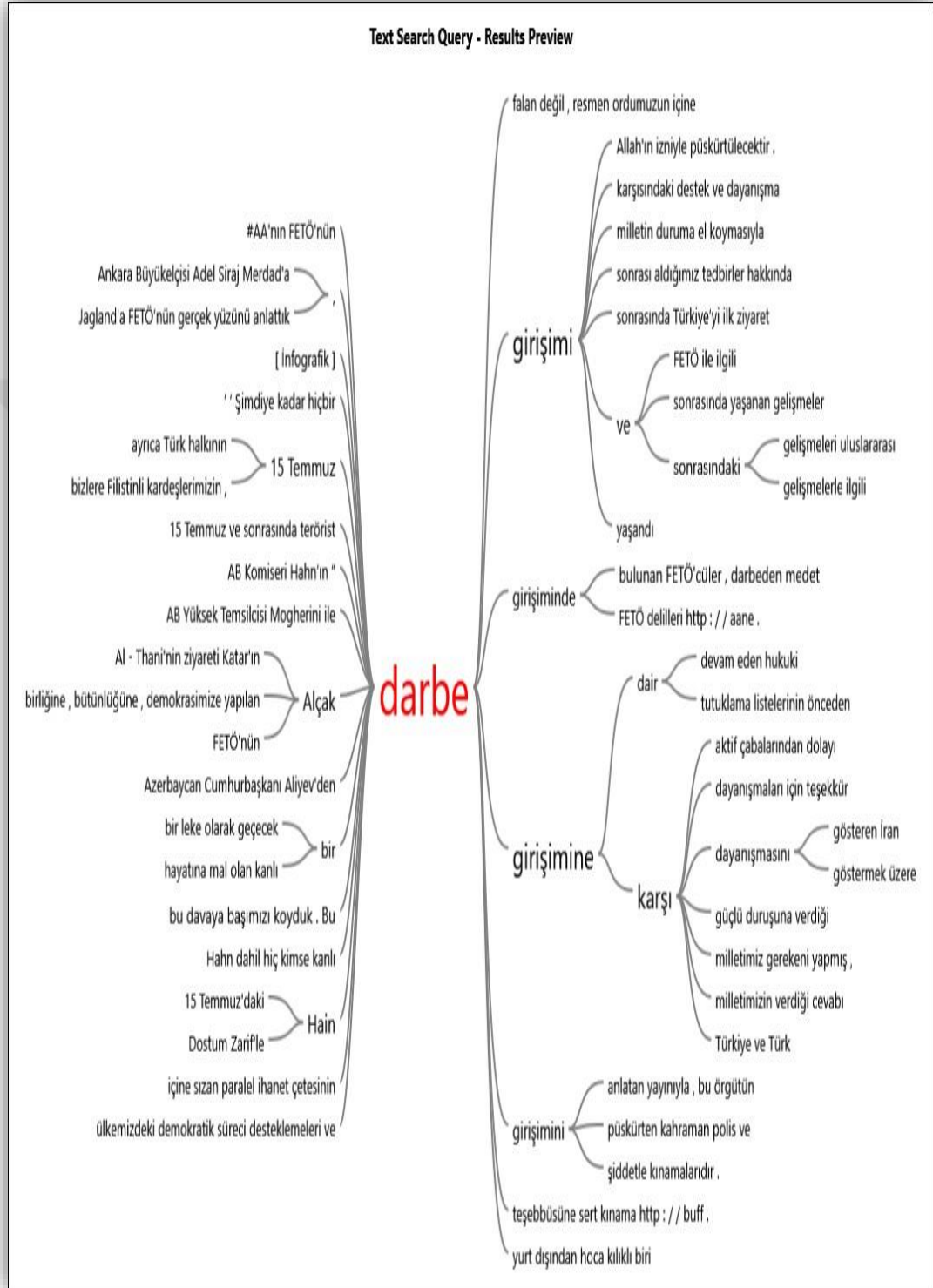
**Figure 16**

*2016 MevlutCavusoglu coup word tree*



**Figure 17**

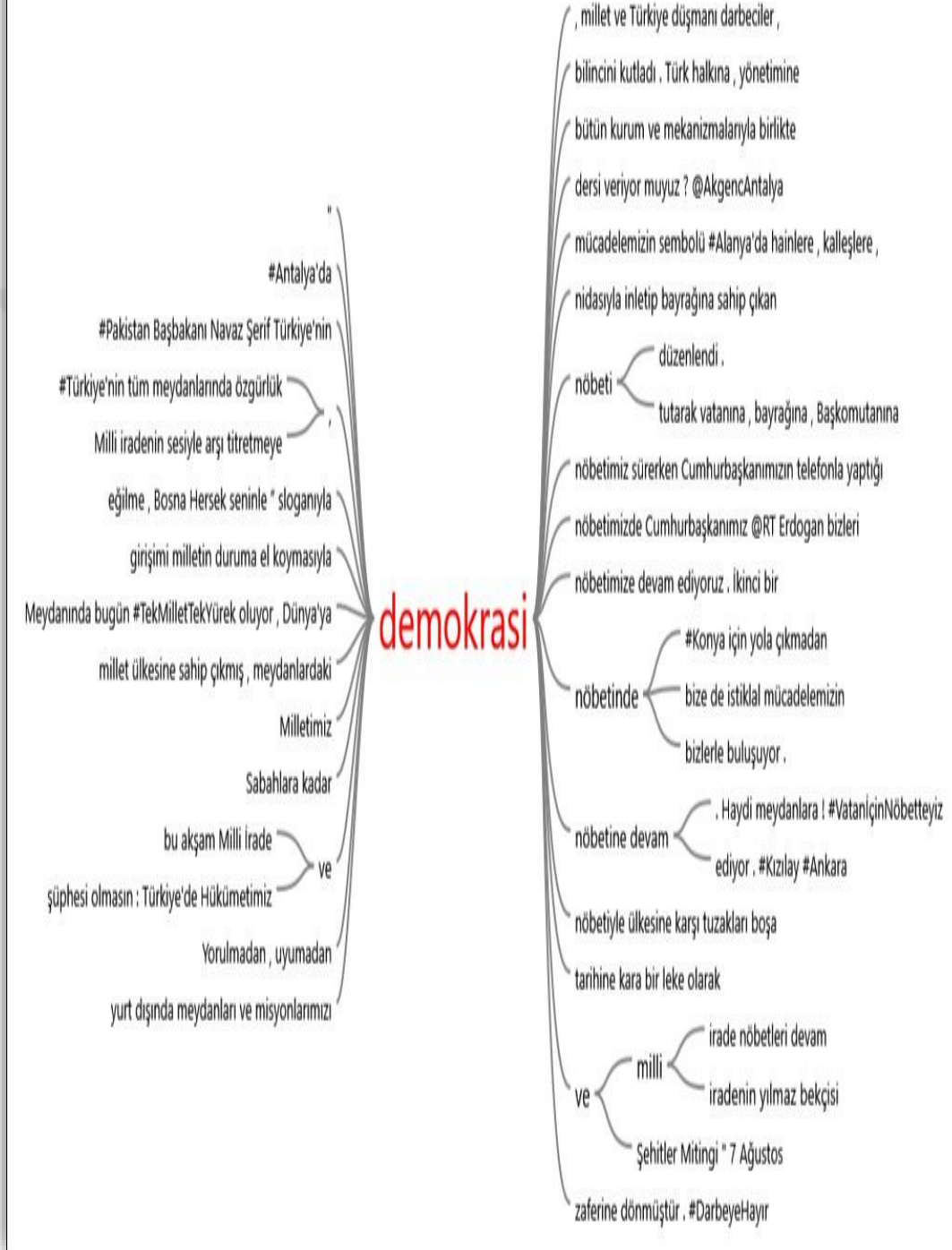
*2016 MevlutCavusoglu darbe word tree*



**Figure 18**

*2016 MevlutCavusoglu democracy word tree*

# Text Search Query - Results Preview

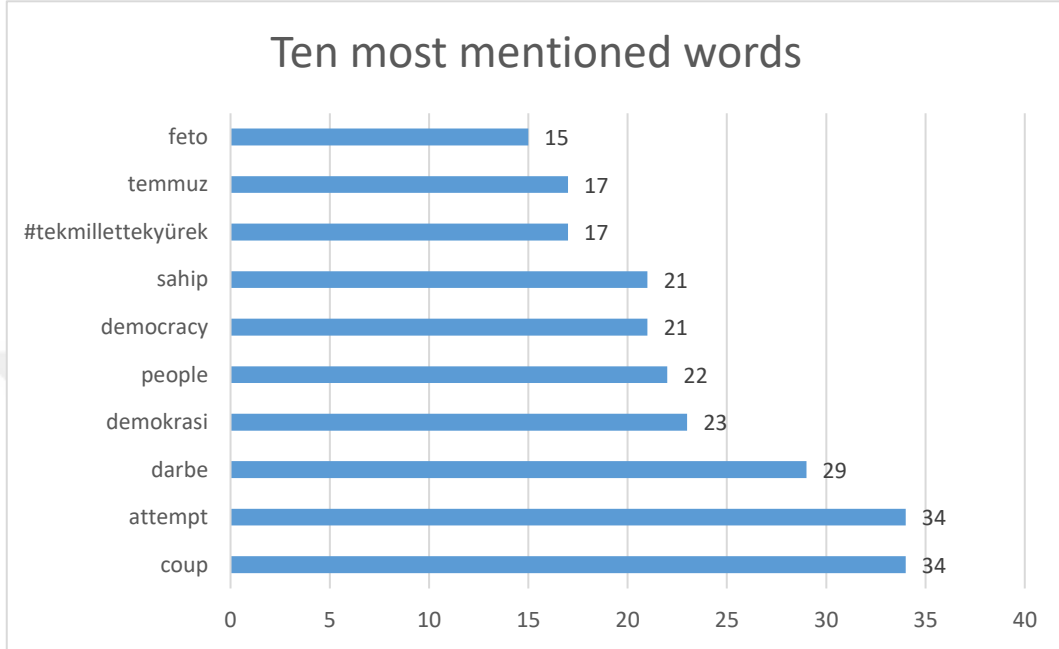


**Figure 19**

2016 MevlutCavusoglu demokrasi word tree

**Table 10**

*2016-MevlutCavusoglu ten most mentioned words*



**Note:** English equivalents to Turkish words are listed below in the same order given in the table. The most mentioned words may not seem meaningful. These words will be further analysed in the discussion part of the study.

*Fetö: Fethullah Terrorist Organisation*

*Temmuz: July*

*Tek millet tek yürek: One nation, one heart*

*Sahip: Owner*

*Demokrasi: Democracy*

*Darbe: Coup*

#### **3.3.1.4 Mapping of the Posts Made by TRPresidency Account in 2016**

The word cloud regarding the general content of the posts made from this account is given below. Mapping of the Posts Made by MFA Account in 2016



“Homeland and democracy watch in front of the Presidential Complex on the 26th day”

The announcement was made about the Mawlid Program for Martyrs of the July the 15 that would be held at Millet Mosque:

“After the Isha prayer, the Holy Quran will be read and prayed for our martyrs at the Millet Mosque. All our people are invited”

“After the Isha prayer, the Holy Quran was read and prayed for our martyrs at Beştepe Millet Mosque”

“A ceremony was held at the Presidential Complex for the Protection Police officer and a martyr, Mehmet Çetin”

Unity and solidarity messages are shared:

“Turkey is one heart for its martyrs, democracy, and homeland with its government and opposition”

Messages related to commemoration days, paying tribute to martyrs, and family visits for the citizens who lost their lives during the resistance of the July 15 coup attempt were shared:

President Erdogan: "Future generations will never forget the heroes of the July 15 democratic resistance."

President Erdoğan: "We declared July 15 as a commemoration day for the martyrs."

“Emine Erdoğan paid a visit to the Family of Martyr Commissar, Zeynep Sağır”

“Relatives of martyrs' and veterans are at the memorial service for martyrs”

President Erdogan: "If we remain silent in a situation where our young children were martyred under tank treads, we cannot account before the public."

“President Erdoğan Visited Martyr Fatih Satır's Family  
Democracy and Martyrs' Rally Begins”

The betrayal of the coup plotters was also emphasized in the posts shared by Beştepe account. Terrorist organizations have been reported to have betrayed. Turkey demanded the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, the leader of the coup from the US. FETÖ leader Gulen faced threats as being accused of betrayal to the nation:

President Erdoğan: "This was an act of betrayal. They will pay the price for it”.

Those who betray this country will pay the price for it.

President Erdogan: I am also calling on Pennsylvania. It is enough the betrayal you have done to this nation. Come to your homeland if you dare it.”

“FETO hands the betrayal watch over to PKK; PKK hands it over to Daesh.”

President Erdoğan: "I repeat my call on the U.S, give this person in Pennsylvania back to Turkey."

President Erdoğan: "We will demand the extradition of the terrorist leader in Pennsylvania. This organization is known to have bombed the TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly). They don't care about their homeland”

Domestic and foreign mass communication tools were widely used to justify the state of emergency:

“The Declaration of State of Emergency is intended to protect Democracy, Law and Freedoms.”

“The incidents in the aftermath of the coup attempt prove how strong Turkey’s democracy is”

“Turkey has a history full of democratic victories, and it will always uphold democracy”

The national will is associated with the decisive claim of the nation and the determined stance of the government. It was emphasized that the people and the government act together:

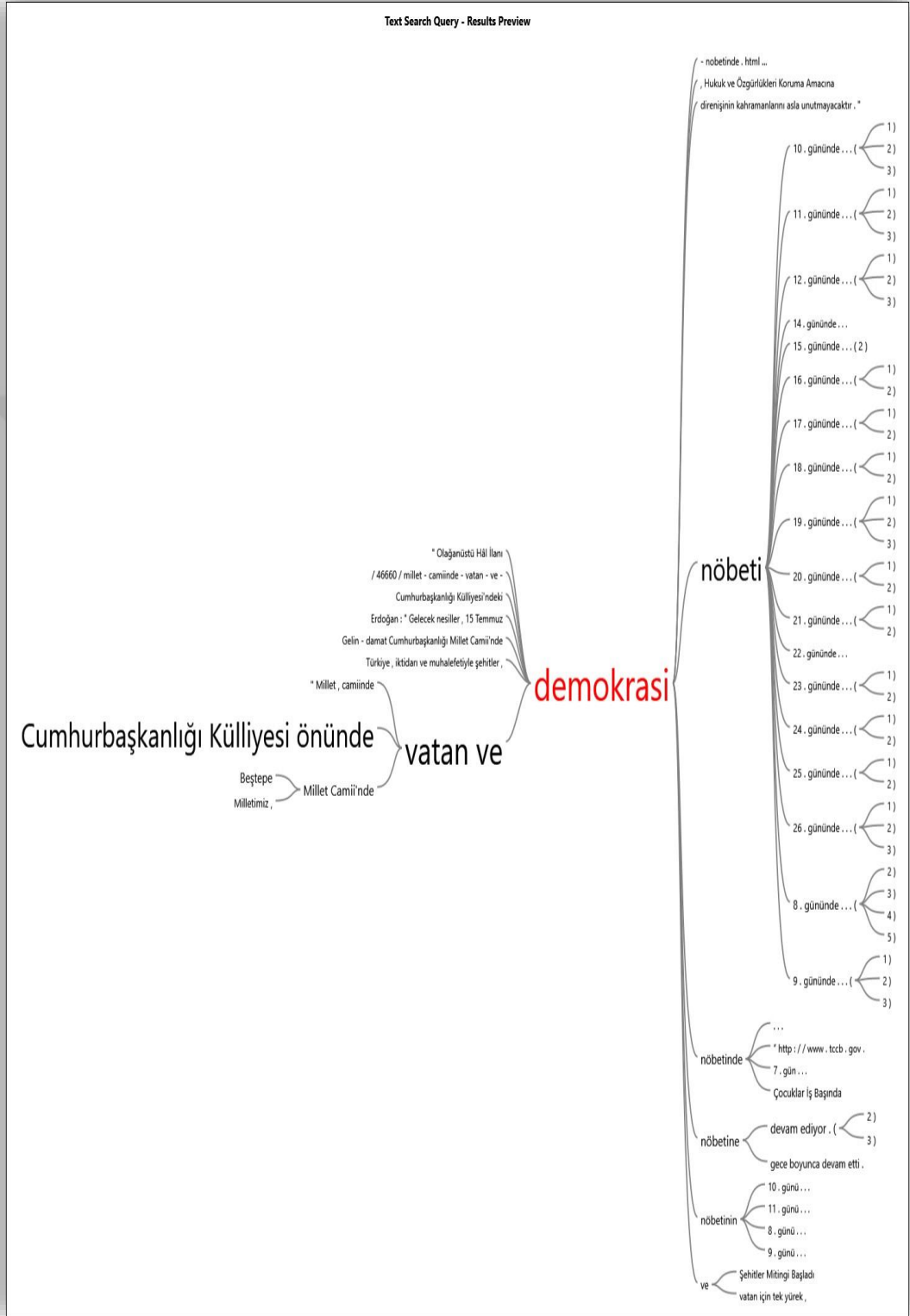
“In spite of all the threats and dangers, we moved to Istanbul and showed our determined stance against the coup plotters together with my nation”

“Neither the weapons nor the helicopters or planes of the plotters did work thanks to our people’s determination and national will”

President Erdoğan: "The Turkish people continue their resistance against the most treacherous and despicable coup attempt in its history”

Apart from these messages shared from this account, there have been some striking ‘words’ repetitively used and underlined in the posts. These words can be grouped and categorised under the terms such as ‘July’, ‘coup’, ‘democracy’, ‘nation’, ‘owner’, ‘terror’, and ‘homeland’.





**Figure 23**

2016 TRPresidency 15 demokrasi word tree

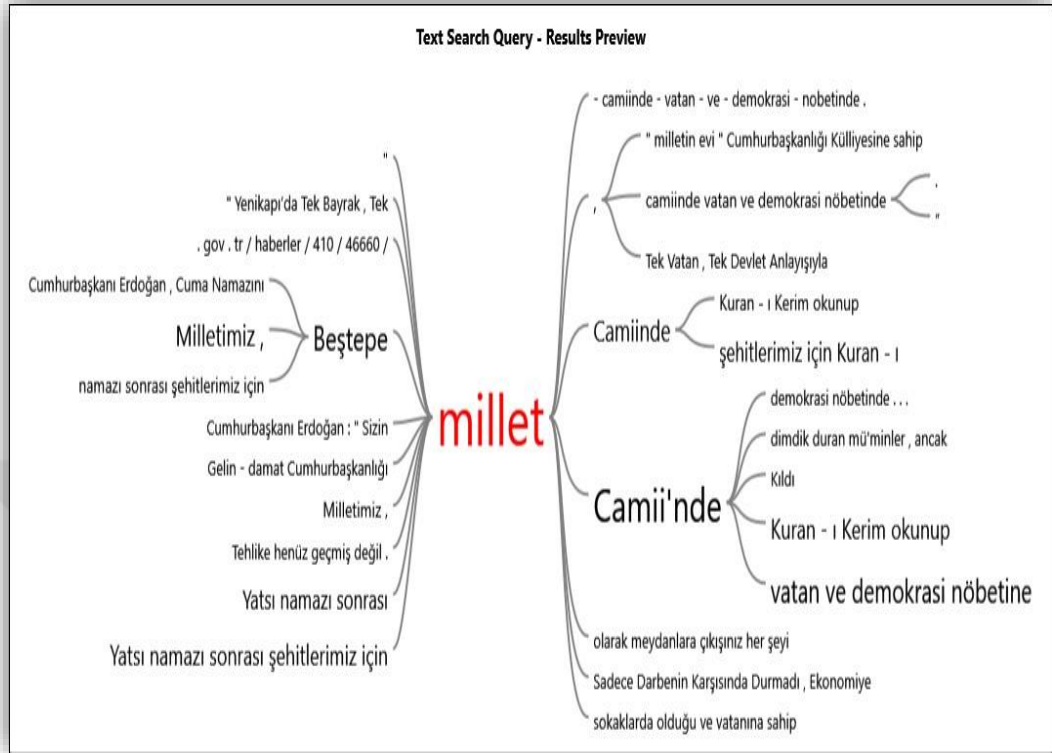


Figure 24

2016 TRPresidency Millet (nation) word tree

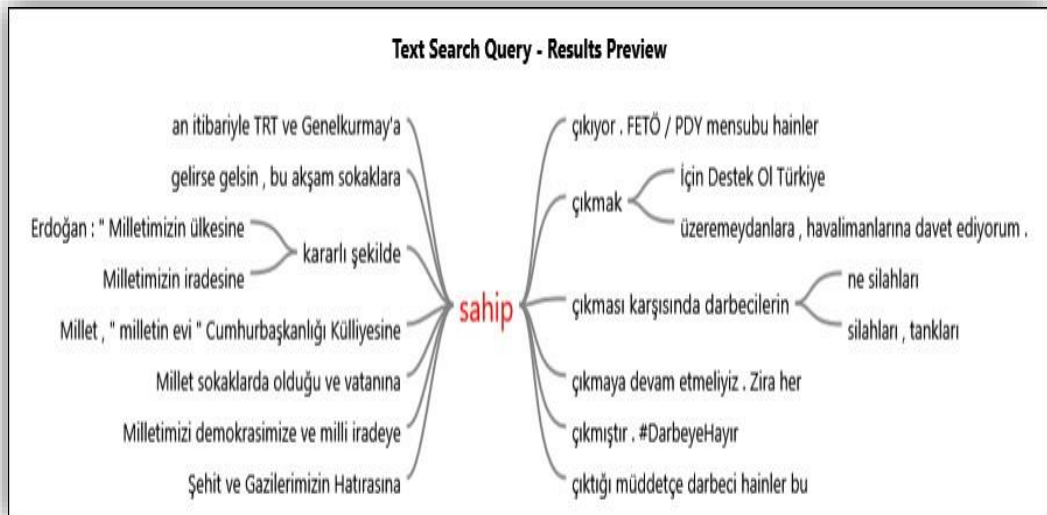
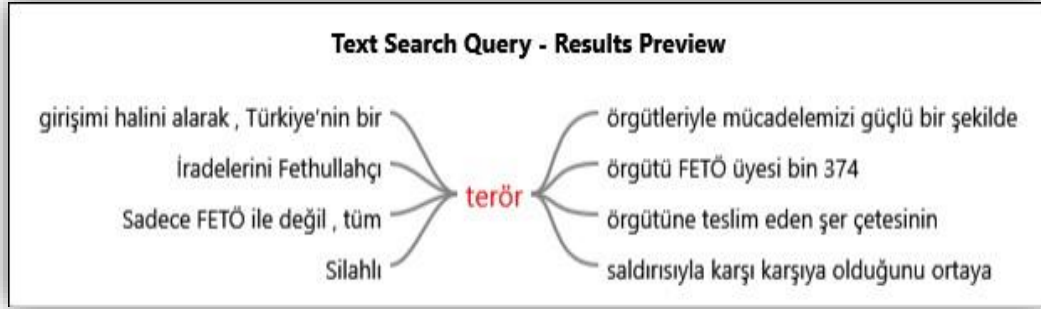


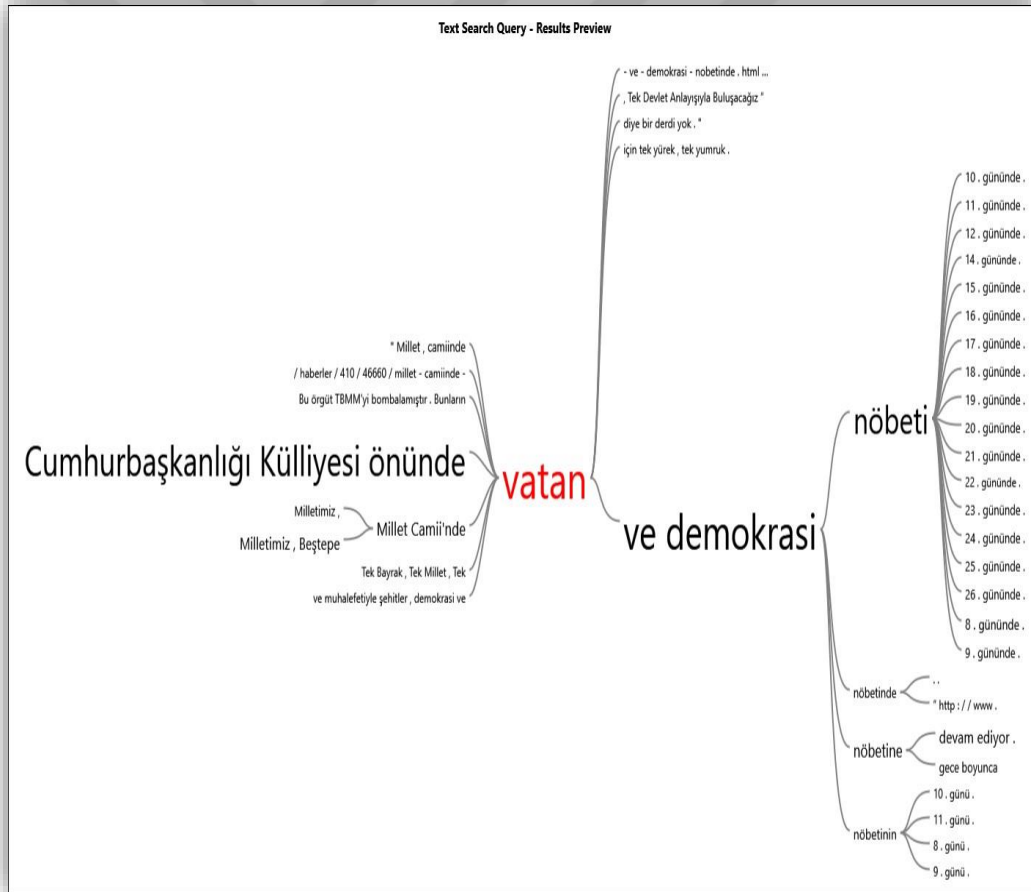
Figure 25

2016 TRPresidency sahip (owner) word tree



**Figure 26**

2016 TRPresidency *terör (terror)* word tree

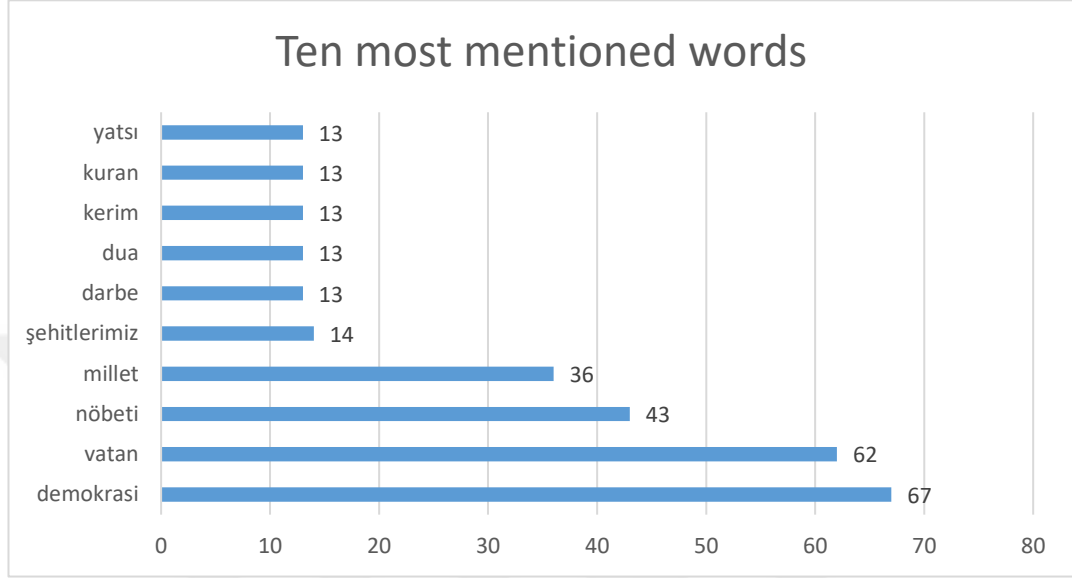


**Figure 27**

2016 TRPresidency *vatan (homeland)* word tree

**Table 11**

*2016-TRPresidency ten most mentioned words*



***Note:** English equivalents to the words are indicated below. The most mentioned words may not seem meaningful. These words will be further analysed in the discussion part of the study.*

*Yatsı: night prayer*

*Kuran: Quran*

*Kerim: great / Quran*

*Dua: prayer*

*Darbe: coup*

*Şehitlerimiz: our martyrs*

*Millet: nation*

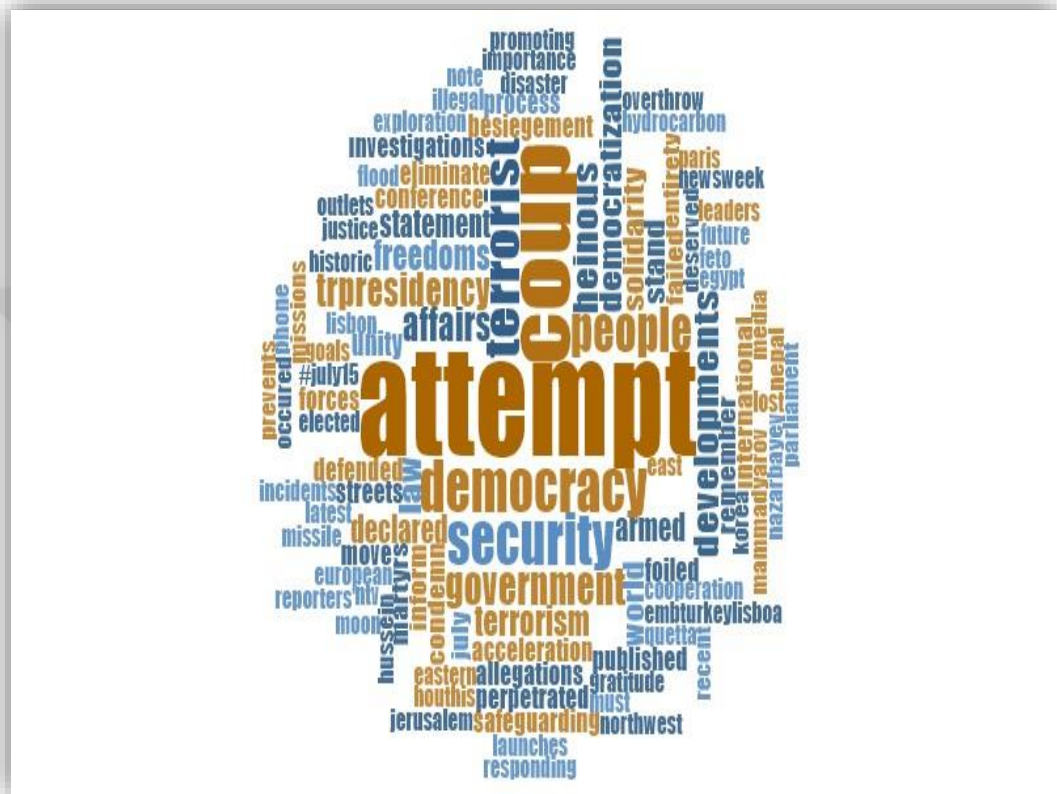
*Nöbeti: vigil / watch*

*Vatan: homeland*

*Demokrasi: Democracy*

### 3.3.1.5 Mapping of the Posts Made by MFA Account in 2016

The word cloud for the general contents of the posts made from this account is given below.



**Figure 28**

2016-MFA Tweets word cloud

Informative posts about the coup attempt and the development of the events were made from the MFA account. In addition to informing the international public, the position of the government is also explained in the posts shared.

“The situation unfolded in #Turkey was a coup attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government”

“Our President and Government are in charge. Turkish Armed Forces were not involved in the coup attempt in its entirety”

“Turkish people have rejected coup attempt against our unity, integrity and democracy & defended their will”

“An Informative Note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Failed Coup Attempt”

“An armed coup attempt has been thwarted by our nation for the first time in the history of Turkey”

“We continue to inform about heinous coup attempt and FETO across the world & stress importance of cooperation”

It has been stated that the public protected democracy by taking to the streets against the coup and claimed democracy, and the messages appreciating the people’s actions were shared:

“We are grateful to our people who have defended democracy by taking to the streets at home and abroad”

It was stressed that democracy in Turkey is strong enough:

“The incidents that took place in the aftermath of the coup attempt proves how strong Turkey’s democracy is”

It was stated that the state of emergency was announced to protect the values of democracy. In addition, examples from European countries are given:

“State of emergency is not against democracy, law and freedoms. On the contrary, it is declared to protect & strengthen these values”

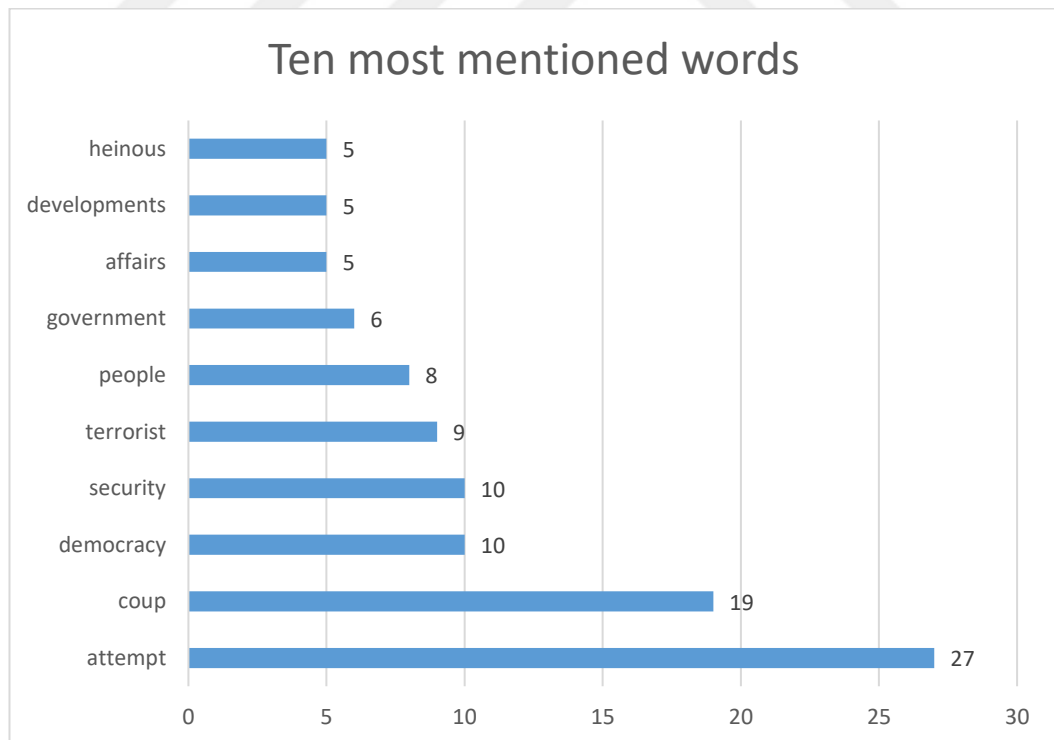
“State of emergency is aimed at safeguarding democracy, freedoms and the law”

“State of emergency is declared in Europe & other parts of the world if needed. Turkey declared it for its security & democracy”

Mevlut Çavuşoğlu's tweets about his talks with the foreign leaders and his statements to the press were shared. These posts will not be repeated here, as they have been discussed above.

**Table 12**

*2016-MFA ten most mentioned words*





“Our President: Turkey is not a country to be sold cheaply and with such riots, and it is not a country to be ruled from Pennsylvania”

President of the Turkish Republic: "This incident, unfortunately, is an act of insurrection by a minority within the Turkish Armed Forces."

“Our President: Those responsible will receive the necessary punishment with the response we will give nationally against this attempt against the unity and integrity of our country”

“They targeted both the soul and the body of the assembly, where the will of the nation was manifested. These are not soldiers, and these are terrorists disguised as soldiers”

The nation was invited to the squares.

President Erdoğan: "I invite everyone to the squares of cities, airports. I will be among them as well”.

"Today is the time to claim democracy, the country and the nation."

“I thank our nation very much. Turkey is standing in the street and Turkey. We will not leave the field open for those marauders”

"Today is the day to protect the country, democracy, national will."

The will to fight has been put forward in the messages, and it has been underlined that this is a terrorist act. In addition, the citizens were told that the armed forces were not in the chain of command during the coup attempt.

"No one should worry; we are on duty. The nation brought us. The responsibility placed upon us by our nation, the only force that will take us is the nation itself."

"Prime Minister Yıldırım: I appeal to all our citizens. The incident that occurred is not an event performed within the TSK's command line"

"Some of the gangs in the armed forces have been trying to attempt. This is a direct terrorist act."

"Our commanders never and ever approve of this act."

Information was given about the events that occurred during the night of 15 July. It was stated that there would be no return from democracy, and assurances were given that the necessary penalties would be imposed on those responsible:

"It was observed that some important buildings were blockaded. Our police forces took action. There will be a hard strike and severe punishment. At the expense of losing our lives, the necessary actions will be taken.

"President: They will pay the price of using the tanks, canons, planes, helicopters, which were bought by the money of the nation, against the nation in the most severe way."

"May our nation be comfortable; we will never tolerate illegal activities that will interrupt democracy."

"The ones who caused Turkey to experience these incidents will be punished most severely."

The posts of the military commanders fighting against the coup were shared:

Special Forces Commander Zekai Aksakal: "These betrayal networks are attempting a coup, but they will not succeed in this"

“Special Forces Commander Zekai Aksakal: "We in line of duty. Our nation stands behind us, and we will overcome this." The Command does not approve of any of these, and it will not, you will see it. We will take control of it soon”

“Umit Dundar, the First Army Commander General: "They represent a small group within the First Army Command. There is nothing to worry about". We take the necessary measures together with other units that do not participate and are currently in the chain of command”

Necdet Ozel: "The TAF (Turkish Armed Forces) has always been sensitive about the protection of democratic Turkey, and it has always been respectful for the national will." "The TAF members should always remember their oath"

Necdet Özel: "My call on those who launched this coup attempt is: give up this immediately, use your loaf."

Gendarmerie Head of Operations: "May our nation be at peace. We are commanding our troops to suppress this movement against the state and the nation.”

Calls by the authorities to avoid abandoning airports, streets, and squares have been repeated many times.

Our President: "We will be in the city; we will teach them the necessary lessons."

Prime Minister Yildirim: "Our people are on the streets. Our people show all kinds of self-sacrifice to protect democracy"

President of the Republic: "I invite my nation to airports and squares in particular. I believe these nights will become the daylight for us."

"Prime Minister: Citizens should not leave the squares empty. They should continue to stay in the squares until they are sure it is safe."

"Regardless of the stage of this coup, we must continue to claim the streets this evening because there can be a new attempt at any moment"

"Prime Minister Yıldırım: I would like our citizens to gather in the squares"

"I sincerely greet my beloved nation who took over the streets. I am very proud of being the son of such a heroic nation"

"Now I invite you to Kızılay for the second democracy watch."

"Prime Minister Yıldırım: "Nightshift will continue. We are on the watch during the night and work in the daytime."

"Our nation's stance is more important than anything in the fight against these plotters. No stop, no retreat. We will not leave squares empty"

"We will continue democracy watch in 81 provinces, districts, villages, and everywhere"

"Go down to the squares, do not leave the squares empty. The response to our call has been our greatest strength in preventing the coup"

It was announced that the necessary responses to the coup plotters would be given, and the decisions taken were shared:

President of the Republic: "The judiciary has given the arrest warrants to those who made these uprisings."

Our President: "They will receive the necessary answers whatever it takes in accordance with our constitution".

"There has been a decision to suspend 2.745 judges at various levels"

"1,500 in the Ministry of Finance and 8777 officials in the Ministry of Interior has been decided to be suspended, and the process is still ongoing"

It was emphasized that after the coup attempt was repulsed, life got back to normal and that democracy in Turkey is stronger than ever:

"May our nation be at peace. Life has returned to normal. This is just very important not only for Turkey but also for the future of democracy in the world"

"The coup attempt in Turkey ended in total failure. Commercial life, social life, cultural life in Turkey all have returned back to normal"

"The perception that the 'coup against Turkey is still going on is utterly a lie"

The decisions taken regarding those who lost their lives during the struggle against the coup are shared. Moreover, Steps taken to ensure that July 15 is not forgotten are highlighted.

"We have 208 martyrs, 60 of which are police officers, 3 are soldiers, 145 are civil heroes".

"It was decided to change the name of the Bosphorus Bridge to "July 15 Martyrs Bridge"

“Another topic we have agreed is "Establishing the Monuments of Martyrs in Istanbul and Ankara”.

"Until the evening of July 15th, these heroes were your children, now all those martyrs are the children of our Turkish nation"

In the following part, ‘darbe’ word tree based on the data obtained from all accounts is shared.

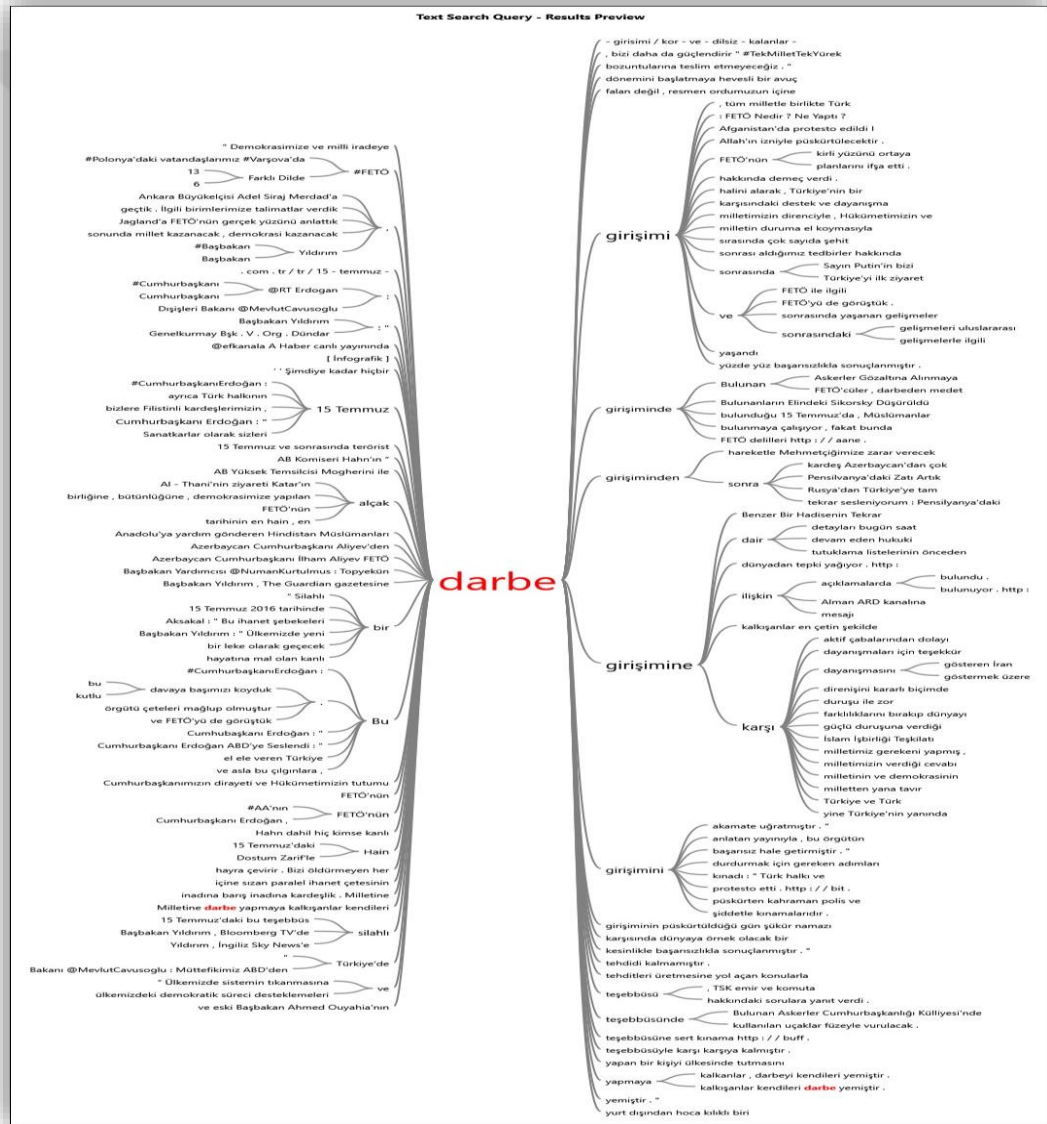


Figure 30

2016 all tweets darbe word tree





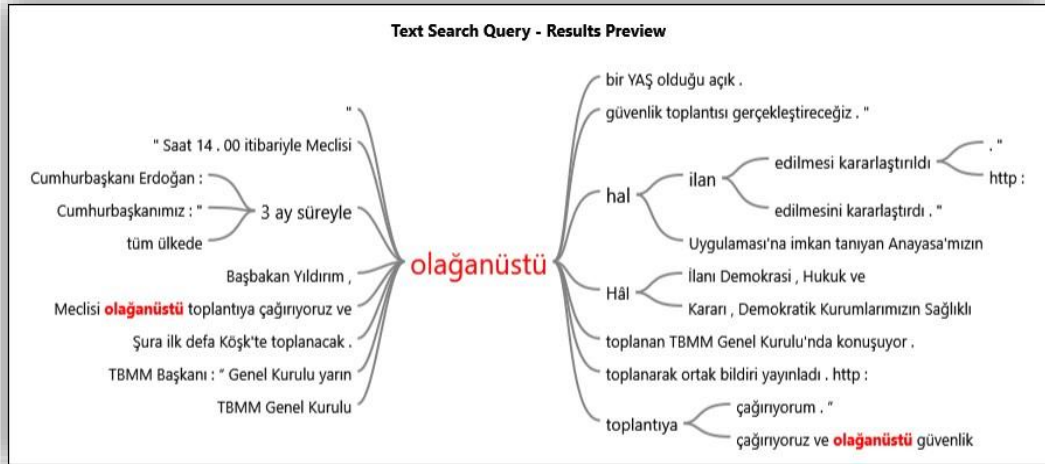


Figure 34

2016 all tweets olağanüstü (extraordinary) word tree

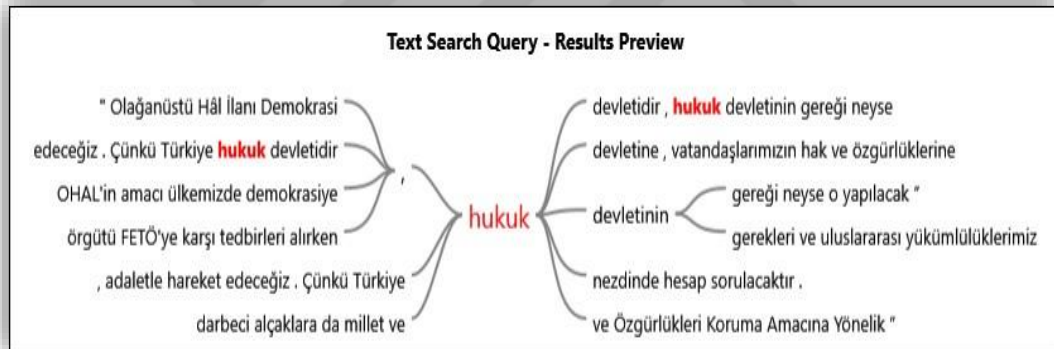


Figure 35

2016 all tweets hukuk (law) word tree

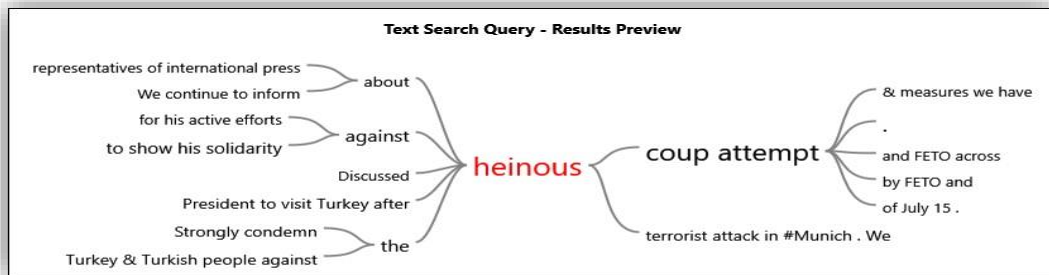
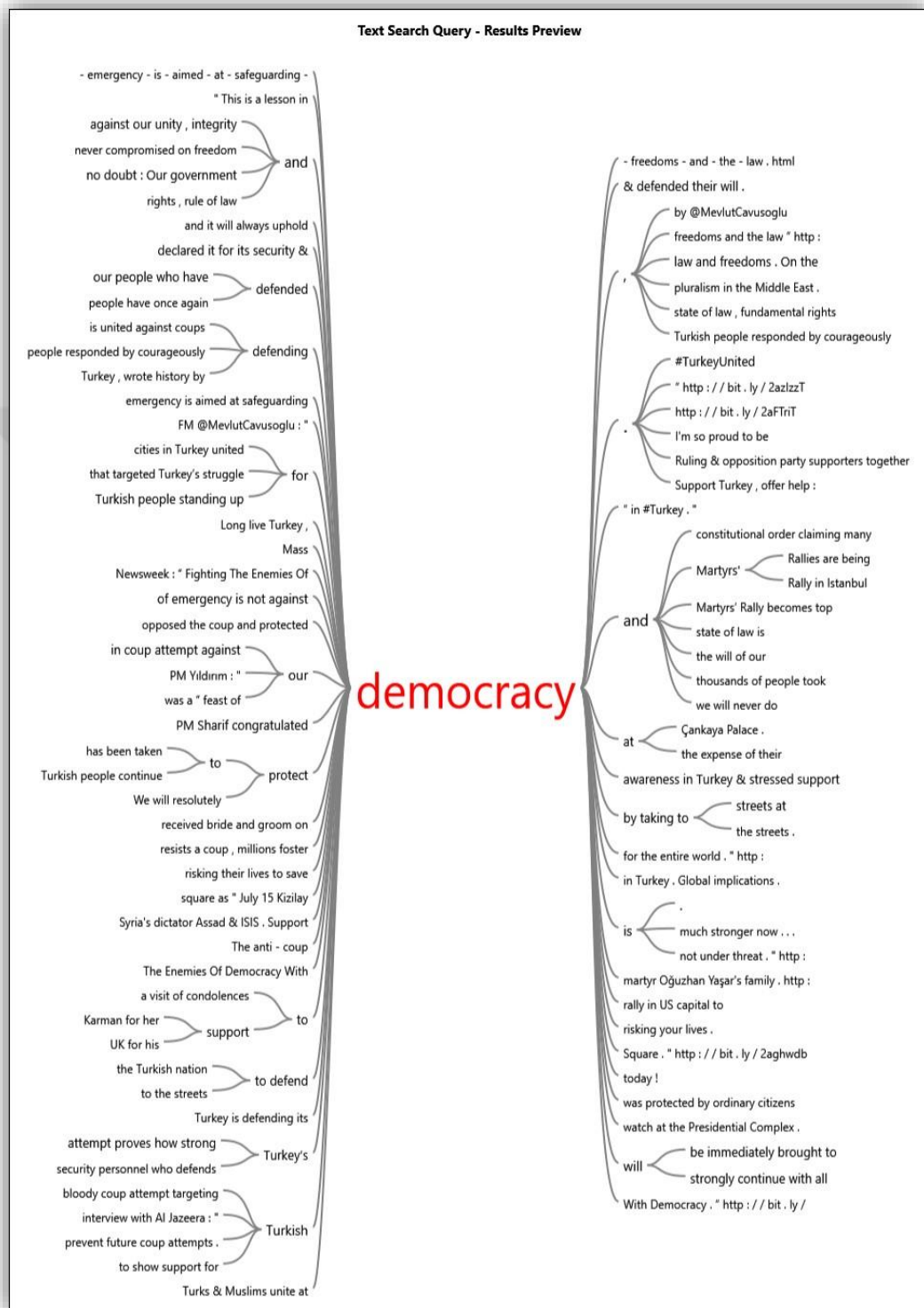


Figure 36

2016 all tweets heinous word tree



**Figure 37**

*2016 all tweets democracy word tree*



Figure 38

2016 all tweets şehit (martry) word tree

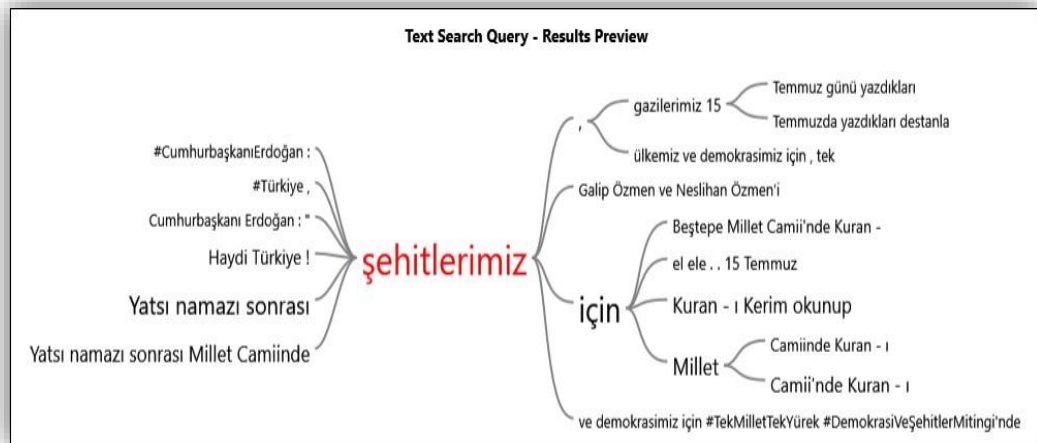
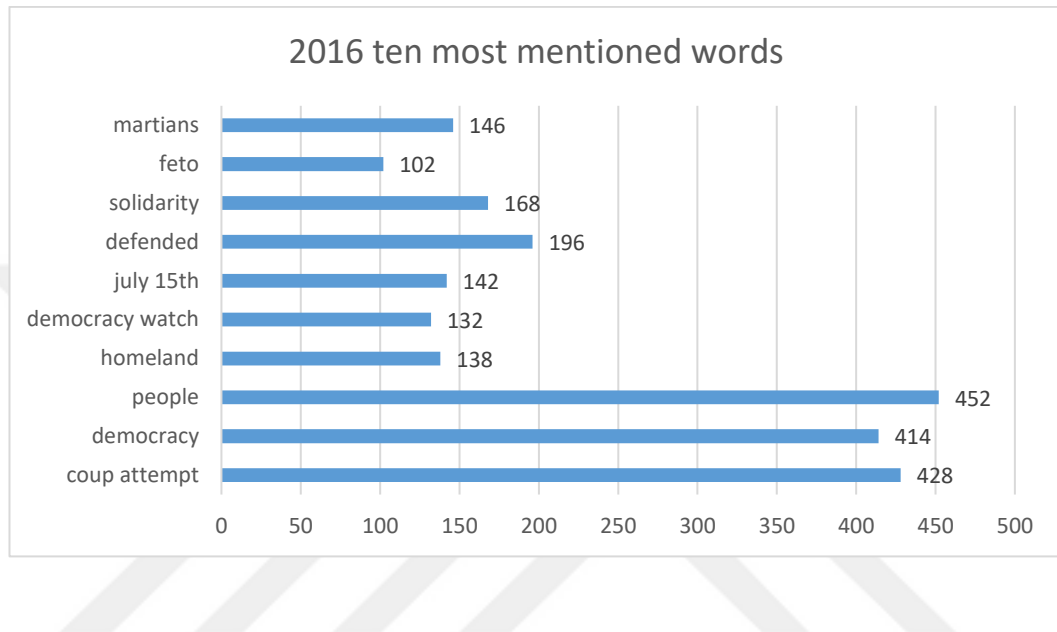


Figure 39

2016 all tweets şehitlerimiz (our martyrs) word tree

**Table 13**

*2016 all tweets ten most mentioned words*



### 3.3.1.7 Themes Collected from the Posts from 2016

In 2016, the following 12 themes were generated when the posts of all accounts were examined:

**Table 14**

12 Themes Generated from all accounts in 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The parallel state structure responsible for the coup attempt</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The armed wing of the FETÖ terrorist organization has emerged.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National unity and solidarity emphasis against FETÖ and other terrorist and betrayal groups</li></ul>

- 
- The coup plotters were planning to destroy democracy and national will
- 
- The fire opened on the people and the bombing of the Assembly by the coup plotters
- 
- The state acted with all its institutions against the coup.
- 
- Mobilizing the nation against the coup
- 
- Creating public opinion to combat the coup and support the measures to be taken
- 
- Giving a share of victory and establishing a common goal by ensuring the participation of all people in the struggle
- 
- Glorification of those who lost their lives in the struggle against the coup attempt and calling them democracy martyrs
- 
- Argument development regarding national and international public support
- 
- Creation of total fighting spirit with messages of determination
- 

### **3.3.2 Analysis of Posts in 2017**

#### **3.3.2.1. Mapping of the Posts Made by MevlutCavusoglu Account in 2017**

The word cloud for the general contents of the 258 posts made from this account is given below.



and with no country, my God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: Let us know how to resist the foe,”

“Do not leave without a lifeless, my God!”

“On the path to tomorrows, do not leave our years

“with no Ramadan [month], my God!”

“While walking along the future, o God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: Give us strength... Do not leave the field of jihad”

with no pahlevan [wrestler], My God!

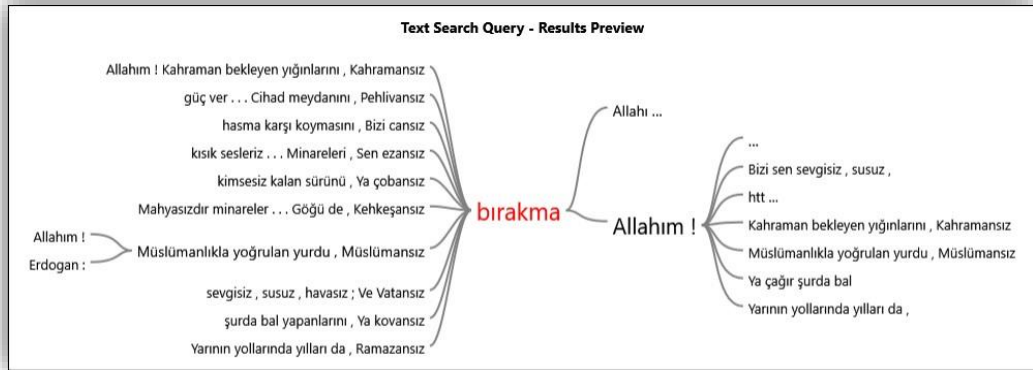
“Do not leave these masses, who look for a hero, with no hero, My God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: “We all have a hoarse voice... do not leave”

“our minarets with no calls to prayer, my God!”

“Either bring us those who make honey”

“or do not just leave us with no hive, my God!”



**Figure 41**

2017 MevlutCavusoglu ‘birakma’ (don’t leave) word tree

The concepts of peace and freedom are only used within the scope of the July 20 celebration in Cyprus:

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: On behalf of myself and the Great”  
“Turkish Nation, I celebrate the July 20 Peace and Freedom  
“Day of the Turkish Cypriot people”  
“On the 43rd anniversary of the Cyprus Peace Operation,  
we stand by the #TRNC for peace, freedom and security”  
“We are in the TRNC following our @Turkish Prime  
Minister Binali Yildirim, who visited the island on July 20,  
Peace and Freedom Day”

The hashtags of #15July, #WeWillNotForget, #DontForget15July were used to mark the commemoration and martyrdom heroism on the 1st anniversary of the coup attempt. These anti-coup actions were described as epic was written by the nation

“From darkness to light, from captivity to resurrection ... 15  
July 2016 - Epic of the Nation ... #WeWillNotForget”

“Our martyrs...

Serhat Önder took to the squares saying, “We are at your service, My Commander-in-chief” ... #WeWillNotForget”

“Our martyrs...

Mustafa Cambaz; He had no weapon against the traitors;  
his only hope was his camera... #WeWillNotForget”

“Our martyrs ...

“Halil Kantarcı; martyrdom would find him sooner or later”

“He heard the call to prayer and walked to God Almighty”...  
#WeWillNotForget

“In July, when we realized the 1st year of the Day of  
Democracy and National Unity, we continued our multi-  
faceted foreign policy contacts. #DonotForgetThe15July”

President Erdoğan's heroic identity and his power as a leader were emphasized, and it was stated that he started the struggle for liberation:

“Our President, who raised millions of people on their feet with a single word and started the struggle for a new Liberation War on the night of 15 July, is @RT\_Erdogan”

July 15 was called “the Day of Democracy and National Unity”. “The Bosphorus Bridge” was named as a monument of martyrs on July 15, and its name was changed:

RT @tcbestepe: “The Turkish Nation showed to the whole world that it is literally a nation on 15 July.”

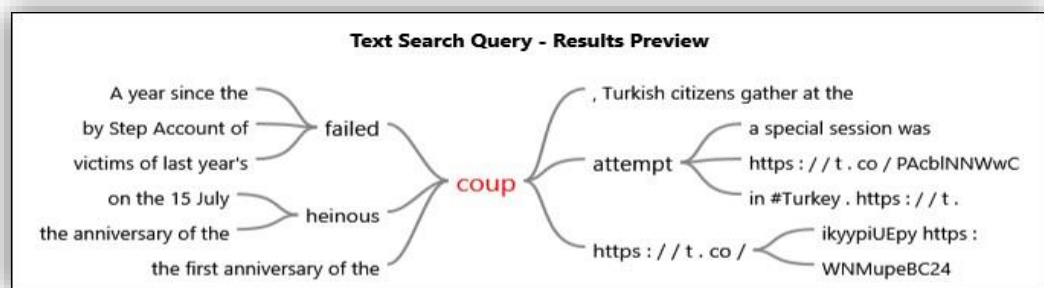
“RT @RT\_Erdogan: 15 Temmuz Monument of Martyrs”

“RT @tcbestepe: Commemoration Ceremonies of the Day of 15 July Democracy and National Unity”

“15 Temmuz Martyrs Bridge...”

“It is the symbol of resistance against traitors, resurrection, great heroism of our nation”

The word FETÖ or FETO was used in three posts in total. The phrase ‘the coup attempt’ was also solely mentioned related to the memorial day activities.



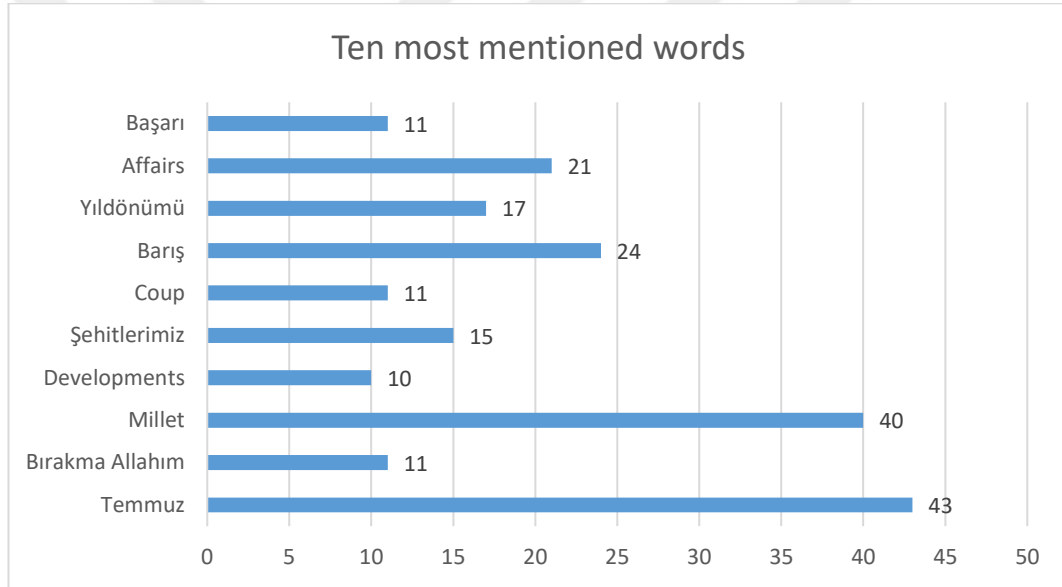
**Figure 42**

*2017 MevlutCavusoglu ‘coup’ word tree*

When Mevlut Çavuşoğlu's post in 2017 are examined, it is seen that he focuses more on regional and international relations, and the posts of the coup attempt become more frequent on the anniversary. On the other hand, the reference to the FETÖ armed terrorist organization started decreasing, and he focused more on the heroism and power of the people.

**Table 15**

*2017 MevlutCavusoglu ten most mentioned words*



**Note:** English equivalents to the words are indicated below. The most mentioned words may seem meaningless without context. These words will be further analysed in the discussion part of the study.

*Başarı: Success*

*Yıldönümü: Anniversary*

*Barış: Peace:*

*Şehitlerimiz: Our martyrs*

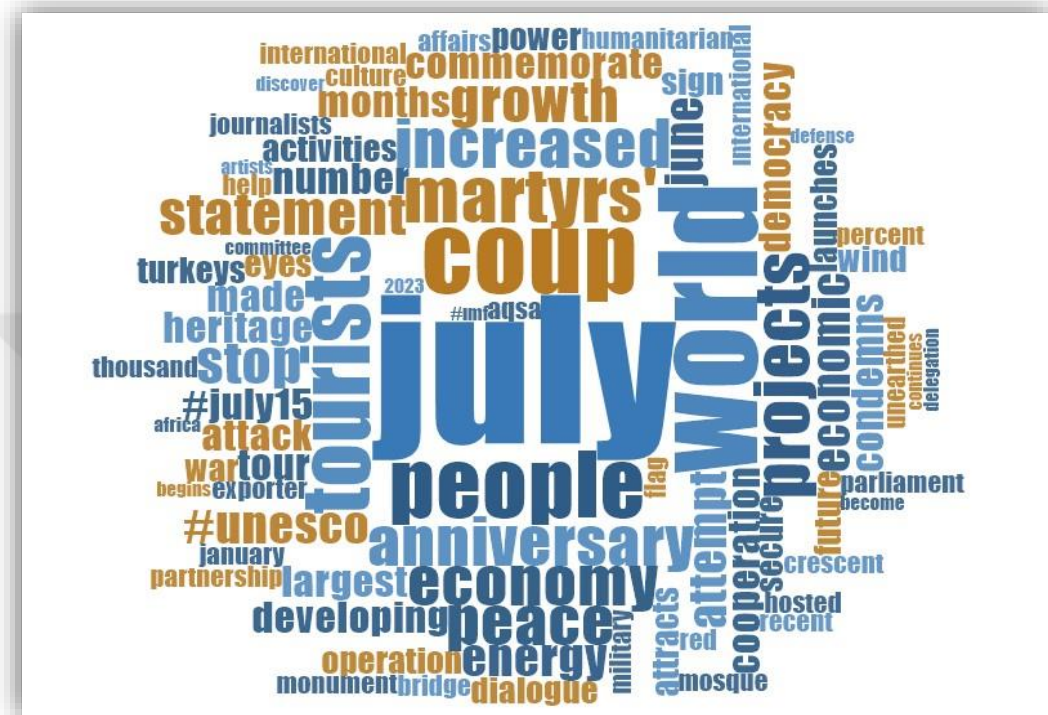
*Millet: Nation*

*Bırakma Allah'ım: My God, do not leave us!*

*Temmuz: July*

### 3.2.2.2 Mapping of the Posts Made by Byegmeng Account in 2017

The word cloud for the general contents of the 244 posts made from this account is given below.



**Figure 43**

*2017-BYEGM word cloud*

On the anniversary of the coup attempt, memorial day events and heroism of the nation were shared:

“Thousands of people have flocked to #Istanbul's iconic July 15 Martyrs' Bridge to mark the first anniversary of the defeated coup attempt.”

“Turkish Epic of #July15” to the world by organizing a week-long series of events.”

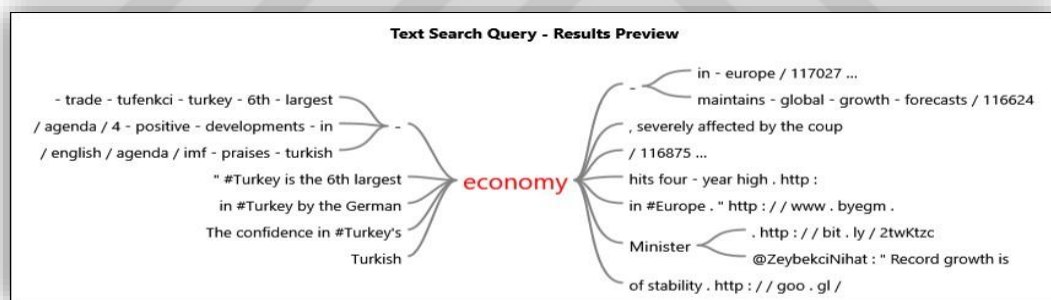
President #Erdoğan: "Coups plotters used heavy weapons against the Turkish nation on #July15th, but they only had their flags and faiths."

It was emphasized that Turkey and its democracy is stronger after the coup attempt. These posts can be seen as attempts to remind that the institutional structure in Turkey is strong and the rule of law is at the forefront in order to receive the support of the international public and investors. Moreover, collaborative projects and partnerships come to the fore in posts as well as the emphasis on economic growth.

“One year after the July 15 coup, Turkey is stronger”

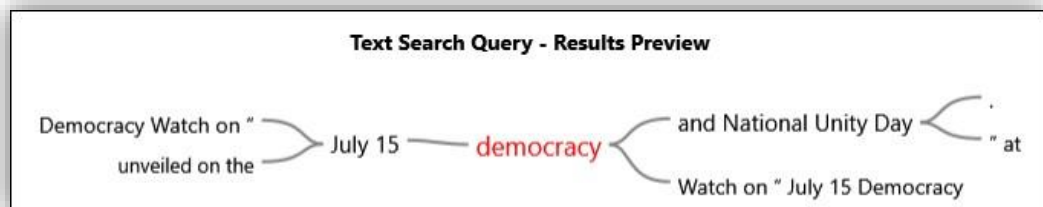
“Turkey has proved to the world it adheres to democratic values not only on paper but implements them even at the cost of its citizens’ lives”

“The Turkish economy, severely affected by the coup attempt, is on the rise in 2017 thanks to stable government policies”



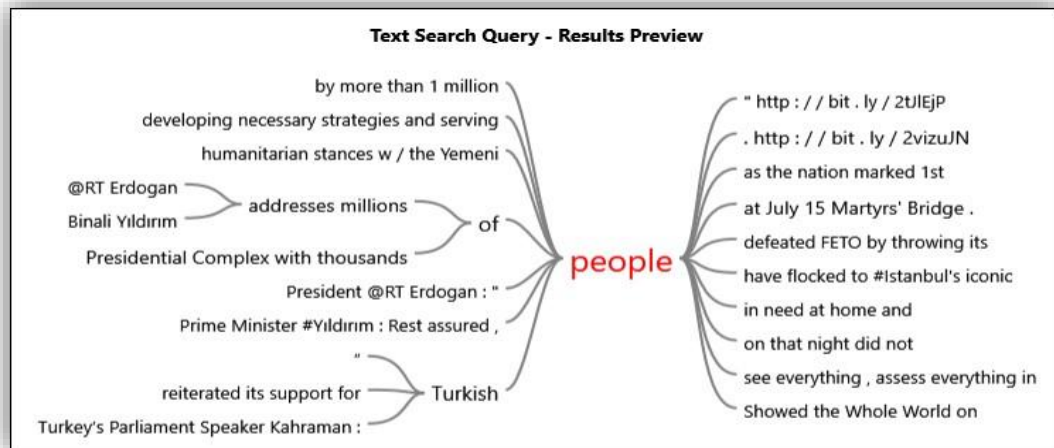
**Figure 44**

2017 BYEGMENG ‘economy’ word tree



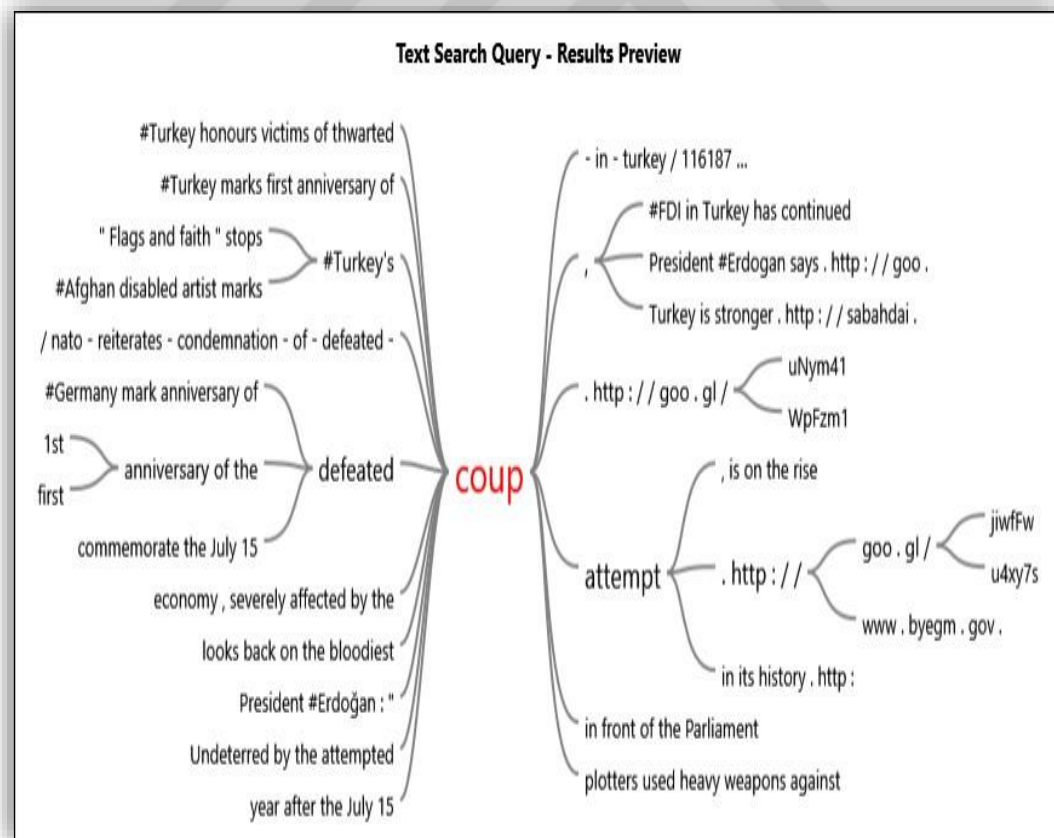
**Figure 45**

2017 BYEGMENG ‘democracy’ word tree



**Figure 46**

2017 BYEGMENG 'people' word tree

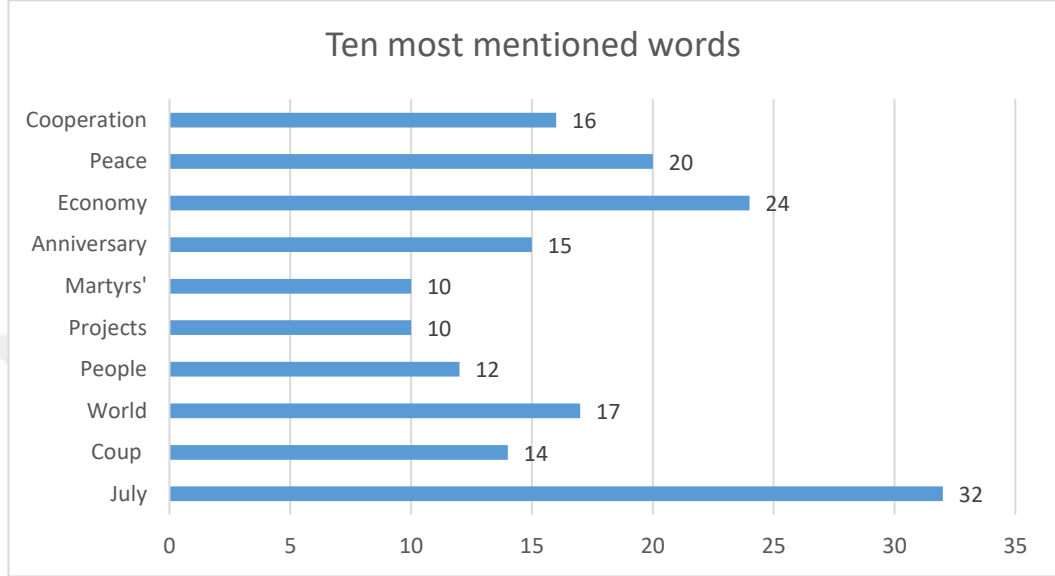


**Figure 47**

2017 BYEGMENG 'coup' word tree

**Table 16**

*2017 BYEGMENG ten most mentioned words*



### 3.3.2.3 Mapping of the Posts Made by BaşbakanlıkKDK Account in 2017

The word cloud for the general contents of the posts made from this account is given below. Only 13 posts were made.



**Figure 48**

*2017 BasbakanlikKDK word cloud*

*Note: English equivalents to the words are indicated below.*

*Temmuz: July*

*Minnetle: Gratefully*

*Enflasyon: Inflation*

*Unutmayacağız: We will not forget our martyrs*

*Rahmet: God's mercy*

*Şehitlerimizi: Our martyrs*

*Kayıtsız: Unconditional*

*Milli: national*

*Eğitim: education*

*Sahip: Owner*

Information about FETO was given, and the anniversary of the 15th of July was commemorated. Martyrs and heroism of the nation are emphasized:

“How did Fethullah Gulen end up on Turkey's most-wanted list? He and his organization explained in 6 minutes”

“With its fundamental understanding of "Sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation", Turkey continues to stand up for Democracy and the National Will”

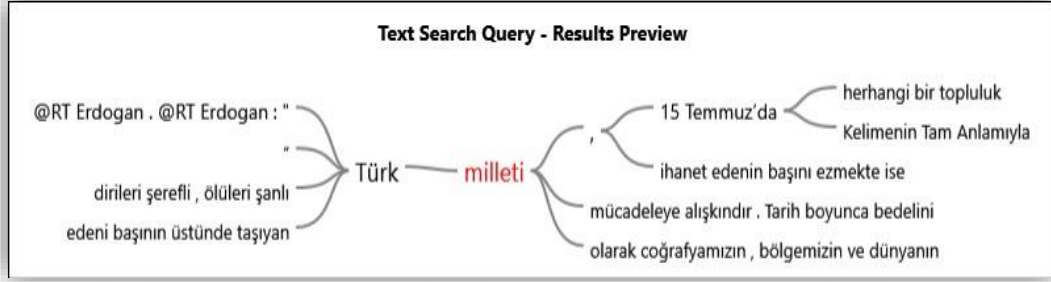
“We remember our July 15 martyrs with mercy while our veterans with gratitude”

“Turkish people united and defeated a coup attempt against Turkey's democracy. This is what happened that night.”

In line with the low number of posts made from the account, it would be easier to see which words have been used repetitively or highlighted more in most of the tweets.

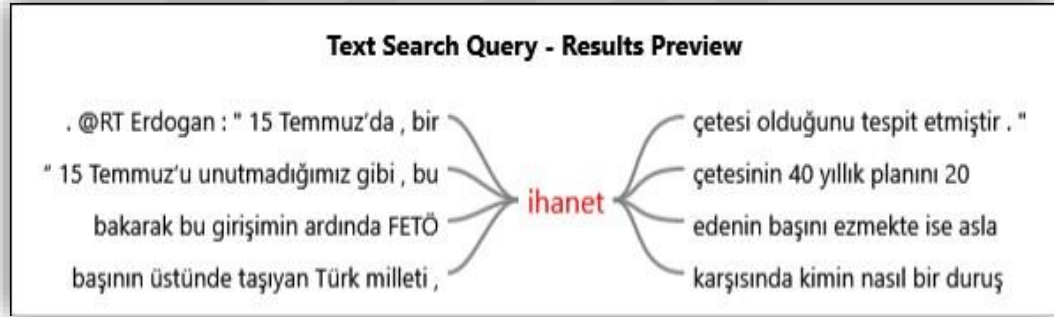


The concepts of “democracy” and “national unity and solidarity” and “nation” and “struggle” have been associated with one another.



**Figure 50**

2017 TRPresidency ‘millet’ word tree



**Figure 51**

TRPresidency ‘ihanet’ word tree

In the messages shared, it was stated that an independence war was fought, and determination in the struggle was emphasized.

"We are in a period in which Turkey gave a new independence war. We cannot tolerate any inertia and betrayal"

“Traitors who show off in the courts will be left alone with their painful fate”

"We bring one type of dress to FETO terrorists. The coup plotters will wear one-colour jumpsuits, the world will recognize them in this way."

In the new period, it was stated that mosques should work actively, and not just as places for prayer and that people who come to mosques have a duty:

"Our mosques must be filled with life and have spirits. After five-time prayers, we should not close its doors and leave"

"In the new period, our mosques should be active all the time, except for five times of prayers. Great duties fall on the Turkish General Directorate of Religious Affairs."

The criticisms made about the struggle against those who attempted after the coup were answered. It was underlined that Western countries provide shelter for FETO terrorists:

"Those who Caused the Most Brutal Massacres in History in the First and Second World Wars Cannot Teach Us a Lesson of Humanity"

"Westerners want to fill up our country with their spies. Sorry, but old Turkey no longer exists.

"You will not surrender the terrorists to us, but you will try to drive us into a corner over two German citizens in the judicial process. Not a chance"

"The ones who hide terrorists in Germany should give an answer for this"

"As we have not forgotten about July 15, we will not forget who stood against this betrayal"

It was stated that the July 15 coup attempt would not be forgotten, the responsibilities for martyrs and veterans will be fulfilled, and the struggle will be carried out with determination:

“We are determined to fulfil our promise not to forget the 15 July and not to let it be forgotten, which we declared as the Day of Democracy and National Unity”

"While those who sell their homeland for \$ 1 on the orders of the charlatan in Pennsylvania are rotting in the dungeons, Turkish National Assembly will continue to serve our nation."

"On July 15, we broke a 40-year plan of a betrayal gang in less than 20 hours and made a new history of victory”

“Democracy watch in front of the Presidential Complex on July 15, Day of Democracy and National Unity”

“It is our biggest responsibility not only to our martyrs and veterans but also to our history, not to forget and not let it be forgotten”

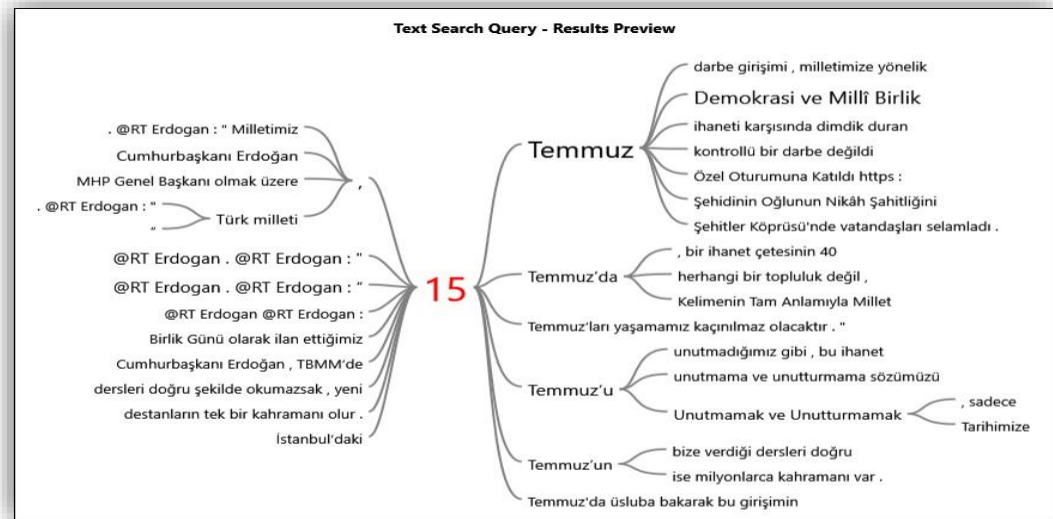
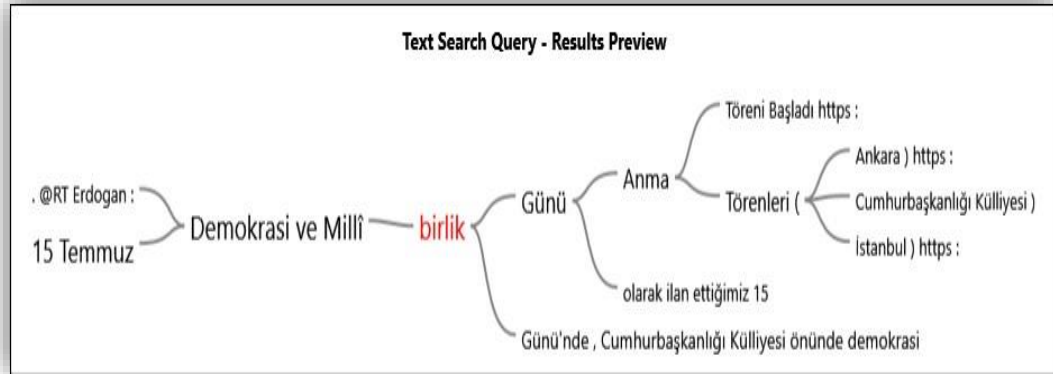


Figure 52

2017 TRPresidency '15 Temmuz' word tree

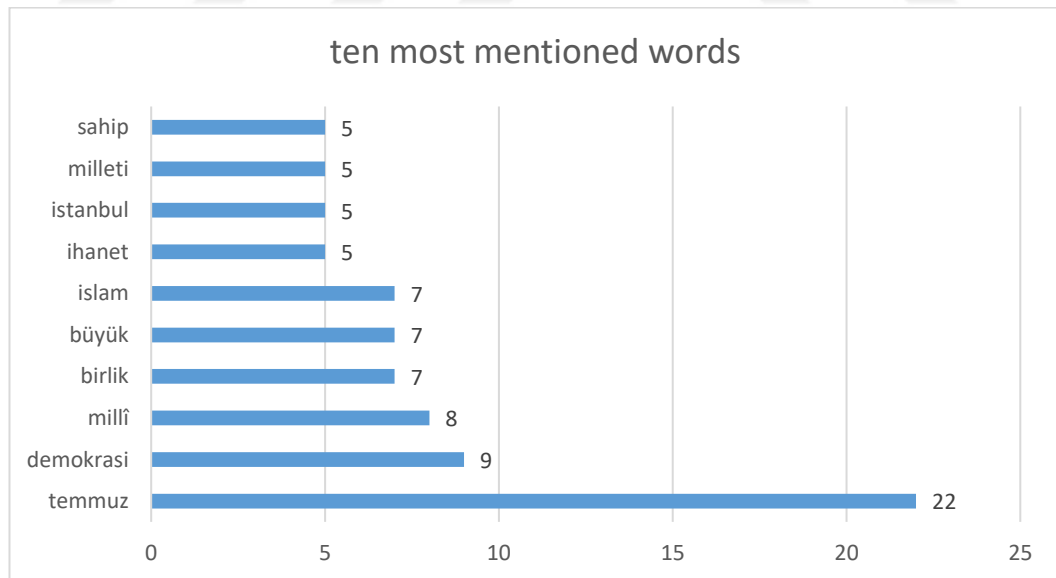


**Figure 53**

2017 TRPresidency 'birlik' word tree

**Table 17**

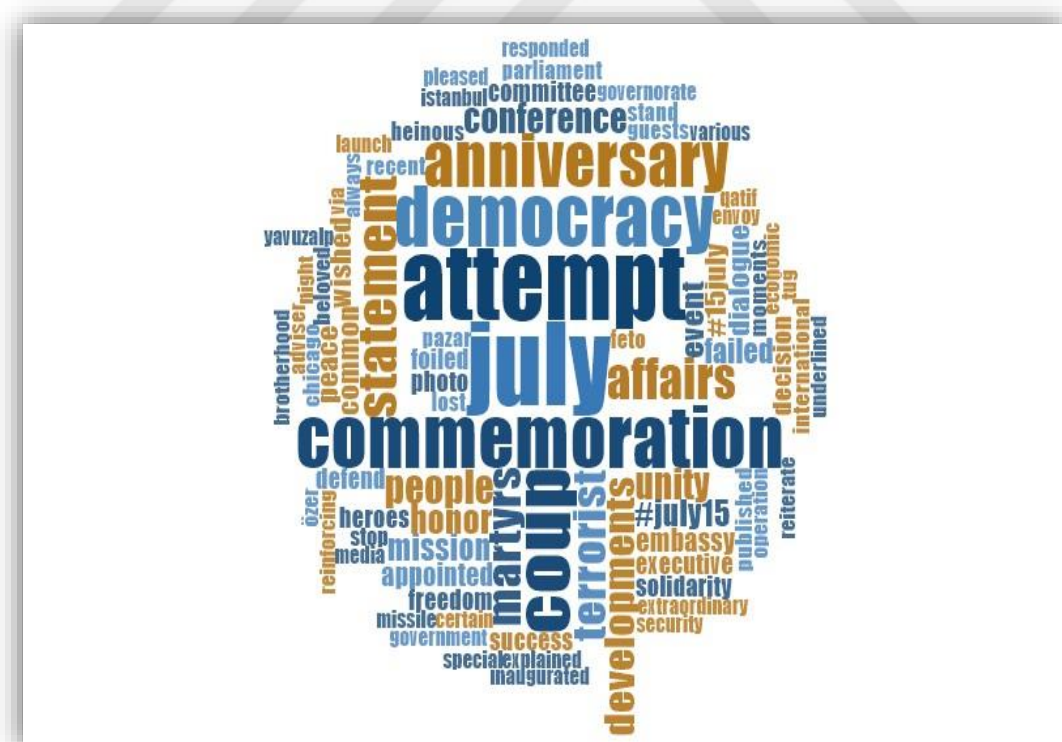
TRPresidency ten most mentioned words



**Note:** English equivalents to the words are indicated below. The most mentioned words may seem meaningless without the context. These words will be further analysed in the discussion part of the study.

*Temmuz: July*

The word cloud for the general contents of 147 posts made from this account is given below.



2017 MFA-Turkey tweets word cloud

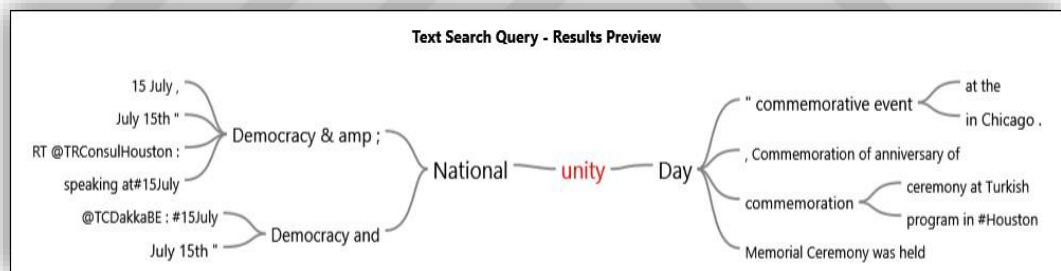
On the 15th of July, commemoration activities at the foreign delegations were announced:

“Ambassador Öztürk's article on the first anniversary of the #15July coup attempt”

“On the 1st anniversary of the failed July 15 coup attempt, we commemorated our democracy heroes through various events”

“Sinirlioğlu speaking at#15July Democracy&National Unity Day, Commemoration of anniversary of a foiled coup attempt”

“Amb.Kılıç speaks with Robert Siegel of NPR about the anniversary of the #July15 coup attempt”



**Figure 55**

*2017 MFA 'unity' word tree*

The term FETÖ terrorist organization is mentioned in three posts:

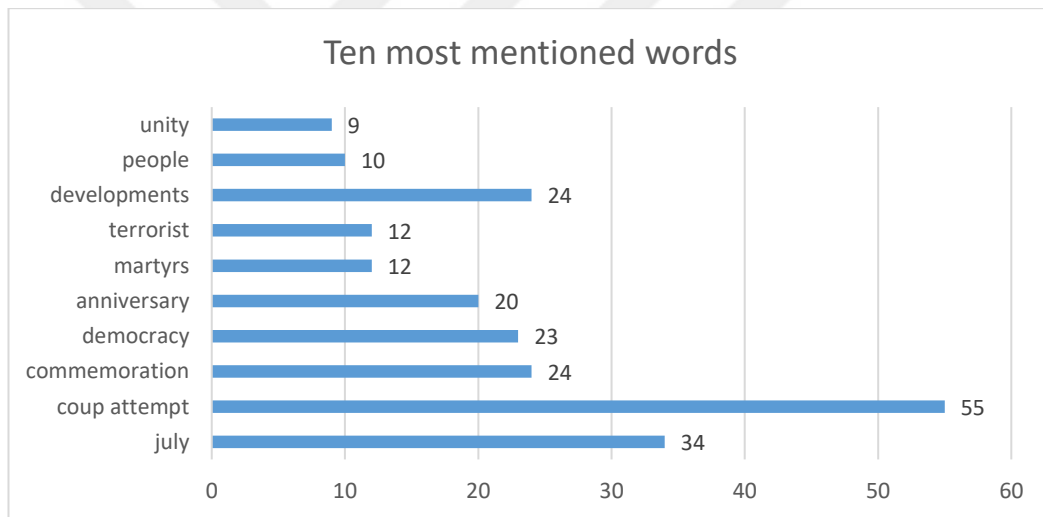
“RT @MevlutCavusoglu: As a country providing shelter to PKK&FETO terrorists in its own territory, statements by Germany are just double standard”

“RT @TelAvivBE: One year ago, the coup attempt by FETO members was thwarted. Today we pay tribute to our democracy martyrs. #1...”

“RT @TC\_Hargeisa: Consul General Coşkun held a press conference on the anniversary of the heinous July15 coup attempt and FETO terrorist org...”

**Table 18**

*MFA ten most mentioned words*



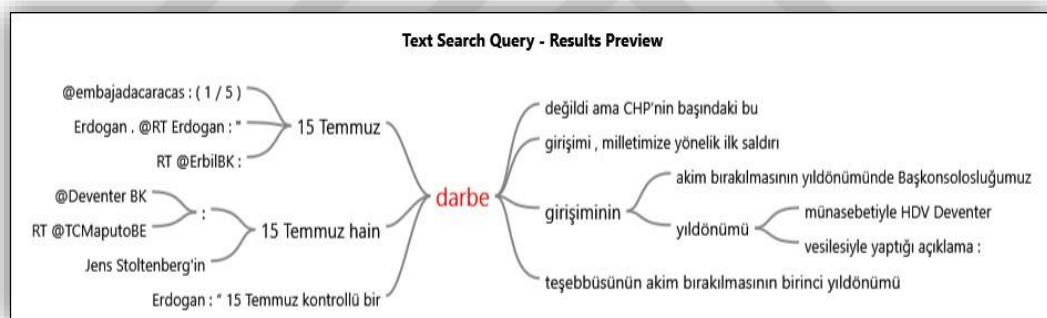
### **3.3.2.6 Data Aggregation for the Analysis of Posts Made from Five Accounts in 2017**

The word cloud related to the general contents of posts made from five accounts is given below.



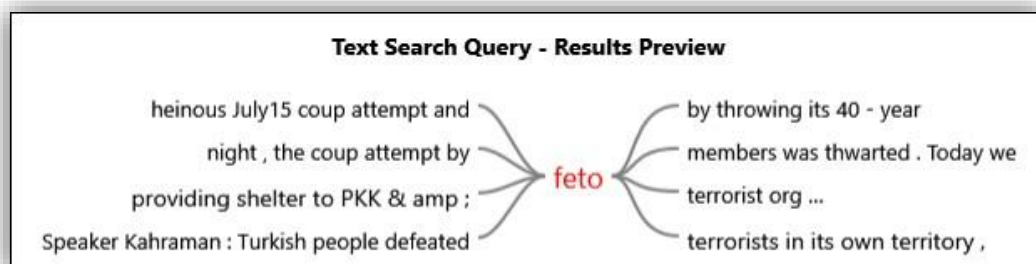
**Figure 56**

2017 all tweets word cloud



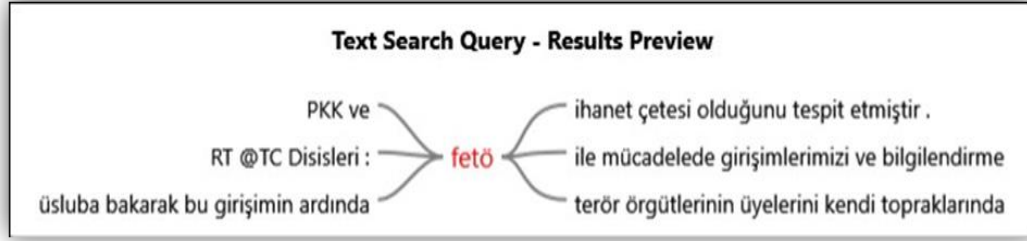
**Figure 57**

2017 Word tree for all tweets regarding the word “darbe” (coup d’etat)



**Figure 58**

2017-word tree for all tweets regarding the word “feto”



**Figure 59**

*2017 All tweets regarding the word “fetö”*

When all accounts for the year 2017 are examined, the following themes become particularly salient.

**Table 19**

*7 Themes Generated from All Accounts in 2017*

• Democracy in Turkey is stronger than it was before the coup attempt
• The posts in the fight against FETO, in particular, for national public support
• Activities and monuments for the 15th of July
• The messages for promoting economic opportunities in the international arena and attracting investors
• Epicizing the struggle on the July 15
• Associating national unity and solidarity with the current government
• Much less emphasis has been placed on the FETO terrorist organization compared to 2016



The posts about July 15 were about commemorating the anniversary and announcing the activities that would be held for commemoration. The account shared nine messages, including #15TemmuzDestanı hashtag. Except for this account, the hashtag #15TemmuzDestanı was used eight times only by the Yurtdışı Türkler account and this hashtag was not used by any other accounts. The word ‘FETO’ appeared in only one English post:

“Today, on the anniversary of the coup attempt by FETO, we remember our martyrs, those who were wounded with great respect and gratitude”

“We won’t let #FETO terrorist rest, neither in Turkey nor elsewhere in the world- until they all face justice”

"Your ancestors are martyrs, you descend from Asım Khan, They can't stand in front of you, and you're like a flowing river”

“You stand just like a mountain. No one can beat you”

“#15TemmuzDestanı#MilletinZaferi”

“#UnutmadıkUnutmayacağız”

“#15TemmuzDestanı is the #MilletinZaferi<sup>1</sup>the victory of the nation, who is not afraid to die but to die without ablution”

“Never forget! #15TemmuzDestanı #Unutmayacağız”

“President @RT\_Erdogan recited the Holy Quran for our #15July martyrs”

“Our President @RT\_Erdogan speaks at the meeting of relatives of martyrs and veterans”

“I have lived free since the beginning. I live free”

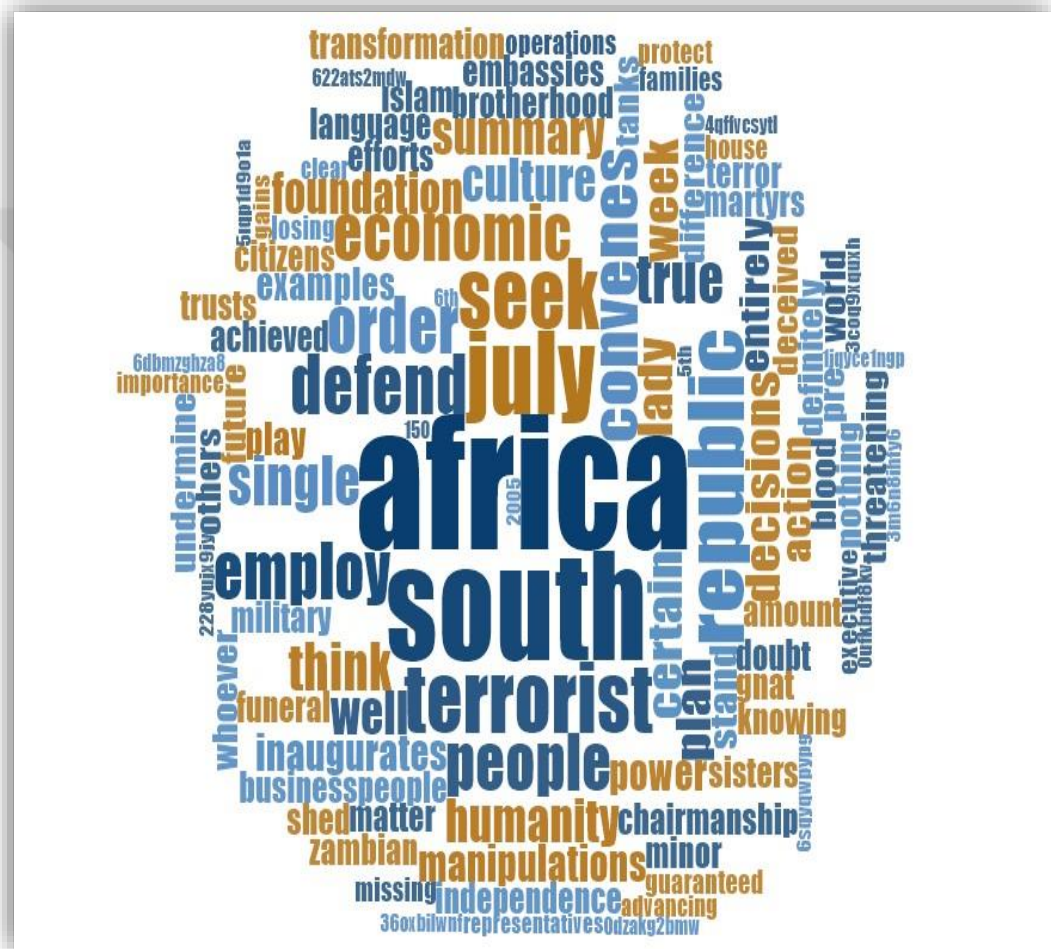
“What madman shall fetter me? I would be surprised.” <sup>2</sup>

Turkish National Anthem

“#MilletinZaferi #15TemmuzDestanı”<sup>3</sup>epicoftheJuly15

### 3.3.3.2 Mapping of the Posts Made by TRPresidency Account in 2018

The word cloud for the general contents of 72 posts made from this account is given below.



**Figure 61**

2018 TRPresidency tweets word cloud

In the posts shared in this account from 15 July to 10 August 2018, the attention was drawn to the economic manipulations towards Turkey, seeing them as the fundamental reason why the economy is not good in Turkey. The tone of the messages against the ones accused of being manipulative is striking. However, there are posts mainly made to attract foreign investors to the country:

“Those who assume they can bring us to our knees through economic manipulations don’t know our nation at all.”

“Whoever trusts in Turkey will definitely win.”

President Erdoğan: “Whoever trusts in, invests in, and walks with Turkey will definitely win.

“Yet, those, who seek minor gains at the cost of losing Turkey, will, no doubt, deeply regret it”

President Erdoğan: “We are confronted with artificial waves of financial instability although there is no problem with Turkey’s macroeconomic data, production power, employment level or banking system”

Posts about the tensions with the United States have been shared, and it has been reported that any pressures will not be tolerated:

“Turkey’s strength as an ally has an importance that is way beyond the U.S. domestic policy calculations.”

President Erdoğan: "We will freeze U.S. Attorney General and Interior Secretary's assets in Turkey"

President Erdoğan: “Those who accuse us of not knowing the intricacies of the U.S. system have no clue about our nation's history. We never succumb to such pressures”

President Erdoğan: “Those who think that they will make Turkey back down with threatening language and sanction decisions do not know our nation at all”

Tweets about FETO's activities abroad were shared, some countries were warned against it, and it was stated that the state is aware of these activities:

President Erdoğan: “We are aware that FETO is working to charm the Muslims in the Republic of South Africa into siding with it”

“Don’t you ever be deceived by the rhetoric they employ and the disguise they wear! Hypocrisy and deception are the tools they use most conveniently”

On the anniversary of the 15th of July, tweets about memorial activities, ceremonies for the martyrs were shared. There is a total of four posts on this topic:

“July 15 is the victory of every individual of our nation.”

“July 15 symbolizes our determination to protect our independence and future”

“President Erdoğan speaks during a luncheon with martyrs’ families and veterans at the Presidential Complex on July 15, Democracy and National Unity Day”

“President Erdoğan recites Holy Quran for martyrs at Beştepe People’s Mosque”

### **3.3.3.3 Mapping of the Posts Made by Communications Account in 2018**

The word cloud for the general contents of 72 posts made from this account is given below. With this account, it should be remembered that it was named as Byegmeng in 2016 and 2017 before the Prime Ministry Office was not abolished in 2018. As of that time, the same account was used with the name of “Communications”.



The martyrs were commemorated, and democracy was emphasized on the anniversary of the coup attempt;

“Two years ago, today, the Turkish nation wrote history by thwarting a coup attempt by FETO terrorists. It was a night of great heroism, sacrifice & loyalty”

“We will never forget those who sacrificed their lives that night. Those responsible will face justice while living and after death”

“Turkish President Erdogan hails marchers of the July 15 defeated coup, says "we will come together in our struggle" in addressing the families of those killed or wounded by the rouge soldiers”

“Turkish representations in many countries marked the second anniversary of the defeated coup attempt in Turkey”

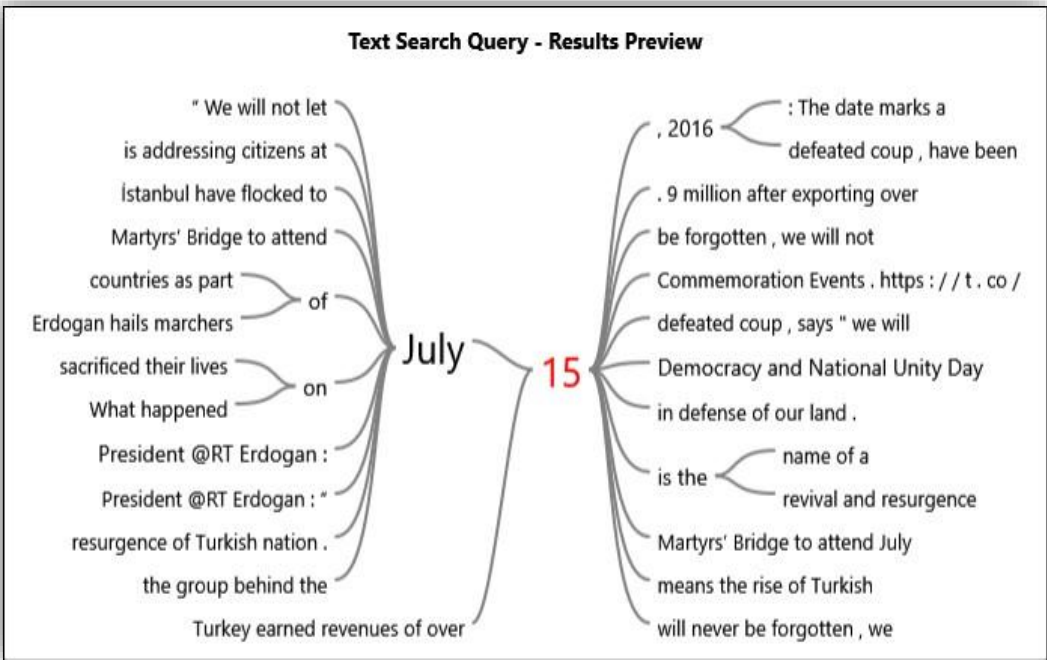


Figure 63

2018 Communications “July 15<sup>th</sup>” word tree



Today we commemorate with great respect and gratitude our martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our democracy against the coup plotter FETO terrorists on “#July152016.#15TemmuzDIŞ#15July#ŞehitlerimiziUnutma”

Today we commemorate with great respect and gratitude our martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our democracy against the coup plotter FETO terrorists on “#July152016.#15TemmuzDIŞ#15July#ŞehitlerimiziUnutma”

Today we commemorate with great respect and gratitude our martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our democracy against the coup plotter FETO terrorists on “#July152016.#15TemmuzDIŞ#15July#ŞehitlerimiziUnutma”

### 3.3.3.5 Mapping of the Posts Made by Yurtdisiturkler Account in 2018

The word cloud for the general contents of 120 posts made from this account is given below.



**Figure 65**

2018 Yurtdisiturkler tweets word cloud

From this account, posts related to the educational activities carried out by the Presidency, summer schools, Turkish language education, educational programs for Syrians, scholarships provided to students and graduation news were shared. Also, activities, meetings and events aiming at creating a diaspora culture were announced.

#15TemmuzDestanı, #Unutmadık, #Unutmayacağız hashtags were used in the posts about the July 15 coup attempt. Regarding the coup attempt, the observations, thoughts and comments of foreign scholarship students, who receive education in Turkey, were also shared. In addition, the book prepared by the Presidency on July 15 was introduced and once again, the failed coup attempt was emphasized by underlining the nation's victory.

“#TheEpicofJuly15 through the eyes of international students studying in our country”

"I said to the TVs I spoke to that night; Make sure that the Turks will be on the roads in one hour by Allah's leave and drive the tanks”

“Praise to God, the coup plotters failed, and I hope they will never achieve their goals.” #MilletinZaferi”

’On July 15, the courage of the Turkish people encouraged the Muslim world”

“Our Agency prepared a booklet of "15th of July through the Eyes of International Students" for the second anniversary of the epic of July 15”

"When July the 15th coup occurred, the Western media shared fake news. If I hadn't learned Turkish, we would have just followed the news of the BBC and the AP”

“On the anniversary of the heinous coup attempt on July 15, our Turkish Alumni Associations commemorate our dear

martyrs and offer our gratitude to our veterans. We would like to thank our goodwillambassadors from all over the world who have always been with our nation.#15TemmuzDestanı”

“I had great respect for this nation even before July 15, but it got even more after #15 July. When my friends in Ghana ask, "What kind of people are Turks?", I say, "They are the bravest, most resilient and most patriotic nation in the world”

“Turkey was an island of hope for the entire Muslim world. The whole Islamic world prayed all night for Turkey. With the courage they showed, the Turkish people showed us that there was hope for all humanity”

“Adhans and salaah recited that night were like relaxing drugs. Upon seeing that the Turkish nation claimed their homeland and packing shoulder-to-shoulder flocking into the squares, I believed everything would be alright, and I prayed for Turkey” “#MilletinZaferi”

“The Turkish nation has taught us a lesson that we cannot see anywhere else in the world, by shielding their bodies in front of tanks and bullets, and protecting the President @ RT\_Erdogan and the government, elected by their own votes”

“I composed a Turkish ballad for my beloved brother, the former head of the Küçükesat branch #SerhatÖnder, who became a martyr on duty in front of the Turkish General Staff building on 15th July”

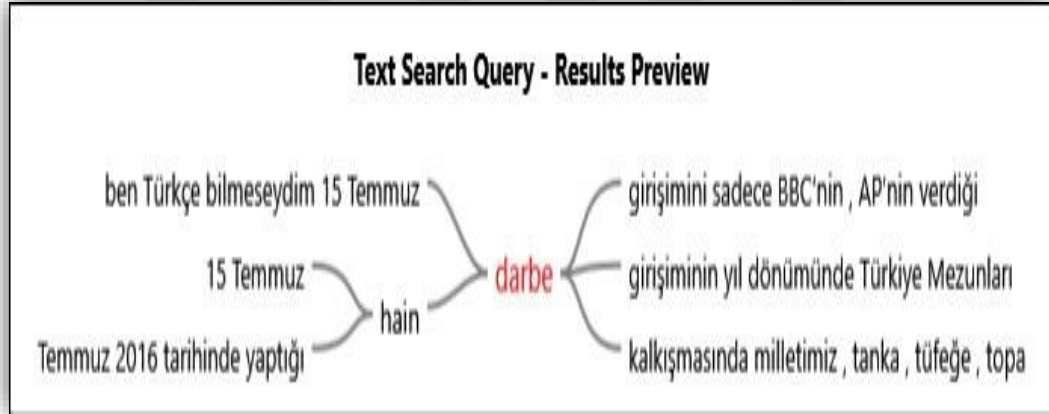
“The news shared by the Western media and the Turkish media that night was not the same. If I didn't know Turkish,

I would have had to learn about the July 15 coup attempt only from the news of the BBC and the AP”

“On the anniversary of the treacherous attempt, I wish God's mercy to our sainted martyrs, who gave their lives without blinking their eyes while fighting against the coup plotters, and once again, my condolences to their relatives”

“On the #15July, the day of Democracy and National Unity Day, we commemorate all our martyrs with mercy and wish our veterans health and peace”

“Thank God, the coup plotters have failed, and I hope they will never succeed”



**Figure 66**

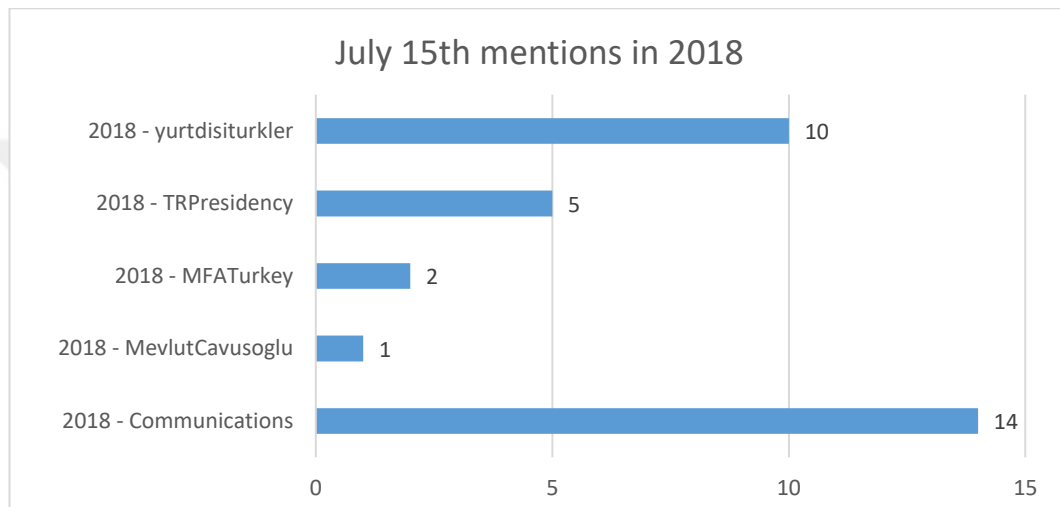
*2018 YurtdisiTurkler “darbe” word tree*



In 2018, the coup began to be characterized by new concepts. Other related symbols are used instead of the word coup (such as epic and victory).

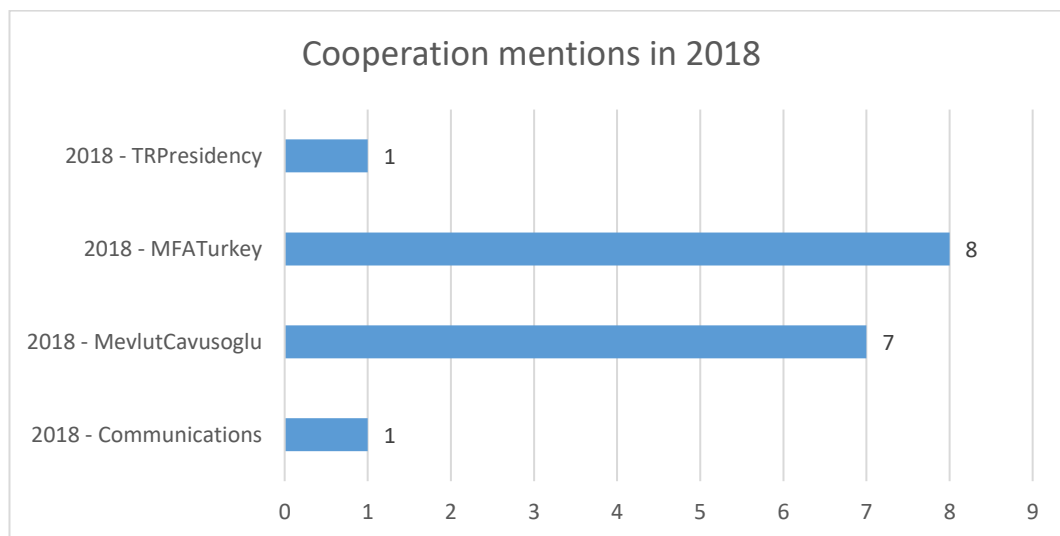
**Table 20**

*The Number of “July 15<sup>th</sup>” mentions in 2018 by all accounts*



**Table 21**

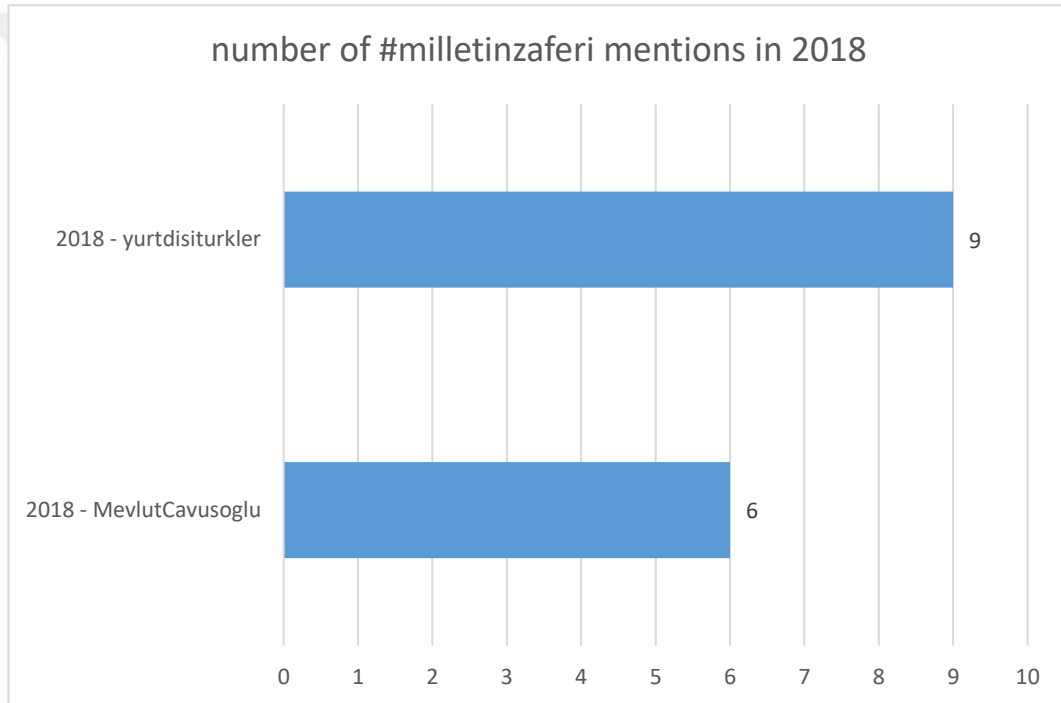
*The number of “Cooperation” mentions in 2018 by all accounts*



In 2018, it was seen that some posts about co-operation were generally made from the Foreign Ministry and Çavuşoğlu's accounts.

**Table 22**

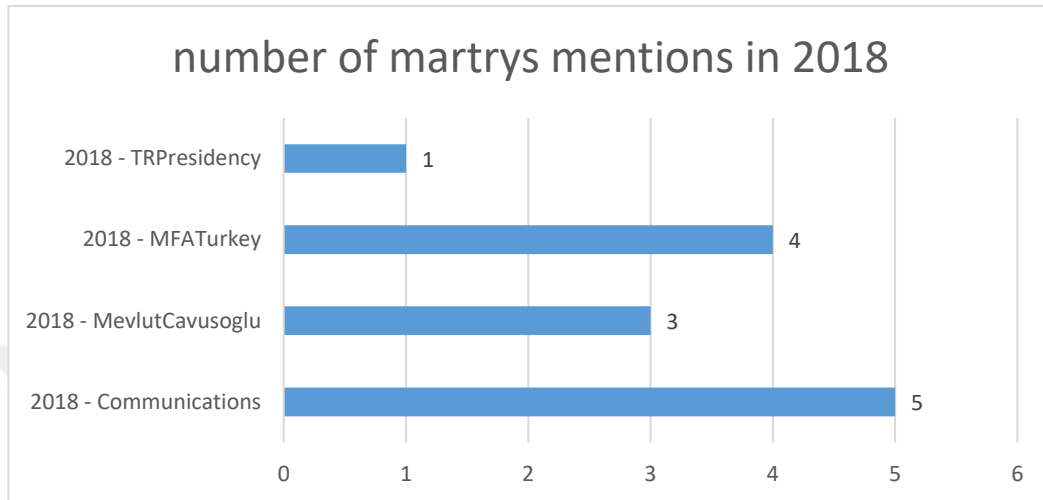
*The number of “milletinzaferi” mentions in 2018 by all accounts*



In 2018, only two accounts used the hashtag #milletinzaferi. It is noteworthy that the communications account does not use it. In addition to this, the yurtdisiturkler account is the one that uses #milletinzaferi hashtag the most.

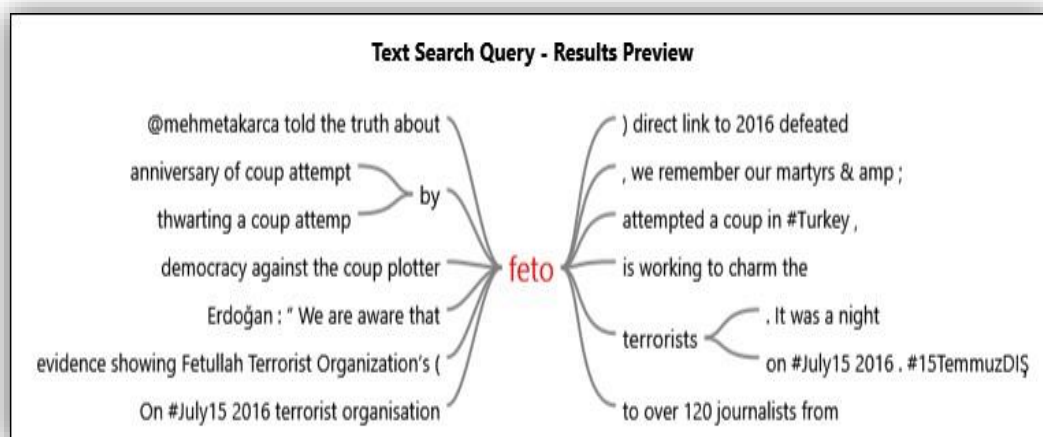
**Table 23**

*The number of “martyrs” mentions in 2018 by all accounts*



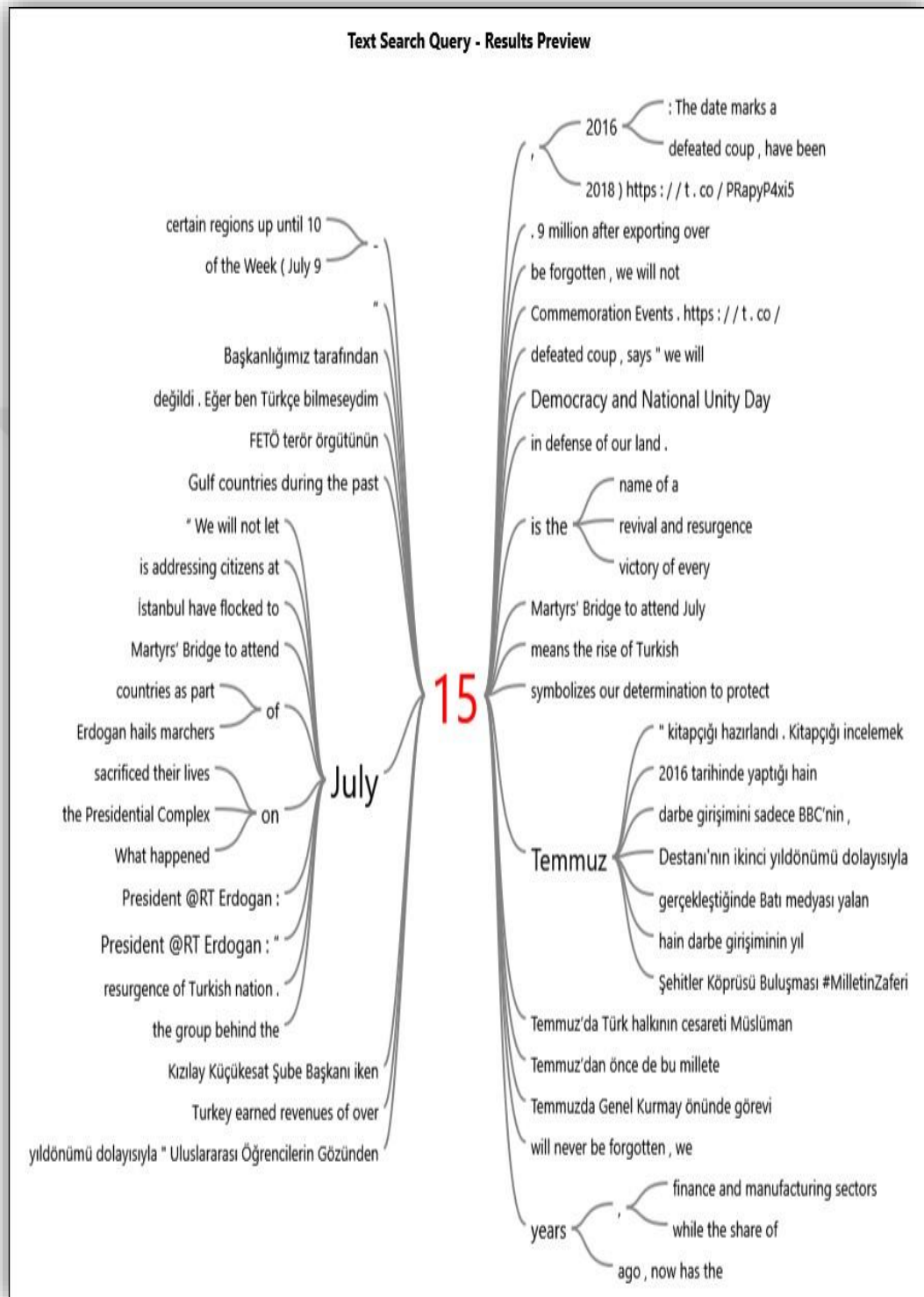
Those who were martyred in the fight against the coup attempt were mostly mentioned by the communications account.

The word cloud for the comparison of the 2016, 2017 and 2018 posts of the ministry of foreign affairs account is given below. The normalization during the following years - 2017 and 2018 - and the end of the state of emergency created by the coup attempt that occurred in 2016 are clearly seen in the word cloud.



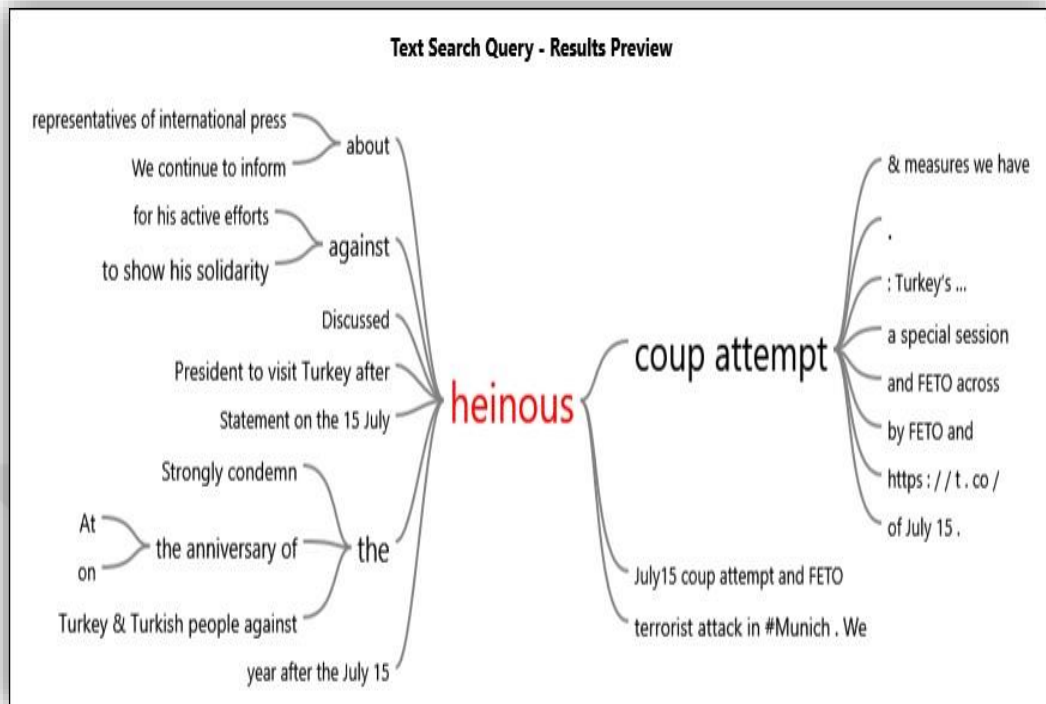
**Figure 68**

2018 All accounts “Feto” word tree



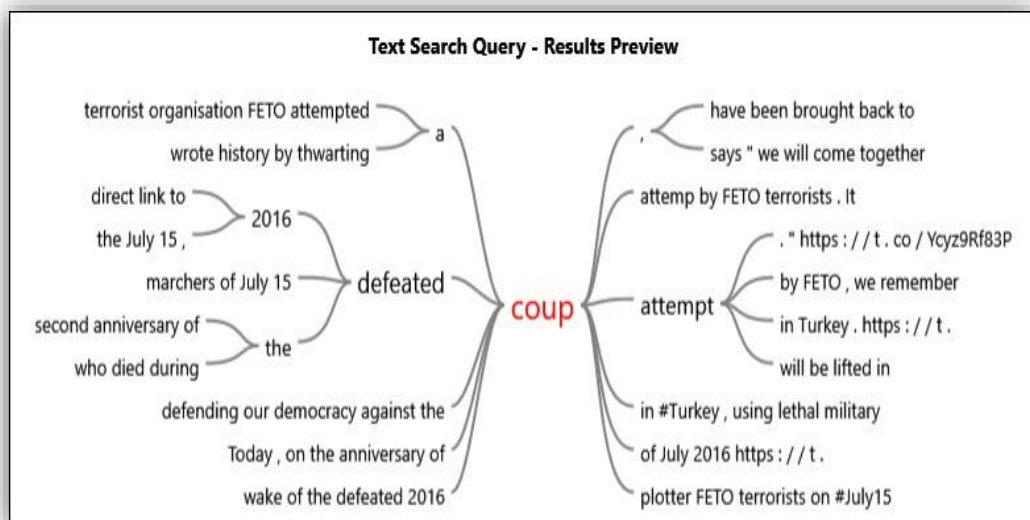
**Figure 69**

2018 All accounts "July 15<sup>th</sup>" word tree



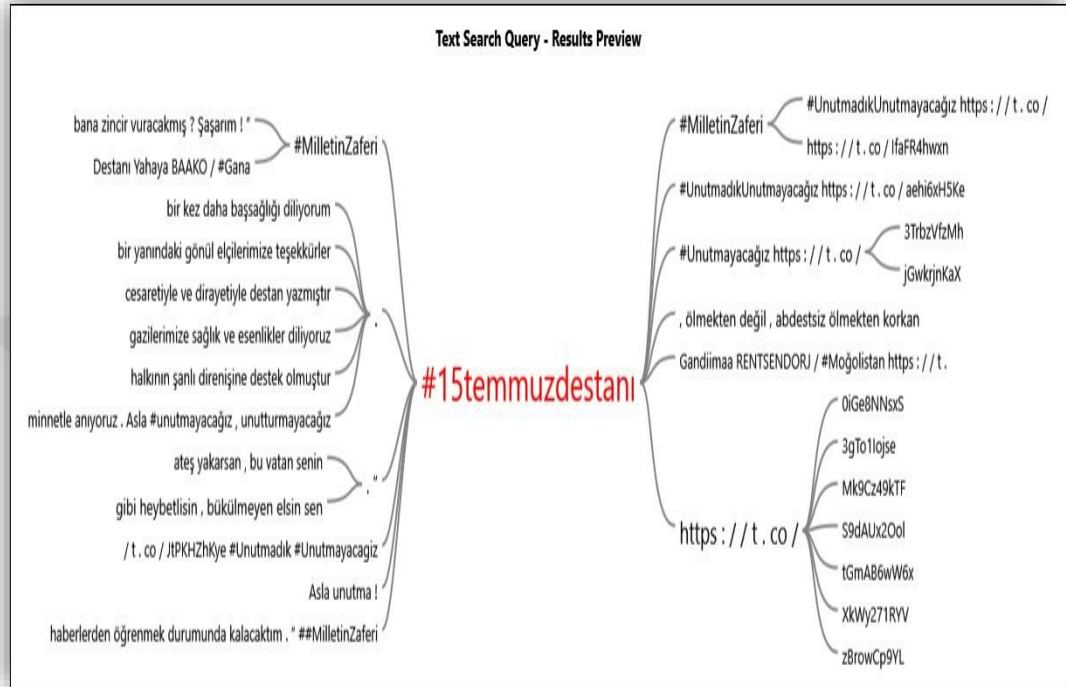
**Figure 70**

2018 All accounts “heinous” word tree



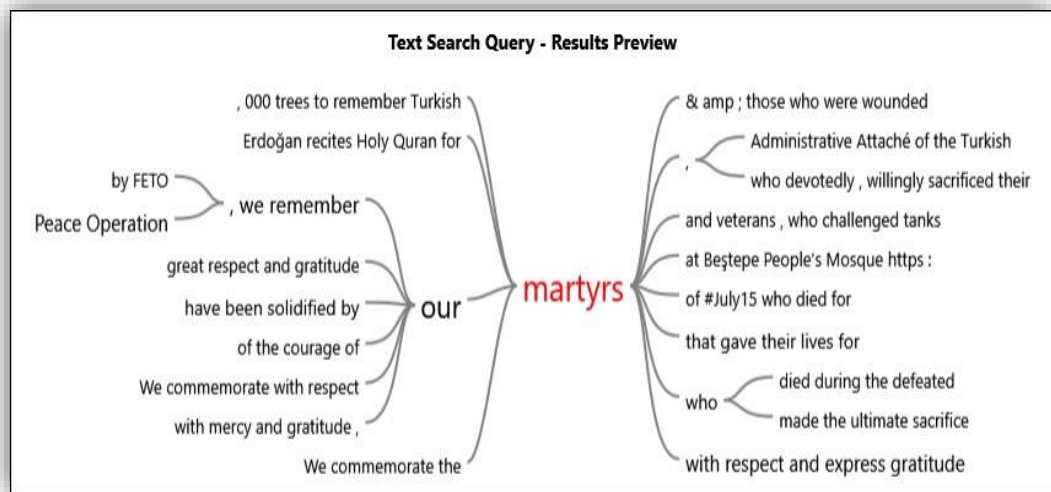
**Figure 71**

2018 All accounts “coup” word tree



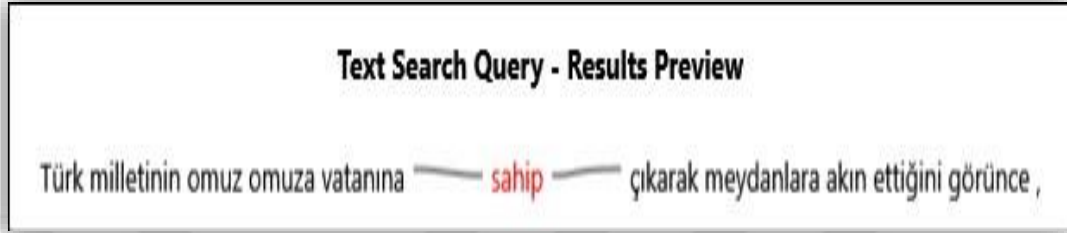
**Figure 72**

2018 All accounts “15temmuzdestanı” word tree



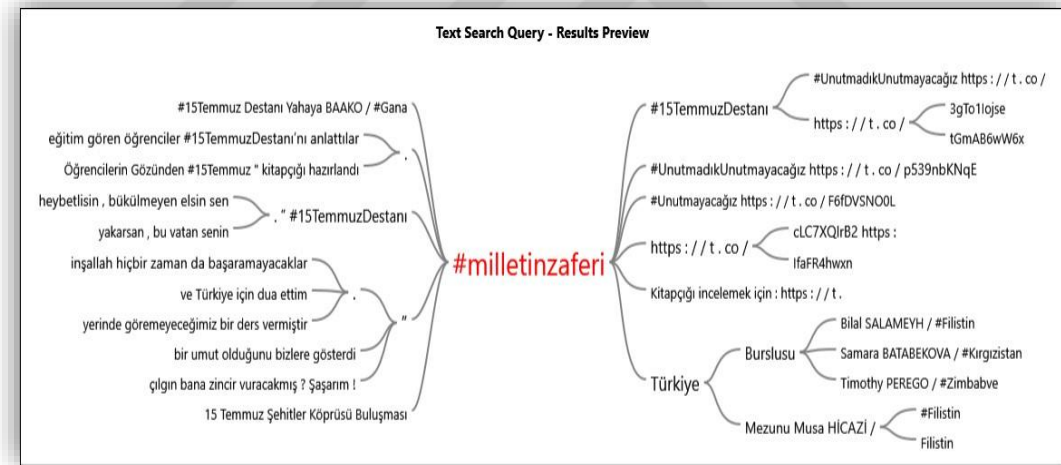
**Figure 73**

2018 All accounts “martyrs” word tree



**Figure 74**

2018 All accounts “sahip” word tree



**Figure 75**

2018 All accounts “milletinzaferi” word tree

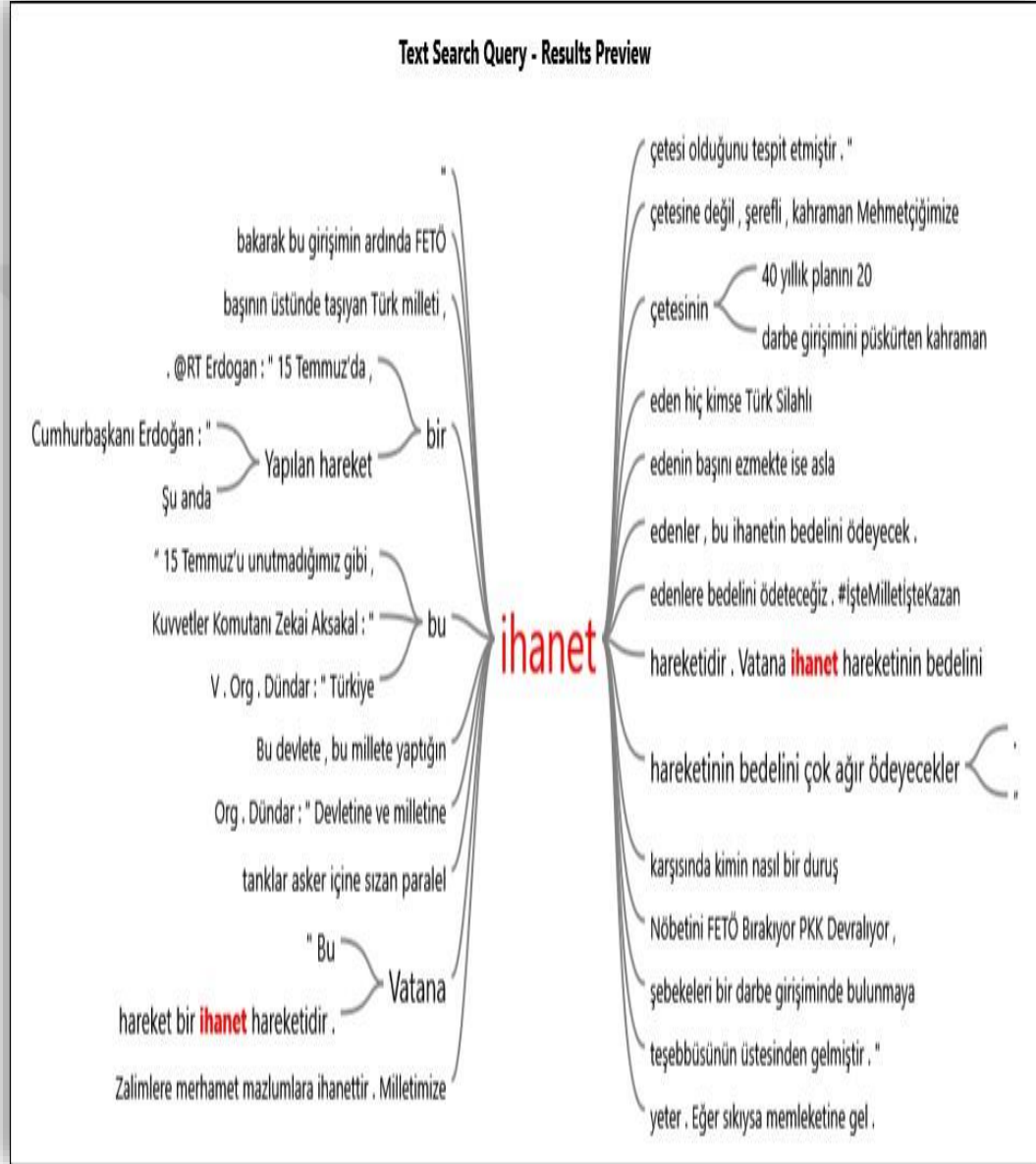
**Some notes on 2018:**

#MilletinZaferi is only shared by Mevlut Çavuşoğlu and Yurtdisiturkler

#15JulyEpic is only shared by Mevlut Çavuşoğlu and Yurtdisiturkler

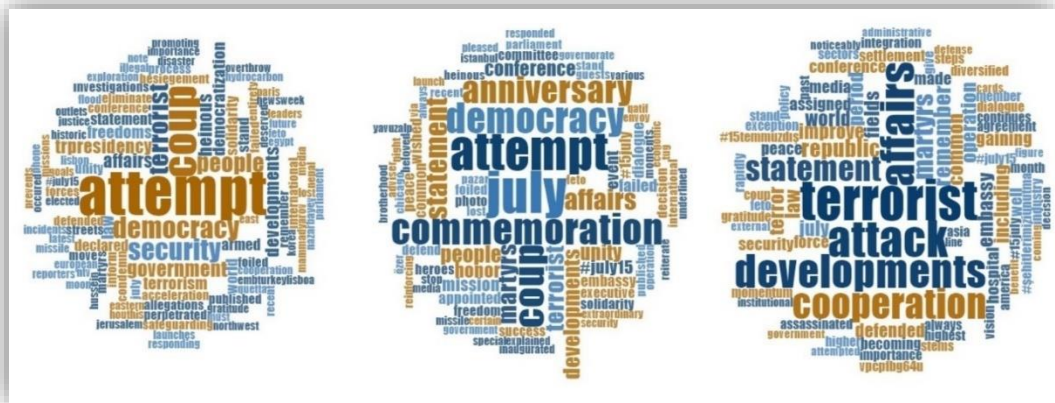
#WeHaventForgotten #WeWontForget is only shared by Mevlut Çavuşoğlu

In 2016, the word 'betrayal' was used 5 times by BasbakanlıkKDK, six times by Mevlut Cavusoglu and six times by TC-Bestepe. In 2017, only the TRPresidency account used the word betrayal five times. The word was not used in 2018.



**Figure 76**

2018 All accounts "ihanet" word tree

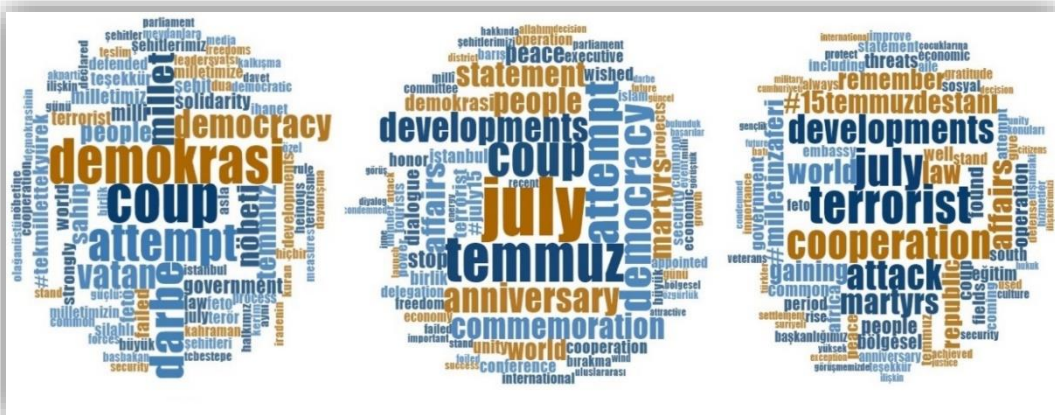


**Figure 77**

*MFA tweets in 2016, 2017, and 2018*

*Note: Detailed comparisons will be made in the overall evaluation section of the study.*

In the same way, the collective word clouds of the posts shared by all accounts are presented for comparison.



**Figure 78**

*All tweets in 2016, 2017, and 2018*

*Note: Detailed comparisons will be made in the overall evaluation section of the study.*

### **3.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

This chapter has presented a framework analysis of the data acquired from the posts shared by official Turkish institutions on Twitter in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in order to examine digital diplomacy in Turkey in the way that it is conducted over Twitter, which now governments widely use for their diplomatic activities. In other words, this chapter aims to form a basis for investigating the communication through Turkish state narratives and discourses by analysing the posts to determine the common themes from the tweets, which construct previously mentioned discourses in Chapter 4. With that purpose, the posts shared during the specified time intervals – from July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018 – have been examined by employing the framework analysis method. Next, the findings are presented in a report in this chapter. Finally, there are evaluations made for each year and Twitter account in the analysis based on the samples from the data shaped following the steps of the framework analysis. Overall, this chapter has highlighted the dominant themes obtained from the analysis. In this way, they will be used while interpreting the findings in the following parts of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The final chapter concludes this dissertation. This chapter will summarise the discussion and conclusion based on the analyses made in the previous chapters, including a brief summary of the framework analysis explored in Chapter 3 and the findings concerning the interpretation and discussion of its findings with each Twitter account. The significance of the emerging state discourses generated by official accounts of institutions that exercise digital diplomacy after the coup attempt is examined.

As discussed earlier, the frequently shared themes revealed as a result of the framework analysis in the time between July 15 – August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018 will be used to interpret the results considering each state body whose Twitter accounts analysed, and the evaluation will be made accordingly. Furthermore, the results and the considerations of the research findings will be evaluated based on populism discourse as findings lead me to observe populist implications in the messages shared by state institutions exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey. When drawing conclusions, it is worth discussing the prominent themes with reference to some essential concepts of Populism by highlighting the similarities between the themes and these concepts. In this chapter, a general evaluation of the posts shared between 15 July and 10 August in 2019 and 2020 for which no framework analysis has been made will be carried out in the context of Populism and the themes derived from previous framework analyses conducted for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Overall, this chapter explains how the dissertation's research questions and aims have been fulfilled and shed light on the study's limitations. Some recommendations that would probably provide guidance for future research in digital diplomacy in Turkey will finally end this chapter.

## 4.2 Overview and Summary

In the previous chapter, the analysis of the posts shared from the official state institutions that perform digital diplomacy in Turkey is shared. An analysis report includes a range of examples obtained from the data (analysed posts) as the endpoint of the analysis is presented. This is also a part of the framework analysis considering the five-step – process according to Ritchie and Spencer's model (1994), which is displayed and explained in a detailed way in the previous parts as well. Once each theme has been represented graphically and investigated by focusing on how they are connected within the scope of the analysis, it is expected to give the reader a much clearer understanding of the data to get a general picture. In this context, all of the posts made from five official Twitter accounts in 2016, 2017 and 2018 were analysed according to the framework analysis so as to identify similarities and differences regarding the language used in messages.

Now is the time to discuss the magnitude of all the posts examined, discover the relationships among the tweets, and detect any shifts occurring over the years regarding the discourse. Therefore, it is aimed to describe a more detailed picture of all the analyses of the posts shared by five accounts in 2016, 2017, and 2018 with specific reference to the general picture drawn in the framework analysis report. Before interpreting the results, I would like to restate the main aims that correspond to the interpretation of the findings. The objective of the previous chapter is to enquire into changes regarding how the Turkish state reacted and responded to the events that took place on Friday night, July 15, 2016, analysing the Twitter posts of state actors practising digital diplomacy shared from July 15 – August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.

This objective is partially met with the findings that are presented in Chapter 3. All 2647 Twitter posts have been analysed using NVivo -11 software tool, and then the report was generated to share the findings to answer the above-mentioned research question. All the nodes or themes were identified, compared in each set of samples, and they are determined according to the years when the posts were shared.

This brings us to the point of thinking about the sub-questions of the second research question. That is why when the results are being discussed, why *some themes that become prominent in the Twitter posts have been given importance by the state officials in communication with the international and domestic publics* will be referred to with a specific emphasis on the motives behind the messages. Moreover, the second question focuses on *how the Turkish State has performed digital diplomacy to communicate its decisions and goals by executing its strategies on Twitter since the coup attempt*. The third sub-question essentially seeks an answer about *the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of shared Twitter messages*. Finally, the last question that will hopefully shed light on the findings reported in the previous chapter is related to *the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of Twitter posts*.

As stated by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey has many social media accounts across various online platforms; many actively use social media in 18 languages. (Çavuşoğlu, 2016) Given that digital diplomacy was considered an effective crisis communication tool to address the need for post-coup communication, the official accounts transmitted their messages reflecting the Turkish state narrative right after the coup. In this study, the effect of the posts shared after the coup attempt in three years has been analysed considering how the failed coup attempt has affected the digital diplomacy apparatus considering the challenge posed by the post-coup period. After the coup attempt, the Turkish government felt the necessity to make great efforts to both explain its narrative to the public and forge public opinion at the international level.

### **4.3 Interpretation of Findings**

From the framework analysis report shared in the previous section of the study, key findings emerge as “seven key themes/ nodes” identified as a result of the framework analysis, which forms the basic themes that could be used to give way to comparing the posts. (See Table 7 in Chapter 3) Having looked at this picture obtained by eliciting and analysing all 2647 posts, I also would like to navigate the

content and see the reflections of these themes in the narrative discourse. With this purpose, since all these themes constitute important data for evaluating this narrative by the necessary parties exercising digital diplomacy in Turkey and perhaps the impact they have created considering the digital diplomacy practices, these themes will be frequently referred to in the section dedicated for evaluation.

In short, various conclusions to be drawn from the earlier parts of this chapter, which pertains to the second research question and its sub-questions. The data comes from three different years, which correspond to 15 July – 10 August in 2016, 2017, 2018. That is why I have opted for focusing on which themes stand out according to the years in order to see the meaning in the discourse more clearly and eventually provide meaningful insights.

#### **4.3.1 Evaluation of the Posts Made in 2016**

As explained in detail in the previous section of the study, seven key nodes/themes representing the topics that I have found in the data were determined. The presentation of key themes supported by the statements and quotes from Twitter posts can be regarded as the primary form of inquiry and reporting of the data. However, it is necessary to have a deeper analysis to enrich the analysis of the data which has been described in the report.

While evaluating the themes, it is important to discuss the themes, as they could be crucial for outlining current issues in digital diplomacy in Turkey after the post-coup period. This can demonstrate the correlations between the messages shared by five Twitter accounts and identify patterns and their relationships, which are necessary for interpretation of the data. For this purpose, a table showing that all the analysed accounts that share posts related to the seven key themes determined are given below.

**Table 24**

*Key themes identified using framework analysis and how they are used by five Twitter accounts in 2016 based on the analysis report*

Key Nodes/ Themes	Analysed Accounts
1 Nodes\\ Hot messages against the coup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaşbakanlıkKDK</li> <li>• MevlutCavusoglu</li> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• TRPresidency</li> <li>• MFATurkey</li> </ul>
2 Nodes\\ National unity and solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaşbakanlıkKDK</li> <li>• MevlutCavusoglu</li> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• TRPresidency</li> <li>• MFATurkey</li> </ul>
3 Nodes\\ Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• MFATurkey</li> </ul>
4 Nodes\\ Making an enemy of the coup plotters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaşbakanlıkKDK</li> <li>• MevlutCavusoglu</li> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• TRPresidency</li> <li>• MFATurkey</li> </ul>
5 Nodes\\ glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaşbakanlıkKDK</li> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• TRPresidency</li> </ul>
6 Nodes\\ Seeking international support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaşbakanlıkKDK</li> <li>• MevlutCavusoglu</li> <li>• Byegmeng</li> <li>• MFATurkey</li> </ul>
7 Nodes\\ Activating the masses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRPresidency</li> </ul>

- Byegmeng

***Note:** For the data interpretation, the accounts are presented in an order, which is determined according to the number of posts they have shared.*

**Table 25**

*Accounts with the number of the posts they made in 2016*

Analysed Twitter Accounts in 2016	Number of Posts
BaşbakanlıkKDK	438
MevlutCavusoglu	388
Byegmeng	264
TRPresidency	218
MFA – Turkey	60
Total	
Number	1368

In the following part of the study, according to the years, the evaluation and interpretation of the posts made from each account are made considering the seven themes and most mentioned words.

#### **4.3.1.1 BaşbakanlıkKDK Account Posts Made in 2016**

BakbakanlıkKDK account shared the highest number of posts (438) in the period starting right after the coup attempt on July 15 and ending with the democracy watch on 10 August. Before beginning data interpretation, it may be essential to give brief information about this account in relation to its role in digital diplomacy. BaşbakanlıkKDK (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Office of Public Diplomacy (OPD)) was founded to organise public institutions, organisations and

non-governmental organisations in 2010. As the name suggests, the office organised various activities in different fields to carry out public diplomacy activities. In 2016, during and after the coup attempt, the office was actively using its social media accounts in order to enter communication with the foreign public.

When the posts are closely analysed, it is seen that five of the seven themes determined are emphasised more. The themes dominating this account are related to (1) Hot messages against the coup, (2) National unity and solidarity, (4) Making an enemy of the coup plotters, (5) Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt, (6) Seeking international support as shown in Table 24. This part sets out to better realising the reasons why some messages are often repeated.

All the official accounts alleged that the coup attempt resulted from a plan of a terrorist organisation led by Fethullah Gülen and was executed by his followers. Therefore, messages about the failed coup attempt stand out in the posts made from this account. In this context, the focus of the messages is on the importance of democracy, how it was protected thanks to the brave people of Turkey, and democracy is no longer under threat. The use of such messages seem like deliberate messaging by the account in order to ensure that all the precautions that were taken like ‘state of emergency’ were necessary and there was a rationale behind it, so in fact, it can be interpreted as an effort to show that everything done basically serves a specific purpose, such as protecting democracy. The emphasis that citizens act in unity and solidarity within the framework of actions to maintain democracy has been another prominent theme, the impacts of which can be seen from two perspectives. This emphasis appears in two different ways. First, it is seen that the account made such posts to show the public their own power, and in this way, they probably hoped to provide public support. The second one is the call made to seek international support, one of the seven themes, having arguments about the necessity of unity and solidarity that highlighting the significance of standing together with Turkey. In line with this purpose, the global support messages shared by the BaşbakanlıkKDK account can be viewed as a kind of show of strength by indicating that world leaders” kept a close watch on Turkey” in this process when international assistance is most needed. Considering the direct link of this account

with public diplomacy, the fact that the messages given to the international public can be considered quite crucial in terms of the role of the Office of Public Diplomacy.

Based on the argument that democracy is defended, the emphasis on the punishment of traitors who intend to democracy emerges as another theme with a specific focus. It is possible to say that it continues with a discourse that overlaps with the themes mentioned earlier and supports each other. While it is aimed to boost the people's morale and a sense of victory is created with the emphasis on the triumph of democracy, those responsible for this coup attempt are strongly condemned.

At this point, I believe that there is a strong possibility that the reflex of calling the people out on the streets to guard democracy is kept alive by guaranteeing that the people who attempted the coup will be punished in the most serious way to show the public that the losses are not in vain. This can actually be seen as a kind of continuity mechanism. It can be said that these themes and most mentioned words used by this account contribute in several ways to our understanding of the common message delivered to the public both at the national and international level. Perhaps, the posts shared by BaşbakanlıkKDK provide a basis for a common mechanism of gratitude towards society and anger against the enemy established and shaped after the coup attempt. They also reflect the dominant key ideas, expressions or words that one can see in the other messages of analysed accounts with the same or similar implications.

#### **4.3.1.2 MevlütCavusoglu Account Posts Made in 2016**

The second account belongs to Mevlüt Çavuşolu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with 388 tweets shared. At the beginning of the evaluation of this account, in general, it can be said that it played an extremely active role in terms of the messages given from this account. As stated in the analysis report, the messages posted to Twitter from this account differ in some ways. As can be seen in table 24, the following nodes; (1) Hot messages against the coup, (2) National unity and

solidarity, (4) Making an enemy of the coup plotters, (6) Seeking international support have been the ones shared mainly by the account.

Firstly, the following conclusions can be drawn based on the common themes. It is vividly seen that the posts about democracy are more related to democracy watches. When these messages are examined, it can be said that both citizens are glorified, and they refer to the common points with international issues like this following statement: “Long live Turkey, democracy, pluralism in the Middle East”. It was underlined that in doing so, the duty to protect democracy was given to the citizens, and this task was successfully fulfilled. At the same time, there are messages delivered to the international public that all the state institutions and organisations of the country faced down the threat of the coup and that the government was in control after the attempt.

Another theme used to ensure “unity and solidarity” can be viewed as rather notable in Mevlüt Cavuşoglu’s account. It seems that the most important point that arises at this point can be seen as the use of #tekmillettekyürek (#onenationoneheart) hashtag, which was mostly used by the MevlutCavusoglu account (17 times by MevlutCavusoglu, 12 times by BasbakanlıkKDK, three times by TRPresidency). An implication of this is the possibility that with this use, the aim could be to provide unity and solidarity with previous posts. It can be asserted that, in this case, the discourse indicates a national unity, which could possibly be seen as a remedy to the problems occurring in the aftermath of the coup attempt. This unity and solidarity discourse can also be seen as very consistent with the messages shared by any accounts analysed in this dissertation in terms of language, content, and emotional appeal considering the focus on the power of the people emerging as key issues surrounding the failed coup attempt.

Apart from the common themes that stand out, there is a difference in the messages shared from this account. These differences have been can be analysed in four categories as indicated in the report. Examining these different posts in terms of understanding the messages can provide insights into the latent power dynamics of digital diplomacy in relation to the coup attempt. Dissemination of official

discourses and arguments of the State, expressing determination in the struggle, emphasis on coup plotters opening fire on civilians and preventing the support propaganda of the coup plotters abroad are main topics apart from the common themes. Considering that the account represents the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is seen that messages are shared with the aim of strengthening the desired influence, especially on international public opinion. For the supporters of the FETO, it was strongly emphasised that they are at the same level as the other terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, ASAD & ISIS, and PKK in the world. Following this analogy, here comes a call for international support for Turkey, which is presented as an opportunity for the countries to shoot any conspiracy theory full of holes about their approval of FETO's terrorist acts. With his posts, it can be easily said that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlut Cavusoglu, tries to put some efforts to create a positive international perception in order to ensure the international community's support in the fights against FETO. In doing so, he offers a number of reasons to refute the opposing arguments. After the coup attempt, there were some news reports in the international media outlets that the coup attempt had been staged. In particular, he explicitly condemned some news organisations like New York Times and some explanations made by the European Union officials. The minister, who warned the European Union that political asylum is unacceptable, also clearly expressed Turkey's expectations on this issue.

While doing all these, the emphasis is on the importance of the other party to make an objective evaluation and act accordingly. For this purpose, western states were warned about FETO, and it is seen that detailed information was shared with them. Hence, as can be clearly concluded from the statements, if the western states objectively approach the events, Turkey expects to have full international support. Maybe, in order to reinforce this expectation, details about the way the events occurred during the coup were especially emphasised. Mevlut Cavusoglu highlighted that civilians were targeted during the coup attempt, and the attacks were directly aimed at killing unarmed people. This argument is also supported by the claim that FETO is an international organisation; therefore, it poses a threat as a common enemy to all countries, which could be perceived as crucial to get full

international support. I think it would not be incorrect to state that the Minister evidently tried to strengthen his hand by underlining the reality of civilians to be at stake could and directly challenge all the opposing views with such a discourse.

What I see as a common point of all these messages is that Mevlut Cavusoglu made every effort to gain international support for Turkey. The posts can possibly make one think that the responsibility of distorting the positive public image of the once known Gulen Movement and its followers in the international arena is associated with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. All the efforts can also be associated with the expectations to ensure all the coup plotters extradition. In fact, it should not be too difficult to understand the calls for support and help considering this purpose. With this purpose in mind, perhaps several support messages coming from different countries after the attempted coup were shared, implying that they are unequivocal support and solidarity of support of real friends of Turkey. All the support messages were shared, and its importance was stressed this much could be seen as related to the desire to encourage others to do the same.

#### **4.3.1.3 Byegmeng Account Posts Made in 2016**

According to the number of posts that were made, the next account to be analysed and examined in the 3rd place with 264 Twitter posts is the Byegmeng account. Until its dissolution, as a result of the Constitutional Referendum taking place in 2017, Prime Minister had been a dominant figure in Turkish political culture. Considering the role of the prime minister's office back then, one can expect that the messages given from this account may also be important. The messages given were not fundamentally different in terms of content. It is seen that all seven main themes determined in the analysis were involved in the posts. Overall, messages about democracy, citizens who defend democracy, the heroism of the citizens, the sense of unity and solidarity among people, the citizens taking to the streets, and the public support for the State of emergency stand out. That the account highlighted the opposition's support to the government after the failed

attempt seems like deliberate messaging by the authorities using this account to generate public engagement.

After the coup attempt, a state of emergency for three months was declared by the President of Turkey, which in its most general definition “... gives itself special powers in order to try to control an unusually difficult or dangerous situation, especially when this involves limiting people’s freedom” (State of Emergency, n.d.). In Turkey, this situation allowed the President to have the power to make emergency regulations as well as bypassing the parliament with the cabinet while enacting and repealing laws and regulations. This could also result in the suspension of fundamental rights or freedoms.

Even though it was initiated for a period of three months, it was prolonged seven times by the parliament and ended in 2018, two years after the failed coup attempt. Since this issue is directly connected to democracy, freedoms, and the separation of powers, it was a pretty controversial topic considering the circumstances. On the one hand, the issues such as the protection of democracy, national unity and solidarity after the coup were brought to the fore. On the other hand, there was a tendency to prevent the resistance that may occur in society in terms of the impacts of the State of emergency. That is why the positive responses coming from the public were shared to show the recognition of this ‘temporary’ situation regardless of the measures taken under the State of emergency.

The content of the remaining posts is very similar to the messages shared from other accounts.

#### **4.3.1.4 TRPresidency Account Posts Made in 2016**

Considering the President's statements and his influence on the posts made by other accounts, the content of the messages shared by the TRPresidency account gains importance. With 218 tweets that the account posted, TRPresidency is the fourth account with the highest number of posts. The account has mentioned the topic which could be primarily associated with the following themes; (1) Hot messages against the coup, (2) National unity and solidarity, (4) Making an enemy

of the coup plotters, (5) Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt, (7) Activating the masses. It can be argued that Twitter posts were used as a guard to defend democracy right after the coup attempt in 2016 to act against negative consequences. Thus, a new ‘democracy discourse’ was produced with specific reference to how Turkey tackled a grave threat to its democracy. The messages shared by TRPresidency specifically focus on how democracy watches are essential to protect democracy. When the posts connected to the hot messages about the coup are sifted through, it is obviously seen that to justify the acts of the Turkish government, ‘democracy tools’ such as the parliament, constitution and law enforcement have been emphasised both in the domestic and foreign press. There is a very interesting point here about the discourse of national will, which had already been used by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan even before the coup, was then associated with the protection of democracy and took its place in the messages.

The current use of ‘national will’ discourse can be seen very closely related to nation and democracy concepts. Considering how these concepts are used in posts, it is evident that national will is associated with the nation’s loyalty and devotion to defending democracy. In the posts made by the Presidency during and after the coup in 2016, the emphasis was on how valuable and practical it was to act jointly as a nation, which is supported by the nation's will.

It can be easily said that another prominent discourse in the posts made by the Presidency is actually very much associated with religious and national feelings, specific to the common themes. For example, Erdoğan paid visits to the families of people who lost their lives during the coup attempt and photographs taken at their homes were shared together with the messages stressing the gratitude to those killed. Those visits of the President as the head of the State, highest elected official of the country, seem very important in terms of supporting the discourse that the loss of lives was not in vain and that he was aware of this sacrifice. This discourse was repeatedly supported with the emphasis on how valuable this sacrifice is in the eye of God.

Another theme that attracts the most attention in the posts made from this account is activating the masses, which corresponds to the 7<sup>th</sup> theme from the analysis. In these posts, it might be asserted that in these posts focusing on national and religious feelings, the call to protect democracy and prayers and are heavily used to mobilise the crowds against the plotters.

Regarding the 4th theme, making an enemy of the coup plotters, it is seen that harsh rhetoric is shared about the return of Fethullah Gülen, the leader of FETO, just like the posts made from Mevlüt Çavusoglu's account. The messages given in connection with this theme are mostly about the betrayal of the coup plotters, their price, and the necessity of seeing the same as the supporters or sympathisers of other internationally recognised terrorist organisations in the world.

#### **4.3.1.5 MFA-Turkey Account Posts Made in 2016**

For foreign policy, technology emerged as a vital assistant. Therefore, the role of MFAs has increased significantly for the better and faster spread of ideas, discussed in this study. Apart from the role of social media in international relations, I thought that the analysis findings in this section were significant in terms of seeing the contribution of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the state discourse created after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. To my surprise, the MFA-Turkey account shared the lowest number of posts from July 15 till August 10, 2016, compared to the other accounts examined in the analysis.

In fact, the point is that the content of the messages is purely informative regarding the position of the government about the issues arising. It is seen that the messages mainly focus on the following themes; (1) Hot messages against the coup, (2) National unity and solidarity, (3) Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks (4) Making an enemy of the coup plotters, (6) Seeking international support. In light of the data obtained from the analysis part, it is impossible to say that messages shared by the MFA-Turkey account contribute to the dominant discourse or create a new one.

#### 4.3.2 Evaluation of the Posts Made in 2017

If the general evaluation is made about the posts shared from July 15 to August 10 2017, it is obvious that the number of posts shared from most of the analysed accounts decreased. However, the BasbakanlıkKDK account, which ranked first with 438 posts shared in the previous year, showed a sharp decline and ranked last regarding its number of tweets in 2017 with 13 posts. This data might provide us with more meaningful content as the discourse of the messages is examined. Besides, unlike other accounts, the only account that increased the number of posts from 60 in 2016 to 147 in 2017 became MFA – Turkey.

**Table 26**

*Accounts with the number of the posts they made in 2017*

Analysed Twitter Accounts in 2017	Number of Posts
MevlutCavusoglu	258
Byegmeng	244
TRPresidency	156
MFA - Turkey	147
BasbakanlıkKDK	13
Total	
Number	818

In the following part of the study, the evaluation to be made in this section is carried out in the context of the shared messages. This is carried out both considering the themes that stand out in the analysis part and the most mentioned words and phrases in the context of the discourses that emerged the same or different from 2016.

#### 4.3.2.1 MevlütCavusoglu Account Posts Made in 2017

Mevlüt Çavusoglu account, one of the accounts that stood out with the posts it made in 2016, ranked first with the number of posts shared on the first anniversary of the coup attempt. When the content of the posts is examined, it would be correct to say that the most striking issue is that the messages with the theme of prayer were only made from this account. At this point, it can be said that the posts made are critical in terms of creating a particular discourse. Based on this argument, it can be said that Mevlüt Cavusogl's metaphors that carry some implicit suggestions about the attribution of some features of President Erdogan can be significant.

As can be seen in the following lines, it can be suggested that some features are intended to be identified with the President, such as a hero, a wrestler, a shepherd, a saviour and a protector of spiritual values.

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: Either disperse your herd, if left  
unattended,

“or do not leave them with no shepherd, my God!”

“Do not leave us, O, with no love, no water, no air”

“and with no country, my God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: Let us know how to resist the foe,

“Do not leave without a lifeless, my God!”

“On the path to tomorrows, do not leave our years”

“with no Ramadan [month], my God!”

“While walking along the future, o God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: Give us strength... Do not leave the  
field of jihad”

“with no pahlevan [wrestler], My God!”

“Do not leave these masses, who look for a hero,”

“with no hero, My God!”

“RT @RT\_Erdogan: “We all have a hoarse voice... do not leave”

“our minarets with no calls to prayer, my God!”

“Either bring us those who make honey”

“or do not just leave us with no hive, my God!”

The discourse built with such messages can be useful for understanding the post-coup process. At this point, a dominant discourse on the role of the President as the leader of the nation, which resisted the coup, explicitly comes to the fore. Such statements emphasise the power of the President while emphasising his “heroic identity”. In that sense, this is closely linked with the ‘freedom’ rhetoric seen in the posts, which thrived on the glorification of the citizen’s defence of democracy after the coup in 2016. This was symbolised with the support of the people. This time, this discourse emerges as glorification of the President’s personality and the actions of the people.

On the occasion of being the first anniversary of the coup attempt, some hashtags like # Don’Foreget15July, and #WeWillNotForgetare shared. Unlike 2016, these hashtags can be identified with the “Epic of the nation” concept for the first time. In this concept, ‘liberation discourse’ with a specific reference to the defence of ‘democracy’ thanks to the people and their anti-coup actions have been identified and marked with the failed coup attempt on its first anniversary.

When we look at the thematic structure in the posts shared by Mevlüt Çavuşğlu’s account, it can be assumed that there was an apparent attempt to mark that day with the declaration of 15 July as the “Day of Democracy and National Solidarity” on the anniversary of the coup attempt in 2017. As of this date, July 15was to be perceived as a day of commemoration and celebration. Concerning

this, it can be determined that the emphasis on FETO and its followers in the posts in 2016 were replaced by the messages about the “Heroism and Power of the People”. It can be deduced that more reference is made to the ‘epic’ side of the struggle.

#### **4.3.2.2 Byegmeng Account Posts Made in 2017**

The Byegmeng is the account that ranks second with 244 tweets shared between 15 July and 10 August 2017 based on the framework analysis that has been conducted in this study. The content of the posts made from this account managed by the office of prime ministry largely overlaps with Mevlut Cavusoglu’s posts regarding the memorial day events, victory of democracy, and heroism of the nation.

One of the most prominent messages to be given to the national and international public can be regarded as the one about economic growth. At this point, the stress on how strong Turkey became in terms of democracy and economy thanks to a stable government policy is quite evident from the messages. It can be understood that it was an effort to show how accurately the policies were implemented since the coup attempt; that is why the word ‘economy’ is in the second rank among the most mentioned words.

#### **4.3.2.3 TRPresidency Account Posts Made in 2017**

In total, 156 posts were shared from this account within the period taken into account for the analysis of the posts. Rather than making an enemy of the coup plotters and condemning them, which we frequently encounter in the posts in 2016, other prominent discourses can be underlined in 2017.

First of all, a very striking metaphor comes forward. It was clearly stated that the struggle shown against FETO on 15 July bears a resemblance to the Turkish Liberation War. This attack, which was allegedly made against the unity, solidarity and democracy of the Turkish nation, comes before us with the emphasis that it

posed a threat to the sovereignty of the nation, which supposedly ended up with a national victory. Hence, in accordance with this emerging discourse, it can be regarded as a tendency to compare the efforts and processes experienced during the national liberation war, making an analogy between the coup attempt of July 15 and the war of independence. The motive behind this rhetoric can be seen as highly related to the desire to maintain substantial public support by identifying the 15 July attempt with the liberation war, which is widely accepted as sacred by the people. Based on this approach, it can be claimed that this process may have been presented to the public as a unifying force on the one hand, and on the other hand, it may have been intended to block the way for criticism that may be opposed to the dominant discourse of the government.

Another issue that caught my attention when I made the evaluation based on the posts from this account was that there was a distinction between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ Turkey. When we look at the issue of ‘new Turkey’ discourse from this perspective, it was claimed that there had been new changes regarding the economy, politics, military organisation, unity and organisation and democracy. Given that there was a strong emphasis that ‘old Turkey’ no longer exists, it can be asserted that the 15th July was a cornerstone for the construction of ‘new Turkey’ considering the messages that might indicate how Turkey seems to be determined to reposition not only at home but also abroad.

#### **4.3.2.4 MFA-Turkey Account Posts Made in 2017**

The opinion shared on the ministry’s page is meaningful due to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ function in the field of diplomacy, and the unique position it has acquired was mentioned before in this study. In its widest sense, practising public diplomacy, which gives the right to establish and maintain healthy relations both with State and non-state actors can be viewed among the basic tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in today’s world. Therefore, that after the coup attempt which discourses have been constructed or supported by the Turkish Foreign Ministry are significant for the evaluation of this study’s findings. It can be observed that, on the

first anniversary of the failed coup attempt, 147 posts were shared from MFA – Turkey account. However, when the posts are examined, it can be recognised that the themes are mostly related to democracy, martyrs, unity, solidarity and memorial day activities. The posts made for informational purposes stand out once again, similar to those shared in 2016, even though the number of posts from his account increased in 2017. Drawing a conclusion based on the relevant findings related to the most mentioned words and common themes, the coup attempt and the developments occurring after the coup can be concluded to constitute the focus of the messages shared by the MFATurkey account.

#### **4.3.2.5 BaşbakanlıkKDK Account Posts Made in 2017**

This account, which took first place with the highest number of posts in 2016, showed the sharpest decline with 13 tweets in 2017. As stated when evaluating the posts in 2016, the primary role of the Public Diplomacy Coordination Office under the Prime Ministry was public diplomacy execution at an institutional level with a systematic state policy. It can be said that this task was tried to be carried out through a few posts, focusing primarily on the ‘martyrs’ and ‘heroism of people’ considering the posts made on the coup attempt’s first anniversary in 2017. And contrary to my expectation, it does not seem possible to state that the posts made from this account play an active role in supporting dominant discourses to communicate with the international public as they did in 2016.

#### **4.3.3 Evaluation of the Posts Made in 2018**

From all the accounts, 461 posts in total were shared in 2018, the last year in which the posts made from five official Twitter accounts were analysed through the framework analysis. It is clear that there was a notable decline by almost half in the number of the posts made in 2018, considering the number of posts examined was 1368 in 2016, the year of the coup attempt, and 818 messages were shared in 2017 - the first anniversary of the coup attempt.

Before starting the evaluation, it would be appropriate to share the changes related to five official accounts analysed due to the constitutional amendment of 2017. According to article 104, “The President of the Republic is the Head of the State. In this capacity, he/she shall represent the Republic of Turkey and the unity of the Turkish Nation; he/she shall ensure the implementation of the Constitution and the regular and harmonious functioning of the organs of State” (The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 2017, 104).

Regarding all the changes that it brought, the 2017 Constitutional amendment can be regarded as a crucial turning point for the Turkish political system. With the amendment made in the relevant law article indicated above, the prime minister's office was abolished. Later, the President became the head of the executive branch right after the 2018 general election. Therefore, the Twitter accounts examined in this study, which was once called “BasbakanlıkKDK” and “Byegmeng” in 2016 and 2017, were renamed as “Yurtdısıturkler” and “Communications”.

**Table 27**

*Accounts with the number of the posts they made in 2018*

Analysed Twitter Accounts in 2018	Number of Posts
Yurtdısıturkler (BasbakanlıkKDK)	120
MevlutCavusoglu	113
MFA – Turkey	84
Communications (Byegmeng)	72
TRPresidency	72
Total	
Number	461

#### **4.3.3.1 YurtdışıTurkler (BaşbakanlıkKDK) Account Posts Made in 2018**

Yurtdışitürkler, in the second year of the coup attempt, is in the first rank with the 120 posts among the accounts examined from July 15 to August 10, 2018. Among all the accounts discussed, the most tweets about July 15 was made by this account. The hashtags about the coup attempt were used, such as #15TemmuzDestanı, #Unutmadık, and #Unutmayacağız. That the observations, feelings and comments of foreign scholarship students that receive education in Turkey about the July 15 coup attempt were shared in the posts, in my opinion, is noticeable. It can be claimed that these posts were made primarily to get support from the foreign public. And when we look at the content of the discourse created for this purpose, we can easily see the themes we encountered in previous years.

It is evident that the discourse centres around themes such as ‘blaming the western media for not being objective about what happened’, ‘praising and giving support for martyrs and veterans’, ‘emphasis on faith, patriotism’, the ‘importance of strong religious belief’, ‘the glorification of the actions of the people’, and ‘adding epic features to these actions’. In particular, the ‘epic’ nature of the events that took place on and after July 15 started to be seen more frequently in messages since 2017. In fact, a book called “July 15 Coup Attempt and People’s Victory” was prepared by the Presidency and this book was also introduced by the ‘yurtdisiturkler’ account, with this once again, the failed coup attempt was emphasised by underlining the nation’s victory. It can be claimed that this ‘epicization’ is at the core of this dominant discourse, becoming quite apparent in 2018. With its rhetoric of “epic victory”, “epic fight”, “epic of victory”, and “heroic citizens”, the government discourse became central to any issues associated with July 15 coup attempt.

#### **4.3.3.2 MevlütCavusoglu Account Posts Made in 2018**

MevlütCavusoglu that actively shared messages in the periods we examined in 2016 and 2017, was placed in the second rank with 113 posts made from 15 July to 10 August 2018. In 2018, Mevlut Çavusoğlu shared both posts mainly about his

meetings as the minister of foreign minister and the activities of the Justice and Development Party. However, it is noteworthy that this account, which had had posts made in connection with many prominent themes in 2016 and 2017, did not have any references to July 15 coup attempt other than hashtag #15TemmuzDestanı (The Epic of 15 July) for nine times. Considering that the only account that also uses the same hashtag was ‘yurtdisiturkler’, we can conclude that the July 15 discourse in the diplomatic language is not used as much as before within the context of prominent themes obtained from the framework analysis.

#### **4.3.3.3 MFA-Turkey Account Posts Made in 2018**

MFA-Turkey, the 3rd place with 84 tweets, shared between 15 July and 10 August 2018, when the analysis took place. Only three of these posts, which had an emphasis on ‘innocent civilians killed, defending democracy, the heroism of the citizens and glorification of martyrs, were about July the 15th. When analysed in terms of the prominent themes and nodes obtained in the analysis of the posts made in 2016, it is seen that the posts made from MFA-Turkey in 2018 were mainly related to four themes.

These are (1) Hot messages against the coup, (2) National unity and solidarity\ martyrs, (4) Making an enemy of the coup plotters\ FETO and (5) Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt\martyr. However, all the other posts other than these three tweets were more informative, and it can be noticed that they were mostly related to international relations, official visits and agreements. It is evident that no dominant discourse, which started to be seen after 2017 and highlighted by the analysed accounts, was shared by the MFA\_Turkey account.

#### **4.3.3.4 Communications (Byegmeng) Account Posts Made in 2018**

It was observed that 72 posts were shared both from the ‘Communications’ and ‘TRPresidency’ accounts during the analysis period in 2018. With the amendments made to the constitution of Turkey in 2017, the username of this

account - formerly known as Byegmeng and controlled by the prime minister's office - was changed to Communications.

Messages about the fight against the FETO were often given. The people who showed courage was praised, and the messages supporting the discourse of the 'heroic defence of democracy' were shared on the coup attempt's second anniversary. Within the posts, the importance of the process after the July 15-coup attempt was regarded as very valuable and vital for Turkey's future.

#### **4.3.3.5 TRPresidency Account Posts Made in 2018**

It is seen that the number of posts made from this account in 2018 is the same as the 'communications' account. It is seen that the most prominent messages in the posts made from this account in 2018 were about the economic situation in Turkey. Considering the themes that became apparent and identified by the framework analysis and the common aspects of the posts about the economy, it is possible to claim that the accusations and striking claims regarding economic manipulations against western states attract attention.

In addition, four posts were shared from this account about the "July 15 Democracy and National Unity Day" Commemoration Events. As can be seen in the posts made from other accounts in 2018, the content of these messages mainly consists of 'appreciating the heroism and bravery of the people', 'messages given to the families of martyrs and veterans', and 'sanctification of the fight against FETO'. Compared to other accounts, the account that shared the most messages about FETO was the TRPresidency. The messages contained thinly veiled threats, especially to countries that support FETO or take into account their statements. Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the issue of the return of FETO members is paramount for Turkey.

Especially, looking at the messages given by President Erdogan, it is possible to say that religion-based discourses dominate the posts made in this period. That President Erdoğan recites Holy Quran for martyrs at Beştepe People's Mosque can indicate the importance of the representation and meaning of the mosques (and the

belief) after the 15 July coup attempt. In that sense, that belief and faith have had a profound impact to win a victory since the liberation war is a familiar discourse underlined in Turkey. This time, the acts displayed after the coup were associated with heroism and victory and identified with this discourse. With all these, it can be claimed that a sense of liberation war was also tried to be created.

#### **4.4 Summarising Results and Drawing Conclusions**

The following part includes the summary of the framework analysis and interpretation of the results of the study to communicate the conclusions of the review effectively. Also, it is followed by a section where key aspects of interpretation are addressed and discussed thoroughly, underlining the dominant rhetoric that has played a central role in digital diplomacy practices in Turkey after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. In considering how the Turkish State reacted to the issues after the coup attempt on the accounts of state institutions or actors conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey during July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and which themes become prominent in the messages in communication with the public, one needs to examine the results of the analysis (see Chapter 3).

Mostly repeated and heavily used discourses are discussed within the framework of the concepts that seem most appropriate so as to form a basis on which all the arguments can be reached as a result of the analysis. As the interpretation of the results based on the analysis of the Twitter post has been already made in the previous section, the same points will not be reiterated once again. Therefore, in this section, a final assessment will be made in light of the findings and evaluations made so far, taking into account the prevalent discourses in Turkish digital diplomacy after the coup period.

The posts giving specific messages to the accounts' followers have provided cues about how communication with the public might be understood with the evaluation of the posts. It can be claimed that the messages can be often understood as influenced and shaped by and reflective of the issues arising on the night of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. For example, seven themes are identified as a result of

the thematic analysis that can point to new emerging discourses or the old discourses becoming more dominant in this process. It would be appropriate to make an overall evaluation to fully understand the state discourses produced by the institutions and individuals conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey and frame those discourses considering the common grounds and features they share.

#### **4.4.1 The Implications of Populism on Digital Diplomacy in Turkey after the 2016 Coup Attempt**

In this part of the chapter, the aim is to interpret the dominant state discourses in digital diplomacy in Turkey after the coup attempt based on the evaluation of the posts shared by the state accounts actively practising digital diplomacy and communicating the conclusions of the dissertation effectively. Regarding the findings from the interpretation part of this dissertation centred on the key themes emerging from each Twitter account, it can be concluded that the discourses that dominated the Turkish state narrative after 2016 can be examined under the concept of Populism. Within the scope of the research subject of this dissertation, it is vital to explore the reflection of Populism on digital diplomacy and underline the intersection points of the key discourses emerging as a result of the analysis conducted in Chapter 3, for concluding the overall assessment of the Twitter posts.

##### **4.4.1.1 Populism as a Concept**

Populism has emerged as a concept that has attracted considerable attention concerning its widespread usage lately (Bale et al., 2011). The commonly held definition for Populism is presented in the Oxford Dictionary as "a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups" (Populism, 2021). However, Populism is a doctrine whose definition is highly controversial and diverse in terms of its definition and constituent elements. Although the theoretical literature says that in the 1960s, there was no clear consensus about the meaning of Populism, recently, there has been a common understanding about at least two features of Populism.

There is a firm emphasis on the 'people' by nationalist leaders. Most of the time, the political elite has given reference to an 'anti-group that is opposed to the 'people' (Deiwiks, 2009, 1). Populism always presents rationalisation of its actions by addressing the public. Populism is based on anti-elite sentiments and subjecting them to a strategy of exclusion, seeing them as a homogeneous group with no inherent differences, except for some particular categories (Jagers ve Walgrave, 2007, p. 321-323). With this definition in mind, it can be asserted that many populists claiming that they take their power from the people challenge the 'elites' that are commonly depicted as abrogating the rights, values, and voice of the ordinary people in a society.

Populism is also seen as a political strategy. Populism which is shaped by the idea that the elite group exploits the ordinary people's rights and powers has been widely used by the right, left and centre ideologies, especially to win elections all over the world. In that sense, Populism is used to gain the support of the voters and a standard communication technique for reaching voters. In other words, Populism reflects the belief of providing a legitimate principle for the people's instincts and aspirations to take political action. In this sense, populist politicians claim that they represent the fears and hopes of the people. (Heywood, 2012, p. 291). Populism is a style of politics adopted by all kinds of politicians as it has a discourse that focuses on the 'people'. For this reason, the effects of Populism can be seen more clearly in terms of the actions of the people.

In this part of the study, rather than a detailed historical development and upsurge of Populism in Turkey, post-coup state narratives that show common elements with Populism are discussed. Since Populism is not considered as the main topic within the scope of this dissertation, the discourses that stand out in the evaluation of Twitter posts are interpreted in line with the fundamental aspects of Populism. These aspects are considered to be closely associated with the dominant Turkish state narrative that was born out of or reinforced subtly by the July 15, 2016 coup attempt.

#### **4.4.1.2 Findings and Interpretation**

##### **1. Democracy/ National Will / Unity & Solidarity and Populism**

I would like to start the evaluation with 'democracy', and related concepts such as 'national will', 'unity and solidarity', which are included in the prominent discourses coming forward after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. They are also seen in the seven key themes that emerged according to the analysis results presented in Chapter 3.

Democracy, a Latin origin word, is constituted by joining the words "demos", implying for people and "Kratos", for sovereignty. Democracy, in the most general terms, is the rule of the people by the people for the people (Held, 2006, s. 1). As the concept and definition of democracy have changed over the years, the types of democracy differ in terms of sovereignty. "The absolute supremacy of the will of the nation, the fact that sovereignty is vested fully and unconditionally in the Turkish Nation and that no individual or body empowered to exercise this sovereignty in the name of the nation shall deviate from the liberal democracy indicated in the Constitution and the legal system instituted according to its requirements". (Turkish Const. as amended on July 23, 1995; Act No. 4121). As stated in the Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, there is liberal democracy, also referred to as 'representative democracy' in Turkey that operates under the principles of liberalism. Turkey's democracy definition may not seem exactly overlapping with Populism. It is possible to say that the 'democracy discourse', which became evident after July 15, has populist elements and is nourished by these.

When the connection between Populism and democracy is examined, it is clearly seen that "democracy is an ideology and practice of popular participation, but at the same time it requires a complex system of decision-making that is often opaque, leading populist actors to experience deep dissatisfaction with representative institutions" (Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013). In the aftermath of July 15, which apparently contributed to the state narrative, a lot about democracy and related concepts are relevant to this relationship. Therefore, regardless of the

definition of democracy given in the Turkish Constitution and the functioning of democracy in Turkey, the concept of 'democracy' is analysed through a populist lens.

In order to examine the impact and meaning of the democracy discourse frequently used by the government institutions conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey, it may be meaningful to start by stating that 15 July became a government holiday called "Democracy and National Unity Day". In 2016, the concept of democracy began to be seen in the messages related to 'democracy watches' immediately after the coup attempt. It appeared as the focus of the rhetoric such as 'securing and protecting democracy', 'the victory of democracy', and the 'democracy of the people' in the posts made in 2016, 2017 and 2018. At the centre of all these concepts, the use of 'national will', whose importance is clearly stated in the definition of democracy in the Turkish constitution as well, draws attention. It is highlighted in many messages shared by the analysed accounts after July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016. Based on its conception, "national will," Twitter extensively used rhetoric accounts implementing digital diplomacy, especially by President Erdogan in the post-coup period. It can be contended that the national will has become a key element in the discourse of democracy, referring to its extensive use.

When these concepts are evaluated in terms of Populism, it can be said that the focus is on the power of the people, similar to the populist attitudes being more supportive of democracy. Likewise, we see that the increasing use of the national will is supported by discourses of national unity and solidarity with specific reference to the fight given by the people during the coup attempt and the heroism of people are indicated as a common trait that bound everyone in this 'fight' against terrorism. In this way, it can be concluded that people are identified as the guardian of 'democracy' and, positioned entirely at the centre of any matters regarding democracy, national will and unity, just like Populism requires. The state rhetoric uses the 'democracy' concept as a driving force for the people, underlining the importance of national will and unity.

## **2. Power and Populism**

Freedom House defines Populism as follows;

“At its core, it pits a mystically unified "nation" against corrupt "elites" and external enemies and claims for a charismatic leader the power to voice the will of the nation. It is therefore fundamentally illiberal, rejecting diversity of identity and of opinion within society and discarding basic principles of modern constitutional thinking: that democracy requires constraints on the will of the majority and checks on the decisions of the executive" (Freedom House, 2017).

Based on this definition, it can be said that one of the most important elements that Populism requires is a charismatic leader that will reflect the will of the majority of people. In Turkey, "Executive power and function shall be exercised and carried out by the President of the Republic in conformity with the Constitution and laws" (Turkish Const. as amended in 2017; Act No. 8). After the 2017 referendum, presidential powers were expanded. President Erdogan's influence on people and the content of the messages shared can be viewed as a strong indication of the increase in populist rhetoric considering the posts made as of the night of the coup attempt.

The new state discourses reflect a hinted proposition of a charismatic leader that is indispensable for the voice of the people's will. It could be described as a situation that resembles to 'us (people) against them (elites)' argument of Populism that corresponds to 'us (people) against terrorists (FETO)' case in Turkey. FETO, which is claimed to have emerged as a national and global threat, came to the fore, showing it as an enemy of the common people as a strong narrative in the posts shared by the institutions and accounts executing digital diplomacy activities the 2016 coup attempt. Including other discourses depicting the July 15 incident, it uses language highlighting the coup attempt in Turkey. It was claimed that this act was against the government with its institutions and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,

who was referred to as the 'guardian of democracy', and it was repulsed thanks to the 'heroic' resistance of the people. This takes us to a point where we come across the proposition of power as one nation creating a myth that draws its strength from its heroes.

### **3. Creating Myths and Heroes and Populism**

Another striking discourse arising from common themes obtained from the Twitter posts of many accounts of state institutions, including the President, is related to how the Turkish people, who successfully thwarted the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, were “making a history”. In the discourse of 'making a history', people standing against the coup are viewed as 'heroes' who left marks on the nation's past and future. As democracy and the national will of people have been stressed in Populism, we see a dedication of the victory of democracy to the 'heroes', especially by the President. He is also reflected as the man of the people by other digital diplomacy channels, including the government accounts analysed in this dissertation. This theme of the Turkish narrative depicted fallen citizens and the President as heroes. It focused on the glorification of martyrs and actions of the people by adding epic features to these actions claiming that it gave way to 'epic of the nation'. Digital diplomacy tools widely used this discourse in the post-coup attempt period.

Another very prominent metaphor in this discourse is the liberation war analogy, which can be recognised as populist rhetoric strengthened with religious sentiments as stated in the Twitter posts. The glorification of the people's defence of democracy formed a basis for the reference to the liberation war. President Erdoğan stated that “July 15 [coup attempt] is the second War of Independence for the Turkish nation. Let us know it like that. They [threatened] us with Sèvres in 1920 and persuaded us to [accept] Lausanne in 1923” (R. T. Erdoğan, personal communication, 29 September, 2016). According to President Erdoğan, July 15 has similarities with the conditions leading up to Turkey's War of Independence. The fact that the people fought against the 'terrorist group' to defend democracy on the night of July 15 by building an analogy to the Liberation War can be noted as a

kind of propaganda tool and a motivational discourse for the public to take any specific actions or to receive people's support when needed. The rhetoric based on the polarisation after the alleged war can be analysed within the framework of the "symbolic distinction between 'Us' versus 'Them'", seen with the July 15 case. There is an anti-group defined as the terrorists and also claimed to be found in the construction of populist discourse (Laclau 2005, as cited in Gidron and Bonikowski, 2013, p.10).

Along with this analogy, the emphasis on the beginning of a new era for Turkey in the messages given to domestic and foreign audience has become quite evident. According to Populism, the adversary and the enemy is aimed to be challenged (Ungureanu and Popartan, 2020). It can be claimed that the frame of the 'New Turkey discourse' became visible in terms of the impacts of the July 2016 coup attempt. There are particular concepts in this discourse: the defence of democracy, unity and solidarity of the people's support thanks to their heroic actions, and 'epicization' of the victory against the coup plotters.

It can be contended that the presence of a charismatic leader as one of the major features of the populist rhetoric has been reflected in the Turkish state narrative in the post-coup period, considering the critical themes of the analysis in Chapter 3, such as "Making an enemy of the coup plotters", "Glorification of those killed on the night of the coup attempt", "Hot messages against the coup\Democracy" and "Adopting the struggle by giving people tasks". In line with Ungureanu and Popartan's (2020) argument regarding the leader being the ultimate "unmasker", the praises to President Erdoğan and statements about the threats against democracy and its elected leader were made in the content of the posts shared by the analysed accounts. Even posts including Erdoğan's quotes were made in line with the definition mentioned above of a populist leader as follows; "Together with you, we will unmask in the entire world this terror group, which martyred 251 people on July 15 night" (Anadolu Agency, 2019). Based on such posts, it can be concluded that as the leader of the Turkish government, President Erdoğan adopts a responsibility of bringing the realities about FETO to lights by asserting how dangerous FETO is and how much damage they have caused for the people in Turkey. All the heroes, created on the

axis of praising and glorifying the people, martyrs and the President, constitute an alternative to both the war of liberation and any anti-group activities that had been experienced before.

In short, what Turkey's digital diplomacy after the July 15 coup presents its narrative on was mainly comprised of populist rhetoric. All government accounts practising digital diplomacy started sharing similar narratives regarding the failed coup and its impacts. It might be necessary to look closer at the theoretical and historical meaning of the concept of 'populism' and its upsurge in Turkish state discourse to draw a more in-depth and comprehensive framework concerning Populism.

The following section will interpret the posts shared during the same period covering July 15 – August 10, 2019, and 2020.

#### **4.5 Overall Evaluation of the Data Obtained from Five Twitter Accounts in 2019 and 2020**

When looked at the impact of emerging themes on the state discourses since July 2016, it can be seen that the virtual environment has created its unique setting for different dimensions of diplomatic communication to occur in Turkey. As the management of the implementation of diplomatic activities in Turkey on Twitter has been the focal point in this dissertation, it is clear that the necessity to look at the data of the two years following the three years selected for the analysis has arisen. The data for the qualitative study that required the framework analysis of the posts shared by the central government bodies implementing diplomacy in Turkey were collected covering 2016, 2017, and 2018.

Considering the need to examine key themes that come forward in the period from July 15 to August 10 2016, which I determined as the examination period for the dissertation, the outline of the study was drafted together with its scope and content. However, after completing the thematic framework analysis of the study, two more years have passed. The time that has been examined has revealed the need to discuss the posts made from the same accounts in 2019 and 2020. Therefore, in this part of the study, it is aimed to make a general interpretation of the posts made

during the same date range in 2019 and 2020 based on the seven critical themes taken as fundamental in the analysis and evaluation sections of this study. While making this evaluation, interpretations and comments will be shared regarding common points between the concept of Populism and the dominant discourses, which is also explained in the previous sections.

The following table indicates the data regarding the number of posts shared from five accounts of the state officials examined before by the bodies'. Drawing conclusions from the results of the current analysis, this table can be used to compare the new and old data to see if there is a pattern regarding the accounts that consistently have an active role in digital diplomacy.

**Table 28**

*The accounts with the number of the posts they made in 2019 and 2020*

Twitter Accounts in 2019-2020	Number of Posts	
	2019	2020
Yurtdisiturkler (BasbakanlıkKDK)	141	144
MevlutCavusoglu	108	136
MFA – Turkey	93	130
Communications (Byegmeng)	47	128
TRPresidency	44	49
Total Number	433	587

Considering primarily the numerical data and the post made, we can see that there is the same order of the analysed accounts in terms of the number of posts shared in both years. Even if this information is not meaningful alone in terms of the content of the posts, and accordingly, the themes forming dominant narratives in digital diplomacy can give ideas about the effectiveness of the state bodies that perform digital diplomacy. Considering the ranking made during the analysis of the

posts made in 2018, as indicated below, it can be seen that the ordering of the accounts according to the number of posts made from Twitter accounts in the same period is the same for the last three years.

#### 4.5.1 Yurtdisiturkler

When all data compared, it is evident that Yurtdisiturkler, once named BasbakanlıkKDK, has always had the highest number of posts among other accounts of government institutions that have been analysed except for in 2017.

**Table 29**

*Comparison of the number of posts and ranking of Yurtdisiturkler (BasbakanlıkKDK) according to the number of tweets over the years*

<i><b>Yurtdisiturkler (BasbakanlıkKDK)</b></i>	<b>Total Number of Tweets</b>
<b>2016</b> (BasbakanlıkKDK)	438 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
<b>2017</b> (BasbakanlıkKDK)	13 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2018</b> (Yurtdisiturkler)	120 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
<b>2019</b> (Yurtdisiturkler)	141 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
<b>2020</b> (Yurtdisiturkler)	144 (1 <sup>st</sup> )

As defined in their website, "Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), established on 6 April 2010, has the task to coordinate the activities for Turks living abroad, related (sister) communities and develop the services and activities carried out in these fields" (YTB, n.d.). From this point of view, it can be said that we see an expected result in terms of the role and responsibility of the institution, considering that it is the most active account performing digital diplomacy by communicating with the domestic public living abroad.

The evaluations in this section will be carried out by considering seven main themes and 48 sub-themes obtained as a result of the framework analysis in the previous chapter. From this point of view, the prominent themes coming forward in the posts made in both 2019 and 2020 by Yurtdisiturkler account can be seen as relevant to all seven themes even though the frequency of using the words has decreased over the years. In general, it can be said that themes such as national will, democracy, national unity and solidarity and martyrdom come to the fore.

#### 4.5.2 MevlutCavusoglu

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's account, which ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of the number of tweets shared for the last three years, is also the only personal account among the accounts examined in this dissertation.

**Table 30**

*Comparison of the number of posts and ranking of MevlutCavusoglu according to the number of tweets over the years*

<i>MevlutCavusoglu</i>	<b>Total Number of Tweets</b>
<b>2016</b>	388 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
<b>2017</b>	258 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
<b>2018</b>	113 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
<b>2019</b>	93 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
<b>2020</b>	136 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )

Given that Cavuşoglu shared 388 posts in 2017 when the coup attempt took place, it is relevant to say that the messages contained many key themes that can be distinguished from any other posts of the analysed accounts. In the posts made in 2019 and 2020 by this account, it is clearly understood that the expression of 'national unity and solidarity' is frequently used, even if it is not only related to July 15. This situation can be interpreted as the widespread use of the concept as an

element to state narrative considering the responsibility of Çavuşoğlu in the State's diplomacy. Put it more concretely, six of the ten posts shared by the account were directly shared on July 15th, in 2020 and the 'Democracy and National Unity Day' hashtag is frequently featured in those posts. At this point, it may be helpful to remind that references in that hashtag to the concepts and ideas that are seen as essential and used in the dominant discourses, such as the values of democracy and protecting national sovereignty.

It is clearly understood that the themes can be associated with the following: “the call to protect democracy made in the heat of the coup attempt”, “the recognition of the terrorist organisation FETO”, “adopting the struggle by giving people tasks”, “making an enemy of the coup plotters” and “the international call for help”. They were not included in the recent posts shared. However, this does not affect the widespread use of some expressions and statements: democracy, the unity and solidarity of the people, martyrs, heroism and victory of the people considering that the key themes contributed to the construction of the master state narratives and dominant policy discourses in digital diplomacy in Turkey that emerge after the coup in 2016.

#### 4.5.3 MFA-Turkey

The official account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA-Turkey), in the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank with 93 and 130 posts consecutively in 2019 and 2020, is also viewed as a vital player in digital diplomacy in international politics. It has been examined in terms of the keywords obtained as a result of the framework analysis.

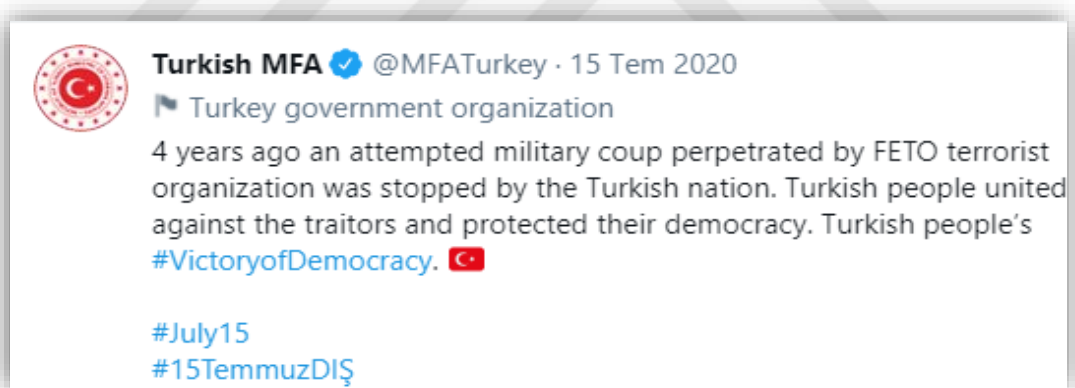
**Table 31**

*Comparison of the number of posts and ranking of MFA-Turkey according to the number of tweets over the years*

<i>MFA-Turkey</i>	<i>Total Number of Tweets</i>
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<b>2016</b>	60 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2017</b>	147 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2018</b>	84 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2019</b>	93 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
<b>2020</b>	130 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )

In general, there is no clear frequency of repetition of key themes in the posts. In other words, the key themes do not appear only in the context of July 15<sup>th</sup>. For example, the word 'coup', involved in many themes as sub-themes such as 1, 4, and 5, has been used four times in 2019 and 2020. However, it can be argued that the content of the post is quite interesting. Below is an example of one of the posts made on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July.



**Figure 79**

*A sample post shared by MFA-Turkey in July 2020*

In this example, an interesting discourse draws attention concerning the choice of words. More than nine words or phrases in a sentence of approximately 30 words are composed of the seven main themes and their sub-themes obtained from the framework analysis. Hence, the fact that the themes used are included in a post shared about July 15 can explain the existence of the dominant discourse

constituted and developed since the coup attempt. Thus, it can also be said that it gives us an idea about the main narrative still existing and shared by the most prominent government body communicating with other countries and practising diplomacy.

In this context, messages that support the state narrative can be claimed to emerge within the analysis framework. Even though they are small in number, regarding many themes such as the nation's victory, unity and solidarity, and the defence of democracy, they constitute a continuous use of 'specific language' mainly related to similar topics.

#### 4.5.4 Communications

Communications (once named Byegmeng), which the Prime Ministry administered in 2016 and 2017, is the 4<sup>th</sup> account with 47 and 128 tweets in 2019 and 2020. Interestingly, the numerical similarities of the posts made from both Communications and TRpresidency accounts draw attention in all of the five-year data analysed since 2016.

**Table 32**

*Comparison of the number of posts and ranking of Communications (Byegmeng) according to the number of tweets over the years*

<i>Communications (Byegmeng)</i>	<b>Total Number of Tweets</b>
<b>2016</b> ( <i>Communications</i> )	264 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
<b>2017</b> ( <i>Communications</i> )	244 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
<b>2018</b> ( <i>Byegmeng</i> )	72 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2019</b> ( <i>Byegmeng</i> )	47 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2020</b> ( <i>Byegmeng</i> )	128 (4 <sup>th</sup> )

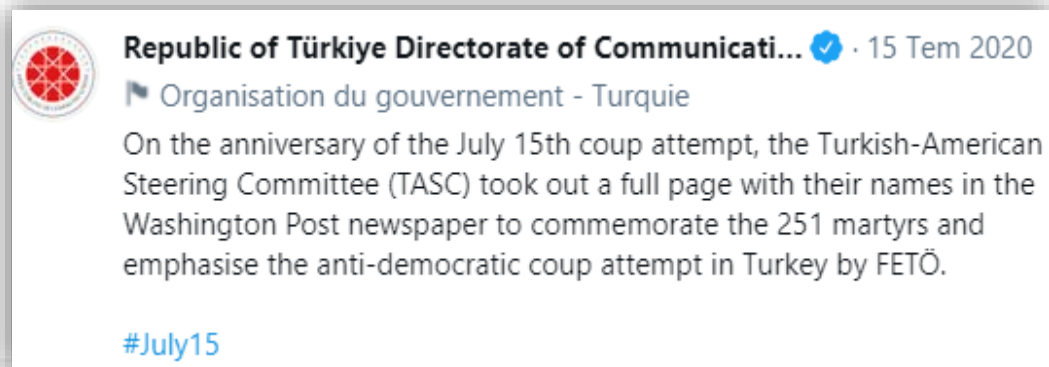
In fact, it is seen that the number of posts made in 2018, the last year in which the framework analysis was conducted, was the same as the TRPresidency's number of posts that corresponds to 72 tweets. Perhaps, this situation is closely related to the abolition of the prime minister's office and the fact that the account started to be managed by the Turkish Presidency. In that context, aside from the evaluations regarding the content of the posts made from this account, the numerical similarities mentioned above seem to be a natural consequence of the fact that these two official accounts belong to the top decision making bodies of the Turkish State. However, it may be necessary to make an in-depth analysis to understand if an autonomous decision-making process and mechanism exists for these two separate accounts while communicating with the international public considering digital diplomacy in Turkey. On the other hand, when the posts are examined in terms of key themes, it should be noted that there is no one-to-one overlap regarding the content of the tweets shared by both accounts.

In 2020, it is seen that the number of tweets shared from the account increased three times compared to the previous year. In parallel with this increase, it would not be wrong to say that the posts about 15 July and containing key themes have also increased. In this context, the highest number of tweets made in connection with July 15<sup>th</sup> among all the other accounts comes from this Communications. Another interesting feature is that in many posts from 2019 and 2020, the messages on themes such as the coup attempt, Memorial Day, martyrs, democracy, and FETO stand out. There are lots of posts that share information about commemoration activities in 2019. They reflect the Turkish State and the President's approach through the discourse developed after the coup.



**Figure 80** A sample post shared by Communications in July 2019

*Note: A typical type of post including some key themes and shared from the account in 2019*



**Figure 81**

*A sample post shared by Communications in July 2020*

Information-sharing regarding the July 15 coup attempt and the steps taken against the initiative can be interpreted as the effort of ‘epicization’ of the struggle of people. It can be claimed that we see this effort based on the repeated use of the "victory" theme in the posts.



**Figure 82**

*A sample post with the key theme 'victory' shared in July 2020*

This account made 128 posts between July 15 and August 10 in 2020.<sup>13</sup> Of the posts are related to the 'victory of the people'. From this point of view, it can be claimed that narratives pertaining to have achieved fighting with terrorists continued to be built by creating myths previously shared in the commentary parts of this dissertation. In that respect, it can be said that the similarities in the discourse still exist about the dominant themes coming forward in the state narrative.

#### 4.5.5 TRPresidency

In the ranking made according to the number of posts, TRPresidency appears as the last account in both 2019 and 2020. Overall, there has been a significant drop in the number of Twitter posts shared, as can be seen from the table below. Even if this data is not meaningful alone to interpret the messages given by the account, it can help to analyse the number of engagements to examine the effectiveness of the posts regarding digital diplomacy and the posts' content from a broader perspective.

**Table 33**

*Comparison of the number of posts and ranking of TRPresidency according to the number of tweets over the years*

<b>TRPresidency</b>	<b>Total Number of Tweets</b>
<b>2016</b>	218 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2017</b>	156 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
<b>2018</b>	72 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2019</b>	44 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>2020</b>	49 (5 <sup>th</sup> )

When analysed in terms of seven central and sub-themes obtained from the framework analysis conducted in 2016, 2017 and 2018, it is not easy to say that there is one single theme that stands out clearly in the posts made from the TRPresidency account. In the most general terms, approximately 15 posts shared in

2019 and 2020, including the expressions related to the themes such as 'coup', 'democracy', 'martyrs', 'homeland', 'epic', and 'unity'.

The 'nation' theme, which is the most repeated among the other ones, was used in 25 posts in total during the respective analysed times of both years. When the messages are examined, it is clearly seen that the people and their actions against the coup attempt are glorified, and it is intended to give a lofty meaning to the process experienced after the coup.



**Figure 83**

*Sample posts with the key themes shared on July 15, 2020*

Based on such messages with similar contents, it can be argued that it reveals the figurative meaning of July 15, considering the constructed state narratives polishing its epic features that can be considered a turning point in Turkish history as a liberation struggle.

Overall, considering the recurring or intensely used themes in all the posts, it can be concluded that some discourses come to the fore, just like seen in the evaluations made for the first three years. Unlike other years, when evaluated independently from the number of posts and frequency of the themes, the data shows that the dominant state narrations constituted during the post-coup period are still prevalent within the messages made on July 15. When we consider the language used in the posts through the lens of Populism, it can be inferred that the most prominent themes in 2019 and 2020 are "will of the nation", "heroism of the citizens", "unity among the people" and "the glorious victory of the nation" gained under the leadership of the President. According to the evaluations made in the previous part of the dissertation, the populist rhetoric of the Turkish State that has especially been clarified after the coup attempt can be characterised by three elements associated with the concepts as mentioned earlier based on the key themes.

As mentioned earlier, emphasis on democracy, nation will, nation holding power and attempts to create myths and heroes are related concepts associated with Populism. In the final analysis, it may be necessary to examine mainstreaming Populism in Turkish digital diplomacy with a more detailed and broad perspective and using different data. However, in the light of the data obtained, it is possible to say that Populism has been channelled into the field of diplomacy, especially pertaining to the issues related to the themes emerging in the post-coup period. When considered within the context of the post-coup variables and effects, the Turkish government's dominant appeal to its followers was transferred to the 'people struggling against FETO' and to "the ones who are the sole holder of power". In that context, in the light of the data gained and the analysis made, it can be argued that the content of the posts considering the dominant state narrative in Turkish digital diplomacy after the 2016 coup attempt, the effects of Populism are still seen.

## CONCLUSION

In this part, there will be a summary of the discussion, interpretation and conclusions based on the analyses and evaluations made in the previous parts of the study. The conclusions drawn from the literature on digital diplomacy and its conduct during crises have been brought together. Furthermore, the study presents the analyses made in the context of the posts made from five Twitter accounts exercising Turkish digital diplomacy, discussions made in the analysis section, and the evaluations made in the light of the data obtained. In that aspect, how the research questions have been answered and the aims have been fulfilled is explained here. Finally, this part concludes with the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

For a sovereign state, it is vital to represent itself in the international arena, establish relationships with other countries and benefit from the results of these relations. Hence, bodies and institutions representing their countries to communicate and negotiate with the others play essential roles in constructing and maintaining all these relations. From this point of view, we see that diplomacy emerges as a practice of communication and negotiation between representatives of various states. On the other hand, as we know it, diplomacy has changed in the context of its methods and tools with the advent of the Internet. With the changes in the implementation of modern diplomacy, the processes of adapting countries to these changes have also begun. Therefore, the new platforms created by digitalisation started to take their place among the tools of diplomacy. Digital media forms these platforms where government bodies share information concerning any diplomatic activities or related topics for their citizens. Based on the digitalisation of diplomacy, the social media tools used, and the increasing importance of these tools are of great importance in establishing the context of this dissertation.

In the most general sense, this dissertation aims to analyse the conduct of digital diplomacy in Turkey regarding the messages shared by government bodies in the post-coup era after July 15, 2016, via Twitter. For this purpose, it seeks to investigate the digital diplomacy practices in Turkey, paying close attention to evolving features of digital diplomacy identifying themes coming forward in the

posts shared by state institutions that perform diplomacy. As mentioned above, the Internet has become a powerful tool in the face of the crisis and dramatic changes in international relations. Therefore, Twitter as a widely used social media platform has impacted digital diplomacy practices to a great extent in terms of the ability of these platforms to offer opportunities to convey any type of messages to its users. Hence, in this study, considering the features mentioned above, it is seen as a noteworthy point in the research in understanding Turkey's digital diplomacy practices and the dominant discourses that emerged after the 2016 coup attempt, which created a significant crisis in Turkey. Overall, this conclusion section contains a review of all the hypotheses and conclusions for the research questions. Apart from that, this part will be concluded by the research limitations and suggestions for future research.

In this study, Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Framework Analysis has been used in order to analyse and interpret the data collated from five Twitter accounts regarding digital diplomacy practices from July 15 to August 10 in 2016, 2017, 2018. It is aimed to analyse the prominent narratives built by the official state institutions that conduct digital diplomacy in Turkey. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) claimed that the ultimate objective is describing and interpreting what is going on in a specific situation while conducting the Framework Analysis. Their methodological approach to go over and analyse a large dataset of tweets so that the most frequently used themes can be generated from the posts shared by five official Twitter accounts is the best one to contribute to realising the study's aims.

From this point of view, while conducting the analysis, I aim to find several conceptual themes emerging from messages shared in official Twitter accounts of government bodies contributing to the digital diplomacy conduct. I would like to point out that, in light of the above explanations at the beginning of this part concerning framework analysis as the research method, it is used in the course of the analysis. I think it has worked exceptionally well for this dissertation since it gave way to shed light on the meaning and messages delivered to the audience by revealing both visible and hidden narratives thanks to the grouping of the striking themes.

In general terms, this study aims to answer the research questions given below.

1. How and why the conduct of diplomacy has changed over the years, both in global and local context considering Turkey?
  - How has traditional diplomacy evolved into digital diplomacy?
  - What are the general patterns of change in diplomacy and the main features of digital diplomacy?
  - To what extent the changes in diplomacy have been involved in digital diplomacy practices in Turkey?
2. How did the Turkish state apparatus respond to the issues arising on the attempted coup night of July 15, 2016, through the messages on Twitter accounts of various state institutions, bodies and actors conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey comparing messages shared during 15 July – 10 August in 2016, 2017 and 2018?
  - Which theme(s) that become prominent in the Twitter posts have been given importance by the state officials in communication with the international and domestic publics? Why?
  - How has the Turkish state performed digital diplomacy to communicate its decisions and goals by executing its strategies on Twitter since the coup attempt?
  - What are the main implications of digital diplomacy based on the analysis of Twitter posts?
3. How has the Turkish state exercised digital diplomacy since the coup attempt with reference to newly emerging discourses?
  - How the implementation of the digital diplomacy tool affected Turkish digital diplomacy practices after the coup attempt?
  - How has Turkey's diplomatic communication formed after the coup attempt? Has it contributed to any specific movements or political ideas flourishing? How?

The following three goals have been used to answer the dissertation's research questions in line with their respective sub-questions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> aim that can be associated with the 1<sup>st</sup> research question and its sub-questions pursues to discover a range of changing diplomacy practices with a focus on the use of digital media. With that purpose, it is aimed to analyse how and why the digital transformation of diplomacy has taken place over the years. In line with this purpose, the implementation of digital diplomacy in Turkey is discussed based on the perception of diplomacy in a digitalised era. In this context, Twitter's role in diplomacy is evaluated in terms of countries' use of digital media, especially in times of crisis. Thus, eventually, to form a basis for digital diplomacy analyses in Turkey, the research contributes to the understanding of the historical development of digital diplomacy to provide an overview of how Turkish statecraft has been affected by the shift in digital diplomacy.

2<sup>nd</sup> aim of this dissertation is to understand how the Turkish state responded to the issues that arose on the night of July 15, 2016, via Twitter through their institutions that implement digital diplomacy. In the relevant part of the study, which primarily centres on the attempts by the state made during and after the crisis caused by the coup attempt and evaluating this process through digital diplomacy, the themes that stand out in communication are analysed thoroughly. For this purpose, the Framework Analysis has been conducted by examining five Twitter accounts to investigate how the Turkish government has practised digital diplomacy. These accounts belong to BasbakanlıkKDK (later named as Yurtdisiturkler as of 2018), MevlutCavusoglu, Byegmeng (later named as Communications as of 2018), MFATurkey, and TRPresidency. The posts shared by the previously - mentioned state institutions between July 15 and August 10, in 2016, 2017, and 2018 were collated. The posts made in this process, which was chosen as a turning point for examining digital diplomacy in Turkey, can be seen as an effort to understand how Turkey has communicated its decisions on Twitter using it as a digital diplomacy tool. In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the content and language of the posts have been analysed and presented in the analysis report to discover the recurring themes forming the state discourses. Apart from that,

related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> question, this study also aimed to bring out and interpret dominant state narratives based on the results of this analysis. Having carried out Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) five-step process for the Framework Analysis that includes “familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation”, finally, as the product of the last step of this process the framework analysis report was generated. As a result, based on the relevant research question, this report has been thoroughly examined in Chapter 3, and the themes coming forward in this report are mentioned separately for each Twitter account examined within the analysis.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> aim of the study is related to figuring out how the dominant discourses in digital diplomacy emerged in Turkey after July 15 coup attempt in the digital age. In Chapter 4, for the last research question, the themes obtained from the framework analysis revealed that they could be easily associated with Populism as a political strategy, and the findings have been interpreted considering that strategy and its overlapping features with the themes. In that regard, the study tries to explain how populism focuses on the discourses in order to understand how this newly formed or dominant political communication developed. As a result of the evaluation, the close relationship of many fundamental concepts common to populism and dominant themes such as democracy, national will, unity and solidarity, power, myth creation and heroism creation has been revealed.

### **Limitations of the Research**

With this study, it is aimed to contribute to the field of digital diplomacy in several aspects. First, it can be said that it tries to fill in the gap of case analysis by identifying and examining the dominant narratives in digital diplomacy in Turkey while communicating with the domestic and foreign public. Although there have been some empirical works with regard to digital diplomacy in Turkey, unfortunately, they seem to have remained generic, focusing on the importance of digital diplomacy for Turkey regardless of the emerging state discourses that would give way to the future of diplomacy.

However, as with any research, this research has its limitations. First of all, it must be underlined that digital practices of any country are restricted to the moment they share their messages. For this very reason, even though the focus of this study covers an extended period over three years, it is affected by this variable nature of digital diplomacy, which can be seen as one of the constraints of this research. In parallel with this, this dissertation is built on qualitative research methods due to the scope of the research in line with the research questions. Thus, the study is limited to the posts acquired from five Twitter accounts implementing digital diplomacy in Turkey, respectively, from 15 July to 10 August 2016, 2017 and 2018. While the analysis was vigorously conducted, the results are restricted to the data size. However, the choice of research universe has been determined not to be neither too broad nor too narrow. Thus, findings were aimed to be neither inadequate nor too abstract to interpret. As known, the results lose their validity as it gets smaller, and as it grows, the findings become more abstract.

For this reason, the study's findings are entirely restricted to the themes obtained as a result of the framework analysis made through the posts made from five Twitter accounts, and the evaluation and comments have been made taking the themes into account. Another issue might be seen as related to the period in which data from the five accounts are collected. It was inevitable to reduce the number of posts made to a specific time since the messages given in the post-coup period were to be examined in terms of the language and the dominant state discourses in digital diplomacy. Otherwise, it would not be possible to evaluate the data considering its current effects as it would not be manageable to analyse.

### **Future Research**

It can be said that the limitations of this dissertation are very much related to the areas that could be addressed in the future. As stated above, the scope of this research is limited to the posts obtained from five official Twitter accounts of Turkish government bodies conducting digital diplomacy in Turkey in 2016, 2017, and 2018 by highlighting the effect of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. Therefore, future research could investigate the same or different accounts on other social media platforms regarding how digital diplomacy is currently conducted. Due to

the rapidly changing nature of diplomacy practices through digital technologies, it may be helpful to examine other elements such as visual elements supporting the messages that complement the themes obtained for three consecutive years in this study. In this context, based on the variables of diplomacy over time, it can be looked at the visual or elements used in the realisation of diplomatic activities accompanying the themes put forward by the framework analysis focusing on the language used in the posts. Moreover, considering that there might be some changes regarding language use, the visual elements that reveal and support the state rhetoric emerging after the coup attempt in 2016 could also be examined.

Interaction between the public and the state may be another subject of study in digital diplomacy, which cannot be included in this dissertation since the universe of the study does not allow it. In digital diplomacy practices, whether there is communication with the public can matter a great deal to understand the state's approach to engaging the public. In addition to this, investigating the power and effects of digital diplomacy in creating international public opinion can provide substantial data regarding efficient factors affecting digital diplomacy in Turkey.

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