



T.C

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY: STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES' TWITTER
ACCOUNT ACCORDING TO DIALOGICAL COMMUNICATION IN 2014
LOCAL ELECTIONS**

Nazlı Çetin

**Submitted to the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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İNCELENMESİ**

NAZLI ÇETİN

Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Banu AKDENİZLİ UZTÜRK

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by

HAZLI GELİN

Approved by:

Doç. Dr. Binnur Akdenizli U. B. Akdenizli U.
(Supervisor)

Doç. Dr. A. Binnur Bıkkı B. Bıkkı

Doç. Dr. Derya Özcan D. Özcan

Date of Approval by the Administrative Council of the Institute 9/10/2014

INDEX.....	i
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
LIST OF CHARTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
ÖZET.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. INFORMATION SOCIETY AND NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES..	4
2.1. INFORMATION SOCIETY.....	4
2.1.1. LIBERAL APPROACH TO NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES...	5
2.1.1.1.HAROLD INNIS AND MARSHAL MCLUHAN.....	6
2.1.2. CRITICAL APPROACH TO NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES..	7
2.1.2.1. HERBERT MARCUSE.....	7
2.1.2.2. JURGEN HABERMAS.....	8
2.2. INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	9
2.2.1. HISTORY OF THE INTERNET.....	9
2.2.2. HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	10
2.2.3. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	11
2.2.3.1. TWITTER.....	12
2.2.3.2. INTERNET AND TWITTER USAGE IN TURKEY.....	13
3. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	15
3.1. COMMUNICATION AND ITS POSITION IN POLITICS.....	15
3.1.1. DEFINITION OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION.....	16
3.1.2. HISTORY OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION.....	18
3.1.3. METHODS, FUNCTIONS AND AGENTS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION.....	22
3.2. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	23
3.2.1. THE ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	26
3.2.2. THE DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	27
3.3. POLITICAL ECONOMY APPROACH TO THE RELATION OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	28
4. THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY AND DIALOGUE.....	31

4.1. THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY.....	31
4.1.1. DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY.....	31
4.2. DIALOGUE.....	33
4.2.1. DIALOGICAL COMMUNICATION.....	34
4.2.1.1. PRINCIPLE ONE: THE DIALOGIC LOOP.....	36
4.2.1.2. PRINCIPLE TWO: THE USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION.....	36
4.2.1.3. PRINCIPLE THREE: THE GENERATION OF RETURN VISITS.....	37
4.2.1.4. PRINCIPLE FOUR: THE INTUITIVENESS/EASE OF INTERFACE.....	38
4.2.1.5. PRINCIPLE FIVE: THE RULE OF CONVERSATION OF VISITORS.....	39
5. TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES' TWITTER USAGE.....	40
5.1. METHODOLOGY.....	40
5.1.1. JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY.....	40
5.1.2. REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY.....	41
5.1.3. NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY.....	41
5.1.4. PEACE AND DEMOCRACY PARTY.....	42
5.1.5. PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY.....	42
5.2. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY.....	43
5.2.1. LIMITATIONS.....	43
5.2.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE.....	44
5.2.3. CODING.....	44
5.2.3.1. DIALOGIC LOOP.....	44
5.2.3.2. USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION.....	45
5.2.3.3. GENERATION OF RETURN VISITS.....	46
5.2.3.4. RULE OF CONVERSATION OF VISITORS.....	47
5.3. FINDINGS.....	47
5.3.1. FINDINGS ABOUT TWITTER PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS.....	47
5.3.2. FINDINGS ON PRINCIPLE ONE: THE DIALOGIC LOOP.....	49
5.3.3. FINDINGS ON PRINCIPLE TWO: THE USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION.....	53
5.3.4. FINDINGS ON PRINCIPLE THREE: THE GENERATION OF RETURN VISITS.....	55

5.3.5. FINDINGS ON PRINCIPLE FIVE: THE RULE OF CONVERSATION OF VISITORS.....	58
6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	61
7. REFERENCES.....	66
8. CURRICULUM VITAE OF THE AUTHOR.....	71

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party

BDP: Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – Peace and Democracy Party

CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – Republican People’s Party

HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi – People’s Democratic Party

MHP: Milliyetçi Halk Partisi – Nationalist Movement Party

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 5.1. General Retweeted Posts.....	49
Chart 5.2. Number and Percentage of Retweets CHP.....	50
Chart 5.3. Number and Percentage of Retweets – HDP.....	51
Chart 5.4. Number and Percentage of Retweets – BDP.....	52
Chart 5.5. General Usefulness of Information.....	53
Chart 5.6. Usefullnes of Information – AKP.....	54
Chart 5.7. Usefullnes of Information - BDP.....	55
Chart 5.8. Variety of Issues - HDP.....	57
Chart 5.9. Variety of Issues - BDP.....	58
Chart 5.10. Link Usage – HDP.....	59

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1. Basic Profile Characteristic of the Political Party Accounts.....	48
Table 5.2. General Mention Posts.....	50
Table 5.3. Variety of Issues - AKP.....	56
Table 5.4. Picture / Video Sharing - MHP.....	56
Table 5.5. Link Usage - MHP.....	59

ABSTRACT

Along with the developments on new communication technologies, the ways of communication also changed. This study aims to reveal the role of new communication technologies, basically social media, within the concept of political communication. As the democratization effect of media is laid on internet nowadays, the study discusses the role of internet on the improvement of deliberative democracy within the concepts of political communication and social media. Theories about information society, social media, political communication, deliberative democracy and dialogue concepts are main constituents of this thesis and the relation between internet and the evolution of dialogue with the sovereign power are surveyed. Some research claims that social media renew monologue to dialogue in political communication and thus it democratizes the communication process. This thesis' aim is to recognize if social media really establish deliberative democracy and if it is possible in this new technology for the citizen to build a real dialogue with the sovereign power. For this specific purpose, the study analyzes Twitter usage practices of Turkish political parties with a content analysis of tweets according to dialogical communication principles framework. Analysis shows that political parties are weak in terms of dialogue and uses the social media as conventional media to spread their ideology.

Keywords: Information society, new communication technologies, social media, Twitter, political communication, democracy, dialogue, dialogical communication.

ÖZET

Yeni iletişim teknolojilerinde meydana gelen ilerlemelerle birlikte, iletişim şekilleri de değişti. Bu çalışma, yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin, temelde sosyal medyanın siyasal iletişim dahilinde rolünü ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Medyanın demokratikleştirici etkisinin günümüzde internete yüklenmesinden yola çıkarak, bu çalışma, siyasal iletişim ve sosyal medya bağlamında, katılımcı demokrasinin gelişiminde internetin rolünü tartışmaya açıyor. Enformasyon toplumu, sosyal medya, siyasal iletişim, katılımcı demokrasi ve diyalog olguları tezi oluşturan başlıca yapı taşlarıdır. Ayrıca internet ve egemen güç ile diyalog kurma ilişkisi araştırılmıştır. Bazı araştırmalar sosyal medyanın, siyasal iletişimde monoloğu diyaloga dönüştürdüğünü ve böylece iletişim sürecini demokratikleştirdiğini iddia etmektedir. Bu tezin amacı, sosyal medyanın gerçekten katılımcı demokrasi kurmaya yardımcı olup olmadığını ve bu yeni teknolojiyle birlikte yurttaşın egemen güç ile gerçek bir diyalog kurma olanağı bulup bulamadığını anlamaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu çalışma, Türk siyasi partilerinin Twitter kullanım pratiklerini, diyalogsal iletişim prensipleri çerçevesinde, tweetlerin içerik analizini yaparak inceliyor. Analiz sonuçları gösteriyor ki siyasi partiler diyalog açısından zayıflar ve sosyal medyayı geleneksel medya gibi ideolojilerini yaymak için kullanıyorlar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Enformasyon toplumu, yeni iletişim teknolojileri, sosyal medya, Twitter, siyasal iletişim, demokrasi, diyalog, diyalogsal iletişim

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the information society and its associated new communication technologies have witnessed the emergence of new social events. In the beginning of 2011, the world followed a series of social events in the Middle East that soon became known as the Arab Spring. The events aimed at democracy and the protection of human rights along with improved living conditions economically. Many argued that new social media tools—such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook – played an important role in communicating, coordinating and channelling the rising of these social movements, so in the end, they became known as Facebook/Twitter revolutions. As social media is presumed to play an important role in such a big and effective events, we are witnessing at the same time a growing interest worldwide concerning the role of new communication technologies and social media. Based on new findings about the political and social effects and consequences of the internet, the concept of online political communication is also being evaluated by academics.

New technologies that changed the society as information society, did also bring new kind of communication ways that would compete with traditional communication ways. Recent developments in technology have enabled user participation in content, which has changed the way we communicate and access information. In our century, information and being informed is vital for every individual. In the information society that we are in, information is the most important capital. Despite some limitations, within new communication technologies, social media, blogs and microblogging systems are the new and fastest ways of getting informed nowadays. Thus, people, especially the ones who are called “the digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), spend more time with these new communication technologies. Social media where people share their opinions and ongoing events are getting many contributions in a day. Especially the microblogging system Twitter is gaining a remarkable popularity among “netizens” (Hauben, 1992) in Turkey.

Along with these developments, academic interest in sociological and political effects of new technologies are also increasing. New media and democracy concepts are main constituents of these academic debates. As dominant and non-dominant expressions and identities are transformed in this new area, the democratization effect and function of the

internet is at center of the debates. One of the common thoughts of information society theorists in regards to the internet is this democratization effect and function of the medium. The democratization mission that was laid on mass media in 19th and 20th centuries, is laid on the internet nowadays. It is suggested that the increase of information quantity, wider probability of interaction, participation of people in the communication process, along with the technological potential of the internet will improve interest and participation in politics. In addition to that, it is suggested by some that new media is more dialogical compared to conventional media which operates in one way communication.

As new communication technologies and social media gained importance in the course of time, these technologies also took their place as political communication tools. The main efficacy of social media tools upon other communication instruments is that they have the opportunity to provide a mutual transmission process between the political parties and their public by enabling citizen participation through commenting (as exhibited through the reply function on Twitter), liking (such as the favorite application on Twitter) and sharing (such as the retweet action again on Twitter) the messages that are delivered by the political agents. Thus, Turkish political actors adapted their communications into this new technology. Especially after 2005, political parties began to use actively their official social media accounts. In this sense, this thesis will basically analyze the usage of social media tools by Turkish political parties for the purposes of political communication within the principles of dialogical communication.

The importance of this thesis lies in exploring the role of the internet on politics in general, but more specifically this thesis in exploring the furthering of civil rights development and the exercise of these rights on a specific social media platform, i.e. Twitter, contributes to the discussion of the internet and its often attributed impact on the function of democracies in general.

In this thesis, theories about information society, social media, political communication, deliberative democracy and dialogue concepts are surveyed and the relation between internet and the evolution of dialogue with the sovereign power is researched. Under the light of these concepts, the thesis aims to explore the role of social media within the practices of political communication and its role in establishing a dialogue. In this context,

the study considers the following questions: (1) In the concept of the internet, does social media really establish deliberative democracy and is it possible for the citizen to build a real dialogue with the sovereign power through this technology?; (2) If there is a dialogue, what are the contributions of the internet and social media specifically?; (3) Or are new communication technologies used primarily as a one way communication tool as it is usually the case with conventional media?; (4) Is social media another way for the ruling powers to spread their agenda and ideology and self-styled democracy.

The study, in accordance with its purpose, analyzes official Twitter accounts of Turkish political parties which are currently members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) and which participated in the March 2014 municipal elections. The accounts' salient characteristics are investigated and the tweets are coded according to dialogical communication principles of Kent and Taylor (2001). With a different point of view, considering the political parties as sovereign powers, the study aims to explore if there is a real dialogue in social media between the political parties and citizens within the concept of political communication. The results of this study will likely to be crucial information for sociologists, scholars in communication studies as well as existing politicians and candidates, formal and informal organizations.

2. INFORMATION SOCIETY AND NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

2.1. Information Society

The use of the concept “information society” had already become widespread by the beginning of the millennium and was not only in the social science vocabulary but also an everyday term. The term has been mostly debated in past decades. In the 80’s, Daniell Bell became the most important actor of information society debates. He replaced the term “post-industrial society” with “information society” in his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973). In his book, he defines a society in which knowledge-based services will be at the center of the new economic structure, information will be vital and where ideologies will be superfluous. With his words, information society is a society that organizes itself around knowledge in the interest of social control and the management of innovation and change (Bell, 1976). Computer and data-transmission systems, knowledge, intellectual technology, abstract theories, future orientation are basic features of information society according to Bell (1979).

When Frank Webster (2002) used the term “information society” instead of “post-industrial society”, he argued that Bell’s analysis on information society is the same as post-industrial society.

Webster (2002), differanciate “information” from “knowledge” and claims that: ...the concept is flawed as a description of the emergence of a new type of society. The criteria for distinguishing an information society are inconsistent and lack clarity, the use of the term ‘information’ is imprecise, and claims that increases in information lead to significant social changes are based on faulty logic and inadequate evidence” (p.57).

He also makes the distcintion between two points of view about information society. To some, information society is the beginning of a professionalised and caring society, with a highly educated public, ready to access to knowledge. “To others it represents a tightening of control over citizenry, and a deluge of trivia, sensationalism and propaganda” (Webster, 2004, p.57). Though, in sum, according to Webster, in light of develeppments such as

mobile phones and internet, it is not surprising that our age is being described by information, the most palpable feature of the time.

This new period of time is also been called as a “revolution”.

Timisi (2003) summarize the distinctive characteristics of this revolution as: Different from previous revolutions, in this revolution, new communication technologies are in the centre. This technological revolution, which embrace a wide scope like micro-operators, cabled tv, fibre-optical cables, satellite broadcasting, teletex, e-mail, video- conference, e- chat and internet, is a result of the developments in the areas of computer, telecommunication and micro-electronic” (p.62).

The term “information society” increases its importance in the 90’s, with the appearance and development of the World Wide Web and new information communication technologies. Within this era, the concept “information society” developed under the control of neo-liberal globalization and gained a more political and economical tone. Although, the term mostly reflects a friendly aspect such as bridging people, cultures and the “market”, there are also critics to the concept. Bell (1980) uses the two concepts ‘knowledge’ and ‘information’ separately, though he does not mention the difference between both concepts. He does not directly open the concept of information itself for discussion. According to him, the post-industrial society is a community which holds information and knowledge as basic strategical resources, and in the same way, the recent occurred society can also be named as information community. The problem of the usage of basic concepts without a deep discussion is available in all other dominant approaches. That is why, the problem starts here for critical approaches because in fact the information is not a knowledge.

2.1.1. The liberal approach to new communication technologies

According to the liberal approach, the innovations in transportation, industry and mass communication are the propulsive powers of social progress. Mass media is a tool for democratization in society. Ideas and their cultural yield at every level have the chance to

reach a wide citizen audience through technology. The liberal approach sees mass-communication as an inevitable feature for the ideal formation of democratic society. (Timisi,2005).

2.1.1.1. Harold Innis and Marshal McLuhan

Innis comes forward among the intellectuals who study the relation between communication technologies and modernism. In his study (2007) *Empire and Communication Vehicles*, Innis points out that apart from communication networks, which have important role about being carriers of information and knowledge, at the same time they have an effect on the shapes of social organization. According to Innis (2007), a communication medium has important effects on the spread of information in time and space, including the spread of the sovereignties. According to Innis, civilizations keep up providing control over time and space, when a new communication medium is discovered, the social balance change and the culture pass through several hands (Şener, 2006).

Marshall McLuhan a student of Innis, and who is also known as one of the most important scholars in the area of communication and technological determinism, claims that the civilization progress depends on the inventions of communication tools and assumes the history of humanity as a history of communication tools. McLuhan who divides the human history into three phases which are ‘oral culture’, ‘written culture’, ‘electronic culture’, puts forward that the tools, which are used by people in each culture, are an extension of the human body and that they create different perceptions. With his words ‘the medium is the message’, McLuhan defends that the technology through which the message is delivered is much more influential than the content of the message. A message creates different effects and perceptions according to its tool. Thus Societies are always shaped more by the nature of communication mediums which people use, more than the content of message.

As Marshall McLuhan states ‘the technologies are not only the inventions which people use, but also are mediums which re-invent people.’ (1962, p.28). A tool may change people’s mindsets and perceptions more than a message and it puts our perceptions into several forms. In his book written in 1967, *The Medium is The Message*, Marshall McLuhan defends that a medium is more influential on society and information, than

content and he puts forward that electronical communication mediums will turn the world into a 'global village' by generalizing the culture. Hereby, actually he defines the effects of globalization of communication technologies. 'The Global Village' which McLuhan put into words in 1967, is today the world we live in, in part to the internet, web and social media.

2.1.2. The critical approach to new communication technologies

The critical approach in the area of mass communication studies is developed against the liberal pluralist social theory. This approach offers general studies on the effects of new communication technologies on society, the political economy of communication and the sociology of communication. Critical approaches are mostly influenced by Marxism but differentiate in themselves (Yaylagül, 2010).

2.1.2.1. Herbert Marcuse

Marcuse, a member of the Frankfurt School which made the most important critics about the concept of information society, is a premise scholar because of his approaches in developing first Marxist theory in the subject of communication (Gurevitch, akt. Yaylagül, 2010). In his book *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse discusses the contemporary technology and how its results turn the individual into a one-dimensional one.

Societies seem as if free because of the so called independent choices, 'free' media and consumer preferences. In reality this freedom is in fact, aimed at shifting the attention away from people's manipulation and conformism in a society effectively managed, and serves to consolidate the manipulation and conformism of the ruling forces. Marcuse's severe description reveals a manipulated surveillance society (Kızılcelik, 2000).

Marcuse sees the technological basis of contemporary industrial society as the culprit for the loss of critical function within societies. According to him, these societies have a tendency to be totalitarian through the regulation of its technological basis. Totalitarianism, is not only a monotype which is based on political repression which removes the personal participation but also is an economical-technical monotype which functions by organizing the needs in the name of benefits of so-called of the public good (Timisi,2003).

2.1.2.2. Jürgen Habermas

Habermas, one of the last representative of the Frankfurt School, made the critics of communication technologies. Habermas suggested that information can not be envisaged and understood unilaterally and emphasized the function of ‘the technique’ and science as an ideology. In his book *Technique and Science*, Habermas sees Marcuse’s approach to science and technology in creating a repressed society as a *cul de sac*. For Habermas the problem is not in the type of information. The problem is the idea which is a monotype knowledge that aims to cover every dimension of life. According to Habermas, the act that create human history which is instrumental rationality is purely reckoner rationality and it shows itself most clearly in technology (Habermas, as cited in Yaylagül, 2010).

Habermas made a difference among ideas of progress through differentiating instrumental rationality from communicative rationality. He put the difference between the idea of progress in modern societies and the idea of progress of enlightenment. According to him instrumental rationality converted the public infrastructure of morality. The public is reshaped with the rise of electronic mass communication mediums and advertisement, meld of entertainment with being informed, increased centralization in every ambit. Especially, communication networks and commercialization of internet converted the media organization into a repression. Mass communication mediums are very powerful to some extent that they can create values that affect human behaviours. The ruling media fills the gap of disappearance of face-to-face relationships in public interaction. Habermas states that instrumental rationality, based on information, moved on living spaces beyond economy and state, and gained sovereignty in spite of its morality, politics, aesthetics and practical rationality (Timisi, 2003).

Instrumental rationality can also affect the market, art, religion and the morality. The instrumental rationality which uses technology, made the public accept its standard of judgements. It helps the system to re-produce itself, and today it is able to silence the voices which could go against itself (Timisi, 2003).

2.2. Internet and Social Media

This next chapter will discuss the use and effects of internet and social media throughout the world and Turkey, while giving detailed information about its tools and their successful influence. Social media tools such as Twitter are basic components of this work and therefore the relationship of political communication and social media within Turkish political parties cannot be understood without a detailed report on this technology and statistics about its broad usage.

2.2.1. History of the internet

Internet was born with the launch of ARPA-NET (Advanced Research Project-Agency Network) a project of the U.S.A Ministry of Defense. With a project which contained four computers, internet was launched in September 2 in 1969. With this project, the aim of scientists who connected three computers in California with the one in Utah, was to provide knowledge trading. In a short time, with the progress of this network, the quantity of computers connected to the network rose to fifteen. With the development of IP and HTML technologies, the network spread out globally.

Turkey has been connected to the internet since 1993. The first connection was set from METU. The connection at the Aegean University was established early 1994 with 64 kbyte/sec. speed. Then respectively, Bilkent University (October, 1995), Bosphorus University (November, 1995), and Istanbul Technical University (ITU) (February, 1996) established connections. In 1999, with the changes in commercial networks, the company TTNET began establish internet connections all over Turkey.

According to the Internet World Stats (2013) statistics;

~The number of computer users around the world is about 2.892.622.900 (I.W.S. Datum of 08.05.2014)

~The number of most computer users, with 642 million users, belongs to China.

~The U.S.A follows China with 267.748.000 users

~The number of computer users in Turkey is about 35.158.210 million.

~Turkey has 13% share among the number of internet users all around the world.

~In U.S.A, 84% of population use the internet, whereas in Turkey this percentage is at 47%.

Especially after 2004, web-based communication became a very popular tool around the world. Its scope became wider, facilitating social interactions, networking, broad communication and broadcasting. This new web-based technology transformed communication into an interactive dialogue among people. Those innovations have been referred to as a set of internet-based applications which have been built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan& Haenlein, 2010). Enabled by easily accessible and scalable communication techniques, such digital interaction has directly changed the communication methods of organizations, communities, and individuals (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011).

2.2.2. History of social media

The first social networking interaction can be said to have taken place in 1792 with the use of the telegraph to transmit and receive messages over long distances (Ritholtz, 2010). In the late 1800's, radio and telephone began to be used for social interaction among people (Rimskii, 2011, p.79). Between 1950 and 1970, the main social networking tools were telephones, telegraphs, and postal mail. The 20th century was an important era for the development of social interaction along with information technology. After the development of the internet, and after it went public, many social networking sites were created. In 2000's, social media gained a big popularity including many social networking sites. They facilitated the interaction of individuals and organizations who share common interests in art, education, politics, personal interests and friendship even more. LunarStorm, Six Degrees, Cyworld, Ryze, and Wikipedia were among the first ones to be laucnhed. In 2001, Fotolog, Sky Blog and Friendster were launched, and in 2003,

MySpace, LinkedIn, lastFM, tribe.net, Hi5 etc. In 2004, popular names like Facebook Harvard, Dogster and Mixi evolved. During 2005, big names like Yahoo! 360, YouTube, Cyword, and Black planet all emerged. In 2006, Facebook went corporate and Twitter was launched. In 2007 FriendFeed and Tumblr, in 2008 Apple Ping, in 2010 Google Buzz, and in 2011 Google + and Pinterest were born (Junco, Heibergert & Loken, 2011, p.119-132). People began using digital media for networking, socializing and gathering information.

2.2.3. The concept of social media and its influence on communication

As a term "social media" represents all the applications, services and mediums which provide the interaction of users using the network technologies (Boyd, 2008). The individuals' dialogues and shares on internet with each other constitute the social media.

According to Kristina Lernan (2008) social media sites have 4 characteristics in common;

1. Users can create content in various media types or can attribute to them.
2. Users can tag contents.
3. Users can evaluate the content by active voting or passive usage.
4. Users can create social media networks through defining mutual interests with other users.

According to Erdem R. Erkul (2009), an internet application or a website should have these feature to fit the definition above:

1. Users independent from publisher.
2. User generated content.
3. Interaction among users.
4. No restriction of time or space.

Although social media is changing the way people and organizations communicate, there might not be any two people who define social media the same way. Mark Dykeman (2008) says “Social media are the means for any person to: publish digital creative content; provide and obtain real-time feedback via online discussions, commentary and evaluations; and incorporate changes or corrections to the original content” (Dykeman, 2008, p.152). Results of research show that these new communications media have brought many changes to many aspects within the field (Marcese, 2007). Findings also suggest that the development of various new technologies has significantly empowered a wide variety of strategic publics by giving them a dynamic new media. Many are using it to communicate effectively with a variety of internal and external audiences. Larry Weber (2007) suggests that the communications world is dramatically moving in a digital direction and those who understand this transformation will communicate much more effectively than those who do not.

2.2.3.1. Twitter

Twitter is a tool in the digital world in which people can share instant events, comments and thoughts. The service quickly gained popularity worldwide after it was launched in 2006. Along with its social popularity, the academic researchs also increased after the social movements that Twitter was used. “Arab Spring” and “Gezi Parkı” movements are some of the most distinguished events that Twitter was part of. Twitter gained popularity among users by allowing them to be in touch politically and socially. Despite the discussion among scholars about Twitter being a public sphere or not and its democratization effect, studies about this social media tool are on the rise.

Twitter is an online social networking service and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". It was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and launched in July 2006. The social network system is known as the SMS of the internet because of its ability to send instant messages from computers and even mobile devices (D'Monte, 2009). Twitter has a simple interface and usage even for basic internet users. Twitter users, once they create their profiles, have the opportunity to send comments and messages through their personal profile page. Users may follow whoever they like, and they can communicate with their followers in an SMS

based structure while having 140-character limits for posting (Johnson, 2009). They can use “reply” “mention” “favorite” or “retweet” features while connecting to the other users. The users can see pictures, videos and GIF format files without leaving Twitter itself by clicking on individual tweets which contain links of supported websites including YouTube, Instagram and Flickr.

On March 21, 2012, Twitter celebrated its sixth birthday while also announcing that it has 140 million users and sees 340 million tweets per day. The number of users increased 40% from September 2011 numbers, which was estimated at 100 million at the time (Wasserman, 2012). According to the Alexa Web Traffic Analysis, Twitter is ranked as one of the ten-most-visited websites worldwide. In global trends, the social media tool has the 8th place within the traffic rank (Alexa, 2014). As of 2014, Twitter has 645 million active users.

2.2.3.2. Internet and Twitter usage in Turkey

Turkey is one of the countries which has the highest online usage rate. According to the Internet World Statistics, Turkey is among the top twenty countries with the highest number of internet users. The percentage of households with access to the internet was 65.5% in urban areas and 37.3% in rural areas. The region which has the highest rates of access to the internet in their households are Istanbul (62.1%) (TUIK, 2013).

The computer and internet use of individuals aged 16-74 are 58.7% and 57.4%, respectively. According to the results of ICT Usage Survey in Households and Individuals, the proportion of males that use computers and the internet are 60.2% and 59.3%, while these proportions are 39.8% and 38.7% for females, respectively in 16-74 age group. The proportion of computer and internet use are 59 % and 58 % in urban areas, and 29.5 % and 28.6 % in rural areas. These proportions were the highest in Istanbul with 72.2% and 70.9%. The highest proportion of computer and internet usage is to be found in the 16-24 age group. For all age groups, the proportion of computer and internet usage by males was higher than females (TUIK, 2013).

39.5% of all individuals aged 16-74 use the internet almost every day or at least once a week. This share is 88.5% in internet users aged 16-74. The proportion of regular internet

users is 92.6% in urban areas, 86.7% in rural areas and 96.1% in Istanbul. As for the purposes of use, 75.6% of internet users read or download online news, newspapers or news magazines for private use. This proportion is followed by participating in social groups (73.2 %), sending/receiving e-mails (66.8%), finding information about goods or services (61.3 %), and playing or downloading games, images, films or music (49.1 %) (TUIK, 2013).

As for the use of online technologies in political communication, during the twelve months of April 2011-March 2012, 45.1% of internet users interacted with public authorities over the internet for private purposes. This proportion was 38.9% for the period of April 2010-March 2011. Obtaining information from the websites of political and public agents is in the first rank with 42.9% being the main usage purpose of online political communication tools. In this sense, the use of internet for politically directed aims has increased throughout the country (TUIK, 2012).

Twitter has very actively increasing profile in Turkey. The social media tool occupies 9th place in Turkey's top visited sites (Alexa, 2014). Turkey is in the top 10 countries based on worldwide Twitter usage traffic (Gervai, 2014). It has been announced that Turkey ranked 8th place in the top countries in internet penetration for Twitter, which indicates the ratio of all Twitter users within the country over general internet users in Turkey (Alexa, 2014). The Twitter accounts of the five political parties that will be analyzed in this study are among the top 25 most followed Twitter accounts in Turkey (Alexa, 2013).

As the statistics given above show, Twitter is used by most people who have online access. Organizations which take into consideration the improvement on this field began to use this social media tool in many aspects of communication in many contexts. Moreover, since this tool provides effective one to one interaction, it is also used by the agents in political contexts nowadays.

3. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1. Communication and Its Position within Politics

As communication is a concept with a large spectrum, it is difficult to come up with a single definition which embraces all the aspects of it. As mentioned in Mutlu (2008), E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson scanned all the definitions of communication and found 126 different definitions of the concept in 1972. This number has continued to increase and Mutlu (2008) estimates the number of definitions to be nearly at 200. In general, communication is the interaction of attitude, opinion, and emotion which are expressed by a group of people who live in a community and inform each other about changes related with objects, events, actions, transfer information resourced by similar life styles in similar actions and problems (Oskay, 2011). Some of the basic examples of defining communication can be found in the seminal works of Shannon and Weaver (1949), Schramm (1954), Berelson and Steiner (1964), Gerbner (1966), and Barnlund (1970).

Shannon and Weaver (1949), defined communication as the process of sending and receiving messages or transferring information from one part (sender) to another (receiver). Wilbur Schramm (1954) also indicated that we should also examine the impact that a message has (both desired and undesired) on the target of the message. Berelson and Steiner (1964) regarded communication as “the trasmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc. by the use of symbols – words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc” (Berelson & Steiner, 1964, p.527). According to Gerbner (1966), communication is a social interaction through messages. Barnlund (1970) proposed a transactional model of communication. The basic premise of the transactional model of communication is that individuals are simultaneously engaging in the sending and receiving of messages. In a slightly more complex form a sender and a receiver are linked reciprocally. This attitude of communication focuses on how an individual communicates as the determining factor of the way the message will be interpreted. Constructionists believe that the process of communication is in itself the only messages that exist.

In general, there are two types of definitions; the first one sees communication as a process of transfusion between the sender and the receiver, the second one sees it as a meaning derived from mutual perceptions. In both cases, there are some things that must be

considered: the sender must be reliable and valid, the message must be definite, comprehensible and accurate, channel/medium must be convenient and be far from being misunderstood, receiver must be open to be aroused by upcoming messages (Oskay, 2011).

In sum, communication relates people, provides understanding and is the requisite condition of the existence of society. The organization, continuation and change (when needed) of society depends on the organization, continuation and change of the communication.

Based on this fact, we can discuss the position of communication within politics. What politics means has always been a vague question and difficult to answer. The meaning of politics was consistently debated and reshaped by different scholars. According to Kapani (1992), politics is a form of communication between people who belong to different social classes with different benefits and social demands. In this definition, the basic of the concept is suggested to be the conflict between clashing opinions and interests. While the effort of sharing values and scarce sources in a society causes this conflict, simplifying the distribution of these values can only occur through obtaining political power (Kapani, 1992, p. 92).

Van Dyke (1995) interprets politics as one's conviction among others regarding the challenges facing the general public, as well as implementing his/her ideas while obstructing other convictions to become realized.

Politics is primarily a social concept. It includes social units within its entity and becomes operational inside social environments. Politics cannot only be shaped by the survival of a wide range of people together; it can correctly function only when those people are connected and interacting with each other. In this sense, communication arises in politics as an important agent, in order to provide an association between people and political agents through message transactions. The relation of politics with communication is direct. The fact and process of politics constitute the fact and process of political communication (Aziz, 2003).

3.1.1. Definition of political communication

After determining the position of communication within politics, it is easier to outline what is meant by political communication. Although there are numerous attempts to define it; it is difficult to give a specific definition. According to Aziz (2003) it is difficult to define the concept because there are too many definitions made. In spite of all this complexity, the concept of political communication can be defined simply as using several communication techniques to impose political actor's ideology to specific group of people, to countries or to some blocks and to mobilize them when needed (Aziz, 2003). In the communication dictionary, the concept of political communication is defined as "academical interdisciplinary subject which consists of surveys on relations between political and communicative processes" (Mutlu, 1994, p.64). The definition provided by Denton and Woodward (1990) is "public discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes)". In their words "the crucial factor that makes communication 'political' is not the source of a message, but its content and purpose" (Denton and Woodward, 1990, p.120).

In general, a simple definition of political communication might be: all forms of communication between social actors on political matters. Academically, research focuses on the production and dissemination of political messages in the mass media and their impact on citizen audiences. In this sense, political communication involves three sets of actors – media institutions, political institutions and citizen publics – in a bounded political territory, usually in a liberal democracy (Negrine & Stanyer, 2007). David L. Swanson and Dan Nimmo (1990) define political communication as "the strategic use of communication to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and action on political matters" (p.3). Brian McNair (1995) provides a similar definition when he writes that political communication is "purposeful communication about politics" (p.5). For McNair this means that this not only covers verbal or written statements, but also visual representations such as dress, make-up, hairstyle or logo design. In other words, it also includes all those aspects that develop a "political identity" or "image". His definition of political communication incorporates: (1). All forms of communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives; (2) Communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnist; and (3) Communication about them and their activities, as

contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics (McNair, 1995).

In today's world, the political communication is more voter centered and degrades the candidate to a marketing product and the voter to a consumer. Based on that, the features and the control points of Asna (2012), which are valid for all communication process are also valid for political communication:

- Are the messages accepted by the receivers or not
- Are the receivers thinking same as the message or not
- Is the validity of the message approved or not
- Receiver features
- The ideas of receivers about the sender
- The validity of selected medium between message and receiver.

3.1.2. History of political communication

The scientific study and the practice of political communication emerged in the last 50 years. However its roots date back to Ancient Greece, in a manner of using communication techniques for political goals. Throughout history leaders frequently applied specific techniques to govern and gain support from the public, although they didn't name it as political communication (Aziz, 2011).

Applications of different communication techniques for political purposes occurred throughout history based on the social progress, population increase, socio-cultural changes and technological developments. In the 20th century, the concept of communication began to gain importance as a scientific feature as technology improved. Through technology, accessing information became easier, and consequently the use of technology for political purposes began to be emphasized (Aziz, 2011).

After the Second World War, the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes of the people needed to be re-identified, thus the relation of politics with communication emerged in a modern political science paradigm (Köker, 1998). The concept of political communication is a product of liberal democracy mentality. As mentioned before, political communication was born in USA after the Second World War and the first practices were performed also here (Topuz, 1991; Özkan, 2004). The development of political communication can be observed in three major stages:

The earliest *classical era* of political communications evolved in Western Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Citizens and politicians were connected directly through election canvassing, town hall meetings, printed handbills and posters, and local rallies and candidate hustings. These channels were supplemented by the publication of occasional political pamphlets, newsletters, periodicals, journals, and newspapers (Norris, 2010). Telegraphs connected distant reporters. Associated Press was established in the mid-19th century, provided international news feeds from worldwide locations. In early twentieth century, radio was used for leadership chats and first party radio political broadcasts (Denton & Woodward, 1998). Telephones revolutionized inter-personal communications and reduced the limits of distance. This era also saw technological advances in photography and cinema which brought out breaking developments around the World (Norris, 2010).

The *modern era* of political communications, following the end of World War II, was marked by a rapid growing interest in television broadcasting. This era saw TV party political broadcasts and commercial advertising. Inter-personal communications between the party workers and citizens played an important role along with mass-circulation of newspapers and magazines. By the mid-twentieth century, however, these resources were supplemented by growing expansion of satellite and cable transmissions and channels (Norris, 2010).

The *third age* of political communications is marked with the rise of the internet and digital technologies. Email services and networked computers had been available at the beginning of that era and have transformed political communications beyond all recognition.

The developments include a growing expansion of interpersonal and organizational email and text messaging, search engines, the blogosphere, and the wealth of websites maintained by candidates, parties and government agencies. Newspapers, radio and television are in the adapting to the digital landscape and taking advantage of it. Online newspapers, video news and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter became available 24/7 (Norris, 2010).

The first radio broadcasting in Turkey aired in 1927 and this mass communication medium took the cultural and political communication mission (Çankaya, 1996). Before and after the period of multi-party government, radio had been an important political propaganda instrument of the political parties in power (Aziz, 2007). This new information medium which was used for the commercial programmes such as news, entertainment and marketing, affected every single part of social life. Nearly 30 years later, the first television broadcasting in Turkey occurred on 9 July 1952 by İTÜ. TRT started to broadcast on the 31st of January of 1968. Radio and television broadcasting were under the monopoly of TRT for a long time. In 1993, private televisions started to broadcast (Birsen, 2005). Political communication studies which is synergic with national media started too late in Turkey when compared to Europe. Until the multi-party government era, political campaigns were managed directly or indirectly by politicians. During the multi-party government era, political communication gained a growing professional soul with political communication actors like advertisement agencies and research companies becoming active integrals in the process (Bostancı, 1995).

The use of conventional media started after Second World War and its effect still continues. But since the end of 20th century and beginning of 21st century, transformation and development in information and communication technology did not cease traditional media, it started an age of internet technology as a powerful rival. Today, along with the developments in communication, media and technology, political communication is more interactive, more comprehensive and executed more professionally. Foster (2011) summarizes the basic features of contemporary political communication in the following way:

- The strategic dimension

Modern political communication has a strong strategic point. It is generally executed by campaign teams and is strategically built around the characteristics of individual party leaders (Foster, 2011).

- Professionalisation

Large teams of professional advisors work for political parties in modern communication. Their performance is felt throughout the campaign, especially in political advertising and media management (Foster, 2011).

- The long campaign

Modern communication campaigns start some time in advance of the political case finish some time after of the case. This is important to set a favourable media agenda (Foster, 2011).

- Opinion research and marketing

Modern communication exploit modern marketing techniques. These are aimed to make target voters associate a party with certain qualities and set a specific opinion in minds of citizen (Foster, 2011).

- National advertising

The advertisements are carefully presented to reinforce the central campaign messages. Adverts do not advocate policies but create image based simple slogans (Foster, 2011).

- Mediated communications

Modern political communication is highly engaged with the media, especially television. The communication practionners aimed at setting the media agenda carefully, according to the needs and goals of the political party (Foster, 2011).

Methods, functions and agents of political communication

Political communication emerges as a tool which creates one way or two sided relations between political entities and their target. It diffuses by advertising, propaganda and public relations techniques, while providing assistance to political entities which aims to obtain power, in order to gain support and trust across the society (Uslu, 1996). It gives the political agents the opportunity to influence the citizen, change his/her agenda and even change the voting behaviours (Oktay, 1993). This framework seems mostly one sided when the methods of advertising, propaganda and public relations are executed in a one way communication. Along with the development in technology, these methods are applied in new media tools as well and are seen to have the opportunity to change the way of the communication.

As for the functions of political communication, according to Uslu (1996), there exist seven main factors which serve the realization of successful message creation and effective persuasion. Those key issues are;

- the delivery of political messages,
- improvement of message effectiveness and subsistence,
- measurement of public expectations in the socio-political agenda,
- facilitation of feedback channels through the media,
- effectiveness of opinion leaders within society,
- enhancement of agenda setting abilities for political agents,
- taking an advantageous position against rival entities.

Those functions must be created and executed effectively in order to obtain correct understanding and desired perceptions in the public without losing their meaning (Uslu, 1996).

As for its agents, political communication exists between people and organizations who share the same socio-political environment. Political communication encompasses information related to the political statements between political agents and public through media tools. There exist three types of agents within the political communication framework. The agents of political communication are similar to the agents of communication: sender, medium, and receiver (Aziz, 2002).

According to this, political entities, as the sources, are senders who create and deliver the messages. As the second agent, the media are the medium who take the messages from politicians and deliver them to the public through different communication channels. And finally the public is the receiver who is reacting to the output of the political agents (Wolton, 1991). However, in present democratic political systems under the circumstances of today's technology, the official political parties or conventional media are not considered to be the only agents of political communication. Today, every citizen or group of people who plunge themselves into the process of political communication are considered significant political agents. In this sense, local governments, public opinion leaders, non-governmental organizations, public interest associations are members of the political communication agents. They do not only receive messages, but also create and spread them. In this manner they also become a part of both communication and persuasion paradigms (McNair, 1995).

With the technological and related sociological developments, the characteristics of the agents also change. In the beginning of 2011, the world witnessed a series of sociological events that soon came to be related to new communication technologies, mainly social media. In these specific incidents, the receiver turned into the sender and he/she used as a medium the resources of new social media not the conventional media. Soon, citizen journalists revealed themselves and became an important agent of the communication. They played an "active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information" (Bowman, 2003, p.18). Thus, as the agents changed, the communication process improved. In the last decade, the effect of new communication technologies, especially of social media is regarded as instrumental for this change and improvement.

3.2. Political Communication and Social Media

Political communication, just like other communication branches, prefers using the best mediums to impact its target audience. In a society where globalization occurs and which uses the new media channels, political communication also put an emphasis on social media without separating itself from traditional media.

Social media gives the citizen the opportunity to participate and share their ideas, so this feature makes it preferable for the political parties and the citizen. Moreover, it is a user based sphere where people come together and spend time, which increases the interaction among them. Social media use is particularly common among youngsters and seems to be an important rival to today's traditional media.

One of the most latest surveys that analyzes how social media was used in the area of Public Relations, was made by Wright and Hilson (2010). 1126 people (agencies, companies, education institutes, civil organizations, government and sanitary services) participated from all around the world in this survey. The survey was first made in 2009 and then was repeated in 2010 and 2013. According to the results, especially certain blogs, micro-blogs (Twitter) and social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn etc.) and organizations changed considerably the form of communication between employees, clients, shareholders, gatherings, government and other stakeholders. In 2009 the search engines were thought to be the year's most important medium, while in 2010, Facebook took their place. Twitter became the second public relations medium used commonly. In the survey, the mediums which created most difference in the angle of Public Relations in two years, were social media sites like Twitter, YouTube. One of the most important results is that participants do not use the social media in the activity of public relations with the same importance they attribute. Another result is that as a resource of news, public relations experts still use traditional media as a main resource. In the survey re-searched in 2013, it is seen that the percentage of using Twitter, Facebook and Youtube as a main source of information rose up meaningfully from 2010 to 2013.

When it comes to political communication, there exists a common belief that new media tools with the potential of social media are considerably effective on public participation along with government relations with citizen. There also exist several theoretical frameworks written about the political communication including the notions such as Democracy 2.0 and Government 2.0 (Bryer and Zavattaro, 2011). In this sense, just like other organizations, political entities also began to follow the subject of online political communications with the use of Web 2.0 tools (Bryer and Zavattaro, 2011).

Social media is regarded as web 2.0's most important agent. First of all, social media provides an environment where political entities can interact with their target audience easily. Secondly, this interaction is presumed to push the political agents to be more open and transparent to their public which will lead to more democratic relations. Thirdly, with social media the campaign processes will require smaller budgets when compared to the budget needed for traditional media. Another effectiveness of social media for political communication is that political parties can share videos and pictures of their leaders' speeches through online channels and reach and meet their targeted audience even they don't go to their meetings (Devran, 2011).

As political campaigns eventuate in a short period of time, political parties and their candidates are obligated to reach their target audience in an express manner. That is why, the most important factors in online campaigns are; design the messages in several courses and let the electorates respond with instant posts. Each candidate aims at making a difference compared to his/her competitor in the elections. When we consider that the continuous repetition of the messages has a big impact on target, a candidate who crosses the electorate's path regularly through new communication technologies can be still fresh in their mind and thus benefit from the advantages new media have to offer.

In terms of social media, the most effective online campaigns were performed in the USA, starting with the 1992 Clinton campaign. By the time of the 2000 presidential election, candidate websites had become a common campaign tool. The, 2000 US presidential election campaign came to be known as the "first internet election" campaign (Foot & Schneider, 2006). In 2004, political candidates moved beyond perceiving the web as an electronic brochure to viewing it as "electronic headquarters" (Foot & Schneider, 2006). In 2008, the Obama campaign used new tools such as social network and microblogging sites to mobilize and organize supporters (Hendricks & Denton, 2010). Today no candidate or party can enter an election cycle without having an online presence, and "there is little doubt that the effects of internet and internet tools on political campaigns at all levels will grow exponentially" (Trent & Friedenber, 2007, p. 408)

3.2.1. The advantages of social media

Joe Marcese (2007) suggests the difference between traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio-television and social media “is not the media itself, but the system of discovery, distribution, consumption and conversation surrounding the media” (Wright & Hinson, 2010, p.1). Some of the basic advantages social media can be summarized in the following way:

(1) *Measurement*: Internet based web sites have a feature of collecting deep information about users. Especillay, Google Analytics, Alexa and YouTube insight are sites to get various analytical data. Information about different measures are being collected which are about how many people visited the websites, which pages people looked at, what other subjects people searched for related his/her actual search in the search engine, from which resource he/she moved on etc. This information can be employed to political party's advantage as a campaign strategy.

(2) *Database*: One another important advantage which internet based sites provide to political campaigns is databases which are generated from them. As these databases contain the user's personal and sociological informations, at the same time they make possible to reach these users much more easily.

(3) *Low cost*: Once the main costs of preparatory stages of internet based sites are underway, the next process requires much lower costs compared to advertisement in conventional media. The production of visual, written, auditory messages through these sites does not cost much either. There is no cost to create an account on sites such Facebook, and Twitter. The cost of social media is the actually more about the ‘time’ a campaign spends online.

(4) *Two-way communication*: One of the desirable situations for political parties and candidates is the preoccupation to respond instantly to voters' questions and their comments. When voters reach the campaign team and when the campaign team respond to them, it is likely more probable the candidate to be successful compared to their rivals. Both message publishers and receivers have the possibility to receive fast feedback.

(5) *Fast Diffusion*: Messages can reach a wide population of users in a very short time. Of course, the contribution of users is important. The messaging and posting tools of social

media also increase the speed of communication while enabling fast updates in every context.

(6) *Access*: In social media, access is limited by the member users but this provides an opportunity to reach a specific target group for communication practitioners.

(7) *Usability*: Traditional production mostly made by professionals needs a certain education. It is not necessarily valid for most of social media. It is easy to use and can be learned easily.

(8) *Renewability*: Traditional media outputs can not be changed once they are created (for example, an article in a magazine or newspaper can not be changed after it's published and distributed). But on social media, the comments and contents can be changed instantly with re-editing so a vital mistake can be repaired.

3.2.2. The disadvantages of social media

Although there are various advantages of social media, there are also some disadvantages and criticisms about it. First of all, as mentioned before, updating social media accounts takes time and effort. A non-updated account is worthless in the sense of political communication. The cost in time means the social media is not completely free.

A senior person equipped with the knowledge about the political party and the candidate should handle the social media account but it is a continuous work to post and re-post information, video and visuals. Also, even it is easy to edit, one should be very careful about the content. Harmful or undesired improper content can be seen by hundreds of people in a very short time. The fast diffusion feature of social media is a disadvantage also, considering that the undesired content may be stipulated by the users.

Another disadvantage is that the information is only visible for a short time before newer posts replace it. The political entities can not learn if that specific post reached the targeted audience or not.

Also, posting obvious advertising copy is unacceptable in the social media world, therefore communication practitioners must present the information in the form of a conversation.

As social media afford users an opportunity to have two way communication, the public has an anticipation of feedback from the organizations. If the organization does not use this feature for its advantage and does not communicate with the target, they will leave a bad impression on the target audience.

The main critics about new media tools are about accessibility and surveillance. The target of social media is limited compared to mass media tools. Even though there is a growing interest on social media, TV and radio still have a larger audience.

Along with the developments in technology, a surveillance society has also emerged. The database and measurement advantages of the social media are in fact disadvantages as well. People can be tracked and followed by governments. So here, there are questions about trust, accountability, transparency, mobility, freedoms, community and social justice.

3.3. Political Economy Approach to the Relation of Political Communication and Social Media

In a narrow sense, political economy is a study of power relations which involve the production, distribution and consumption sources of communication established or configured mutually. Another common definition of political economy comes forward as a work of a competition of "control" and "survival" in common life. In this definition, "control" in private meaning touches to people's civil organizations and process of adaptation to changes. "Survival" is about how people produce their needs for social reproduction continuity. Control process is mostly political because of configuring social organization of relations in a community. Survival process is basically economical because of being related with the process of production and re-production (Mosco, 1998).

Vincent Mosco (1998) explains three basic processes of the political economy:

1. *Commodification*, used for value change.
2. *Being spatial*, formal change of time and space or change of process of corporational diffusion.
3. *Constructiveness*, process of constructions established by social actor/group.

In political economy, the concept of class is a corner stone to understand social life. Political economy tends to work to understand class separations, on state and super - constructive powers, the sovereign capital, which owns new communication technologies and the use of political communication. It emphasizes, as an actional point of economic-political social analysis, the process of commodification and the power of capital which dispose of new media. According to political economy moving from social class and labor is against the market which re-produces power of class privileges. Instead, it takes into center of its work the "society" and "public life" (Mosco, 1998).

The political economy approach criticizes the global capitalist system within the context of the relations of new media and politics. The global capitalist system guarantees on one hand the maximization of profits in an socio-economic environment where the system's ideological and political control via employing techniques might be presented to consumers as a 'necessity' and on the other hand it also enables the possibility to craft the relationships of individuals with commodities in a theatrical setting seem naturalized. The multi-national firms acting as a sine quo non of such stage not only control the release of new technologies as it suits their interests but also make this stage-craft as a generalized strategy in parallel with the "requirements of a free market system." Thus, many parts of the production is outsourced to local peripheries to reduce the costs of production to minimum while no concessions are made in crafting of the core elements of strategic importance in core domains, especially in the realm of new IT technologies; because such a transfer of know-how would jeopardize the technological autonomy and the determining dominance of the global capitalism (Soyak, 1996, p. 148).

At this point, the political economy approach criticizes the trends of intensifications and monopolizations in domains of new IT technologies. Thus the liberating effects or democratic aspects of mass communication are possible to the extent that relations of consumption might be established, and this becoming even difficult because of the ever-sophistication of such technologies compared to average man in the market-place. As a result the "liberated" people are only those who hold the economic means. And this peculiarity itself causes a new type of social stratification. Added to all this, in this historical unfolding, it is legitimately debatable whether the supposed free citizens are authentically free and to what degree. (Ergur, 1998: 58). In line with their bases of the

understandings, their fundamental point of objection, is the antidemocratic and unequal nature of the new media.

4. THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY AND DIALOGUE

4.1. The Concept of Democracy

The word democracy was formed with the words “demos” (people) and “kratos” (power). Democracy, essentially and superficially defined as the rule by people for people. It has been the object of discussion, contention and debates in all ages throughout its history of two millenia and always on top of social agendas. The city-states have been managed with democratic regimes in classical era where in the feudal times it ceased to exist. The rediscovery or invention of democracy and it is being brought to top of the social agenda to be discussed and being perceived as social and political fact was in the Era of Enlightenment.

4.1.1. Deliberative democracy

Deliberative democracy, is a system that tries to evolve democracy in recent years and it has showed up as an alternative to representative democracy which is founded on the principle of elective officials representing the public. The development of communication technology is said to have increased the transition needs from representative democracy to deliberative democracy. After representative democracy loses its ability to represent, deliberative democracy system has emerged. Deliberative democracy, doesnt only allow citizens to contribute indirectly by selecting their own representatives, it is the system that lets citizens participate in the political system via civil society organizations (associations, foundations, platforms, academia etc.) (Schmidt, 2002).

Deliberative democracy reveals an individual- based democratic society model. The goal of deliberative democracy is to highlight the individuals’ differences and let the individual strengthen and liberalize against the system. The most important element within deliberative democracy is that of the civil society organization. These organizations are indispensable for deliberative democracies. For the deliberative democracy to settle as a new political and social model depends on some preconditions in the existing society. The two things that underly deliberative democracy are the rights to determine together, the public and the government, and the right to participate in the decision making process. The

citizens have the power and the decision rights in regards to their own cities, neighborhoods, taxes and public budgets.

In the 1960s, Masuda emphasized that the socio-economic system is going to become a voluntary civil society that will be characterized by public capital, human capital, synergy and social utility (Masuda, 1980, p. 623). This multi centered society based on voluntariness will have a functional social order organized horizontally not vertically. The political system will turn into a "participatory democracy". This synergic society is based on the common goals created by the whole society and the coordinative and voluntary actions of individuals and groups. Information society's spirit will be based on the harmony of human and nature, strict self discipline and social participation (Masuda, 1980, p. 620-634). The information society will be functional around information values instead of property values. Cognitive creativity will be much more important than material consumption. Masuda uses the concept *computopia* for information society. At computopia, everyone has their own rights to meet their needs and to perform their own future. Computopia will be global, because there will be communities participating from all over the world. All the ideas and goals will be shared voluntarily. For Masuda computopia is twenty first centuries' new long-term vision. And it is based on these notions (Masuda, 1980: 625-629):

- (a) To capture and realize the value of time
- (b) Decision-making freedom and equality of opportunity
- (c) The development of various voluntary societies
- (d) Interconnected synergistic societies

One more feature that makes deliberative democracy very important is the transformation that it makes on politic culture. By this change, the people outside of the active group can let their voices be heard. In other words, dialogue plays a major role in participatory democracy.

4.2. Dialogue

One of the earliest studies mentioning a public relations strategy based on dialogue belongs to Ron Pearson. Pearson based the ethics of public relations on the philosophy of dialogue of Habermas. Habermas underlined the ethical obligation to enter into a dialogue and the vital function of the dialogue in a public sphere in order to reach the truth through discussion (Bowen and Rawlins, 2005:207). Habermas (as quoted in Corson, 1996) listed the conditions which are necessary for communication based on dialogue as;

“All the attendants must have the same right to choose and practice their styles of speech, to begin and continue their speech, to enhance and improve their perspectives, to question the opinions, to suggest supportive and/or corruptive reasons. All the attendants must accept that a pressure produced accidentally or systematically is not present on the discussion, that they have the same right to explain their feelings, approaches and intentions” (p.156).

Pearson (as mentioned in Kent & Taylor, 2002, p.21), in his doctoral dissertation, made a reference to dialogue as follows: “It is morally right to establish and maintain a relationship with all the public affected by organizational actions, and it is wrong not to do so.” In addition to Habermas’ dialogue theory, Pearson suggest that establishing and maintaining relationships with the public is a moral obligation and claims that these relationships need to be improved by gradually basing them on dialogue (Bowen, 2005). He also focuses on the importance of dialogue in ethical performance of public relations. Pearson’s most important contribution to the theory of dialogue is pointing out that the organization could turn into monologue, ‘the organization knows the best’ or ‘deceptive/cheater’ model approaches. This approach back up Grunig’s idea that ‘real public relations cannot be established without reaching the open organizational, two-way symmetrical communication and the level of adaptations of change.’ Pearson’s model contributes to behavioral approach of public relations by establishing a direct connection with social responsibility and highlighting the creation of public policies that enable the organization to be in moral harmony with the social environment of which it is a part (Sharpe 2000, p.348).

Another scholar who also contributed to the studies on dialogue is Paul Freire. The theory of pedagogy of Freire (1982) basically focuses on a dialogue that everybody has the same right to speak, everybody speaks for themselves, and nobody's right of speech is transgressed. Freire mentions the importance of the dialogue process for freedom. When speech is converted into practice in dialogue, the "other" also becomes a subject during dialogue. This dialogue process contributes the interpretation of factuality to be clearly stated. Another important fact that was emphasized by Freire is "dominance". During dialogue, nobody imposes any opinion on someone, nobody predominates over someone. Freire says that being exposed to a monologue is being oppressed.

4.2.1. Dialogical communication

A decade ago, to describe a theoretical framework, Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002) provided some basic principles of dialogic relationships with publics through the World Wide Web. They suggest that what exactly is meant by dialogue is unclear and the concept needs to be analyzed within two-way symmetrical public relations in order to fully understand "the implicit and explicit assumptions of dialogic communication" (Kent and Taylor, 2001, p.23).

Based on philosophy and relational communication theory, Kent and Taylor extended dialogic theory to fully understand its means to guide practitioners and scholars to establish effective dialogical public relations. In order to do that, Kent and Taylor (2002) developed five features that encompass the implicit and explicit assumptions that underlie the concept of dialogue: mutuality, or the recognition of organization–public relationships; propinquity, or the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics; empathy, or the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests; risk, or the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and commitment, or the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in its interactions with publics (McAllistair, 2008, p. 3).

When developing these features, Kent and Taylor (2002) drive attention to the dialogue's ethical and unethical usage. They claim that if an organization get a dialogical communication with its audience, it doesn't mean that the dialogue is ethical nor is it even appropriate in some circumstances. Depending on the intention of the organization the

dialogue may be moral or immoral. Kent and Taylor claim that “if one partner subverts the dialogic process through manipulation, disconfirmation, or exclusion, then the end result will not be dialogic” (Kent and Taylor, 2002, p. 24). In such cases, it is more likely to name this communication as “strategic communication.” The scholars also suggest that as dialogue involves “trust,” “risk” and “vulnerability,” the concerned parties can be manipulated and deceived by organizations or publics. This approach also supports Pearson’s ‘the organization knows the best’ and ‘deceptive/cheater’ models. Here, Kent and Taylor’s (1998, 2002) presumption is important:

“What dialogue *does* is change the nature of the organization–public relationship by placing emphasis on the relationship. What dialogue *cannot do* is make an organization behave morally or force organizations to respond to publics. Organizations must willingly make dialogic commitments to publics” (p.24).

Beside the five features that encompass the implicit and explicit assumptions that underlie the concept of dialogue, Kent and Taylor (1998) offered five basic principles to serve as guidelines for the successful integration of dialogue into communication. They studied these principles within the concept of online communication, specifically into websites. Five basic principles of dialogical communication that Kent and Taylor (1998:326) suggested are:

- Dialogic Loop, which allow publics to get in touch with organizations and offers organizations the opportunity to respond to public;
- Useful Information, which suggests that organizations should provide useful information to their public;
- Generation of Return Visits, which maintains that organizations should offer attractive content to provide regular visits of the public;
- Ease of Interface, which involves the intuitiveness and/or ease of the site’s interface;
- Conservation of Visitors, which suggests that organization should be carefull about conserving the public in their own scope (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

4.2.1.1. Principle one: The dialogic loop

The most important feature of new communication technologies is that, thanks to their design, they allow feedbacks. As feedback is an important function of any communication, a feedback loop is an appropriate starting point for dialogic communication between an organization and its publics. Within the concept of feedback, a dialogic loop allows publics to get in touch with the organization, to comment on something, to ask questions and so on. It also has an advantageous point for the organization. A dialogic loop allows organizations to communicate with their public, to respond them about their issues and questions (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

For a healthy dialogical communication to take place, there are some basic issues relevant to dialogic loop. First of all, the ones who are in charge of the websites should be capable of communicating and negotiating with publics. Organizations should provide not only information but also respond and discuss matters with the public. In order to do that, they need practitioners specially trained to respond electronic communication and skilled in addressing public concerns. To be successful in dialogic public relations in online environments, the same professionalism and communication skills are required as the ones that traditional media require. Besides, the internet is a more fragile environment and can create more public relations problems than it solves. To avoid such problems, organizations should work with individuals trained to answer questions, explain organizational policy and have the communication skills necessary to handle difficult questions or public concerns (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Second, it is important for the organizations that the one who is in charge of the communication with the public is mostly available to respond to the public. In online communications time is important and the public needs instant responses according to the dialogic loop principle. If the organization wants to succeed in its communication with the public, 'customer service' is an important issue. Professional and timely responses are major parts in the dialogic loop, however, the content of the response is also critical for a good communication (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

4.2.1.2. Principle two: The usefulness of information

As new communication technologies emerged, a big amount of online information is on circulation. So for the online communication of the organizations, the information shared with the public hold key for a good dialogical communication. Thus, content is vital to attract and maintain the public. Organizations should make an effort to provide interesting, attractive and usefull information to their public. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), for example, a website for a non-profit organization serving a particular target should provide background or historical information about itself.

As mentioned in Kent and Taylor (1998) and other scholars, content is the driving force for dialogical communication within online environments. Organizations rely on graphics and audios most of the time but the public is not attracted to the site if there is no usefull content in it. Ultimately, the public rely on the organization for useful and trustworthy information. The content will vary upon the organization's characteristics but in sum the information can provide contact addresses, telephone numbers, and electronic-mail address of organizational members, external experts, share holders, those holding valid competing/contradictory positions. Other types of information might be explanations of how products are produced, or services delivered, lists of ingredients, and explanations of what ingredients are, and their known side effects if any (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 327)

Making information available for publics is the first step. But most importantly, this information should be useful and valuable for the public. So the public can get attracted to the discussion, can ask questions and comment on issues so a dialogue might occur between the organization and the target.

Principle two suggests that “relationships with publics must be cultivated not only to serve the public relations goals of an organization, but so that the interests, values, and concerns of publics are addressed” (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 328). Thus, organizations should make an effort to engage the public into the dialogue as an active participant.

4.2.1.3. Principle three: The generation of return visits

The principle of generation of return visits aims at obtaining repeat visits of the public. Organizations should maintain the interest, thence should provide attractive content such as updated information, changing issues, special forums, new commentaries, on-line question

and answer sessions (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 329). If organizations should provide regularly updated and valuable information for their public, it would be easier for them to obtain public loyalty and return visits which are important agents of dialogical communication.

Of course, updating information is not enough to provide return visits. On their own, updated information and interesting content represents a one-way model of communication. Interactive communications are more desirable to form a dialogue between organizations and their publics. Interactive communications include forums, question and answer formats, and experts -such as featuring the company President, CEO, or Department Head on the site once a month- and lead to relationship building between an organization and its publics (Kent & Taylor, 1998,p. 329). Also, frequently asked questions (FAQs) are another format of interactive communication for websites (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

4.2.1.4. Principle four: The intuitiveness/Ease of the interface

This principle is about the intuitiveness and/or ease of the site's interface. The usability of the website is important. Any visitor who comes to the site, should not find it difficult to understand and follow the links. Tables of contents are useful and the site should be well organized (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

Textual format is always better than graphical. Too many graphics at the beginning of a site may annoy users who are in a hurry and often times the graphics do not add any information (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 329). It is also easier for the public to seek for the information needed.

The site should have an attractive and simple design and also should be rich in content. As mentioned in previous principles, the efficiency of getting informed is important and it depends on the design of the website.

The organization's sites should be interesting, informative, and contain information of value to publics and should not contain unnecessary data. Dialogic public relations seeks to create lasting, genuine, and valuable, relationships with its publics, and it should not

operate merely as a propaganda, marketing, or advertising tool (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 330).

4.2.1.5. Principle five: The rule of conservation of visitors

As the nature of the internet is not stable, the organization must pay attention to links that can lead the visitors away. This principle suggests that the organization should keep its public within its own sphere and prevent them to leave the organization's site. The visitors come to the site to see what the organization has to offer. So the designers of the websites should be careful and not let the visitors leave and/or search for other information on another website. Because once a visitor leaves the site, it is very difficult to catch him/her again (Kent & Taylor, 1998).

The goal of the communication is to create relations with public so in order to do that websites should include only essential links with clearly marked paths for visitors to return to the organization's site (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 330).

With the emergence of new communication technologies and related social networking sites, organizations mostly have an account also in social media beside their own website. According to the rule of conversation of visitors, websites should also give links to organization's social media accounts. Thus, the visitors will see a variety of interfaces but still stay in the organization's sphere.

After the first publication of Kent and Taylor's work, studies on dialogic communication within new media increased. Studies such as of Theunissen and Wan Noordin (2013), Kent (2013), Waters, Canfield, Foster, and Hardy (2011) focus on how dialogic communication is on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Kent (2013) further explored how dialogue can be on social media, and how this dialogue can be used to build or strengthen democracy (2013, p.341). Kent (2013) suggests that the problem is not the medium but the application and intent. He emphasized that "rather than social media being a cheap and easy way to reach stakeholders and publics with organizational messages, social media should be reenvisioned as interpersonal and group communication tools, and not a replacement for a weakened mass media" (p.341). In stating that social media requires an ideological shift, Kent (2013) provides six suggestions to build

relationships, solve problems, and enact socially responsible goals: (1) social media spaces where organizational members actually communicate with individuals should be developed. The receiver of the communication should not be considered as people passively waiting for messages. Social media should be thought of as an active participatory place where organizational managers, leaders, and professionals actually communicate with individuals; (2) Dialogic social media spaces should be enacted through different social media venues like Twitter or Facebook. They should be designed for substantive, interactive, discussions not for advertisements and distractions. These new social media interfaces should be designed as to facilitate organizational members and stakeholders/publics to freely interact and collaborate; (3) The identity of participants should be public and verifiable. Kent (2013) suggests that dialogue is only possible between individuals known to other participants who have names and faces; (4) Clear rules for participation should be established. One of the fundamental dialogic rules is that members should be able to question the rules at any time (Pearson, 1989). According to the rules of a dialogue, members should be identifiable. All members are expected to participate, and participants should provide support and evidence for all claims. Conversations should take place in real time; (5) All agents of the communication should be invited to participate, i.e any interested party, including the media, competitors, academics, and customers; (6) Different voices should be encouraged to participate. The more voices the better the dialogue (Kent, 2013, p. 342)

Kent (2013) in underlying the potential of social media claims that studies demonstrate the dialogic constitution of social media but the operationalization of dialogue on social media often looks like online advertising and product promotion. Being informed and being critical are the first steps of a healthy dialogue but richer and more inclusive interactions are also needed.

Waters, Canfield, Foster, and Hardy (2011) in their study about Facebook demonstrate how organizations are not using the platform to its fullest potential. Organizations are not creating a sustained dialogue and ongoing interaction that social media offers. Similar findings and conclusions can be found in Taylor and Kent (2001), Sommerfeldt, Kent and Taylor (2012), McAllister-Spooner and Kent (2009), Rybalko and Seltzer (2001). In a survey done by McAllister-Spooner in 2009 based on Kent and Taylor's dialogical communication principles on websites, it was found that organizations

were using their website in a weak and incomplete manner. This new technology was used to build a basic level of relation between the organization and its public. The findings also suggested that there was inconsistency when it came to organizational practices on what can be done with this new technology and what the organization was actually doing.

Some of the pioneer studies in the area of political communication and social media in Turkey are Genel (2012), Babacan, Akyol, Topbaş, Akyol (2012), Bayraktokutan, Binark, Çomu, Doğu, İslamoğlu, and Aydemir (2014). Genel (2012) and Bayraktokutan, Binark, Çomu, Doğu, İslamoğlu, and Aydemir (2014) study the use of social media especially Twitter by political parties in elections of 2011. Babacan, Akyol, Topbaş, Akyol (2012) focus on e-democracy and study the content and the ways of sharing in social media. An overall result of the researchs of political partys' social media usage shows a one way communication and not an interactive dialogue. This result is valid for social media accounts which operates not in terms of dialogue but as Kent (2013) emphasized in a way of advertising and promoting. The political parties and their leaders are not using social media adequately. The results show that the leaders see social media as a preaching medium and the offline rhetoric is reflected into online rhetoric. The use of social media by political parties is at base of disseminating expressions and news.

5. TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES'S TWITTER USAGE

5.1. Methodology

In this study, official Twitter accounts of Turkish political parties which are currently members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) and which are participating in the 2014 March municipal elections are analyzed. Those parties and their official accounts are:

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party) (AKP)
(<https://twitter.com/Akparti>),

Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) (CHP)
(<https://twitter.com/herkesicinCHP>),

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party) (MHP)
(https://twitter.com/MHP_Bilgi),

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People's Democratic Party) (HDP)
(<https://twitter.com/HDPgenelmerkezi>) and

Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party) (BDP)
(<https://twitter.com/BDPgenelmerkez>).

The following section will analyze the socio-political characteristics of these political parties.

5.1.1. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party) (AKP)

AKP defines itself as a conservative democratic party. In terms of every socio-economic, political and cultural domain, AKP officially supports adapting democracy at every level of the society while strongly opposing any kind of segregation and discriminatory activities towards different cultural identities, ideologies and religions (AKP Party Program, 2014).

The party consistently rejected the use of its Islamic background in Turkish politics, yet it assimilated this conservative framework (Yavuz, 2010).

AKP was able to obtain power through filling the rightist - liberal gap in Turkish politics. It is the largest politically governing unit in Turkey, with 327 members of parliament. Its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the Prime Minister of Turkey, became president of the republic in 2014 elections.

5.1.2. Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) (CHP)

CHP is the party with the oldest roots in Turkish politics. The party was established during the Congress of Sivas and on September 9, 1923, it officially declared itself a political organization with the name of "People's Party". The name of the party was changed to "Republican People's Party" in 1935 (CHP website, 2014). In 1927, CHP adopted "Republicanism", "Populism", "Nationalism", and "Secularism" as the four main principles. "Etatism" and "Revolutionism" were introduced in 1935. The six arrows in the party logo refer to these six principles (CHP website, 2014).

As the main opposition party against the AKP government, CHP criticizing AKP on issues like economic crises, the Kurdish question and international policy failures.

In its party program, priority is given to democratic values, human rights, national security, political participation, equality, social modernity, and labor integrity (CHP Party Program, 2014).

5.1.3. Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)

MHP is the main representative of the ultra-nationalist dimension of Turkish society. The party first emerged in 1969. Despite monopolizing the right wing nationalist ideology in Turkish politics, MHP successfully created its own ideological context, called idealism. Throughout the 1970's, the "Idealist Hearts" (Ülkü Ocakları) spread the mainstream ideology of MHP throughout the country. Within the party, the concept of Islam was also politicized and used in party policies. (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002).

MHP party program defines a nation as an entity in which its participants live together in harmony within the same territory along with a shared historical background. In these terms, nationalism is the entity which aims to enable the Turkish nation to perceive its distinguishing characteristics. The nationalist approach covers the establishment of a

national identity, language, culture, sovereignty, state and solidarity. In terms of rights and liberties, the party supports equal treatment to every person who lives within the same entity. It refers to differences as cultural prosperity and supports tolerance in order to protect the national integrity (MHP Party Program, 2014).

5.1.4. Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party) (BDP)

Peace and Democracy party was established in 2008. After the closure decision of the Democratic Society Party by the Constitutional Court in December 2009, 20 parliamentarians and 97 mayors from DTP joined BDP. After the general elections in 12 June 2011, because of the 10% electoral threshold, BDP attended with independent candidates as “Labour, Democracy and Freedom Block”. BDP has 36 seats at Grand National Assembly as March 2014.

BDP defines itself, as a left leading mass party that perceives libertarian, egalitarian, peaceful, pluralist and multi-cultural society as richness. It adopts democratic local and horizontal style of politics in place of centralist and hierarchical politics, rejecting all forms of discrimination and racism (BDP website, 2014). The ideology of the party is different from the parties listed above. BDP prefers the development of local democracy and local governance in Turkey, replacing the rigid centralist structure of the state and the authoritarian/bureaucratic state. Their inner party structure is also parallel to this view.

They are mostly criticized by others parties about being a “Kurdish party” and willing to demolish the unitary structure of the state.

5.1.5. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People’s Democratic Party) (HDP)

People’s Democratic Congress, a platform composed of various left wing parties, feminist and LGBT groups, ethnic initiatives and trade unions became a party in 2013 headed by BDP’s leaders. In 2014 BDP joined HDP entirely.

Similar to BDP, HDP, as a left leading mass party, defines itself as a pro-peace, pro-labor, pro-selfgovernment, pro-gender equality and a green party. They call themselves as representatives of labor, ecology and women’s rights associations, artists, writers, intellectuals, independent individuals, workers, representatives of different ethnic and

religious groups, the unemployed, the retired, farmers, the handicapped, scientists and those whose cities are being destroyed (HDP website, 2014).

Just like BDP, they are also criticized about being a “Kurdish party” and willing to demolish the unitary structure of the state.

5.2. Sample of the Study

To be sure of the exactness of the official Twitter accounts, the research takes as sample the Twitter accounts which were linked in the parties’ official website and were announced as “official” by the owner of these political parties’ Twitter accounts. There are some other non - official accounts which produce content on behalf of the parties but the research’s focus point is the ones which are led by the political parties themselves.

The research takes as sample the accounts salient such as the number of tweets, number of followers/following and the user of the account. But more importantly, the research analyzes the tweets sent by the official accounts according to dialogical principles of Kent and Taylor (2001).

The research takes as sample the tweets sent by the political parties between March 15 and March 30 2014 when the municipal election campaigns occurred. Because the dialogical communication of the parties is expected to be the most effective and high in this time period, these dates were chosen.

5.2.1. Limitations

As the research universe is social media, i.e. Twitter, there are some limitations to data collecting. First of all, within the features of Twitter, it is easy and probable to remove a tweet from the accounts timeline. Even though the data was collected each day, there may be some tweets that might have been erased before the data were collected. So the research takes as sample only the tweets that were captured by the researcher.

During the research and data collecting, the government blocked Twitter Turkey access with a spontaneous decision. So the biggest limitation of the research is that AKP official Twitter account did not tweet after 20 March 2014 until the ban was lifted. The research

takes as sample only the tweets between 15 – 20 March 2014 for AKP. The other parties' accounts did not obey the restriction like many other user of Twitter in Turkey and continued to access Twitter through proxy servers and tweet. So the limitation of the dates March 15 through March 20 is not applicable to the other political parties' part of the study.

5.2.2. Data Collection and Analysis Technique

This study aims to analyze Twitter usage practices of Turkish political parties with a content analysis of tweets according to dialogical communication principles framework. The study tried to emphasize the nature and the utilization of Twitter accounts of Turkish political parties according to dialogical communication principles.

In order to do that, a coding system based on Kent and Taylor's dialogical communication principles was used. Kent and Taylor (2001) form their principles of dialogical communication basically on websites so the principles were appropriated according to Twitter. The coding principle is based on Kent and Taylor's principles. But as their work is on websites, the principles were adapted to social media Twitter. The principle four "the ease of interface" is excluded from the evaluation because all accounts use the same substructure of Twitter.

5.2.3. Coding

First of all, to be able to measure the dialogical communication principles, some features were attributed to every principle. Then, they were coded according to the tables below.

5.2.3.1. Dialogic loop

The research universe Twitter has "Reply", "Retweet" and "Mention" functions. As feedback is an essential value for organizations in dialogic loop principle, these functions fit this principle by allowing the users to give feedback to their followers. The dialogic interaction between the user account and its followers is bond by "Reply", "Retweet" and "Mention" functions in Twitter. So to measure the dialogue, the study coded the tweets as;

Retweet public / Retweet member / Retweet news / Retweet other

Reply public / Reply member / Reply other

Mention public / Mention member / Mention other party / Mention news

5.2.3.2. Usefulness of Information

In this principle the content of the tweets were analyzed according to the information provided in every tweet. As “usefulness of information” principle depends on the content, the survey measured the usefulness of information given in tweets. The tweets were coded as below:

- (1) Battleground: When the account’s tweets are deliberative against other parties or party members
- (2) Policy Explored: When the account announces the party’s policies
- (3) Performance: When the account tweets about the performances of their politicians
- (4) Informative: When the account inform the public with instructive tweets
- (5) Historical: When the account tweets about the past accomplishments of the party
- (6) Calendar: When the account announces some dates about the municipal election campaigns
- (7) Wrongdoing Exposed: When the account inform the public about the mistakes of other parties
- (8) Tactics: When the account tweets according to some tactics

5.2.3.3. Generation of Return Visits

In this principle, the content of the tweets matters in a manner of providing interest and in maintaining the follower. To measure this principle, question/answer sessions, interesting

content such as picture and video and the variety of issue and subject of the tweets were coded. Question/answers sessions and picture and videos were coded as present / absent. To measure the variety of issues, the subjects of the tweets were coded. The most important subjects that should be discussed in a municipal election campaign were chosen and others were added according to the tweet's content such as:

Family/Women

Agriculture

Economy

Civil Rights

Foreign Policy

Religion

Labor

Education

Health

Municipal Services

Nationalism

Domestic Politics

Electoral Activities

Newroz

Peace & Democracy

5.2.3.4. The Rule of Conversation of Visitors

This principle focuses on how the political parties maintain their followers in their own scope. As the principle focuses on the ability of the account to maintain the target audience in the political party's sphere such as its own website, social media accounts and the subjects about itself, to measure this principle, links and hashtags were coded as below.

- (1) Link to own website / Link to news / Link to other social media
- (2) Own hashtag / Other hashtag

5.3. Findings

5.3.1. Findings about Twitter profile characteristics

Kent and Taylor's dialogical communication principles were mostly applied on the tweets that the political parties sent. But besides that, the basic features of the Turkish political parties accounts and their 'users' were also explored in this study.

First of all, the users of the accounts were explored. According to the results of phone interviews with political parties, it is seen that AKP and CHP has professional communication practitioners to conduct their accounts. Correspondingly, MHP, BDP and HDP accounts is conducted by volunteers.

Second, the "bio" of the accounts were surveyed. Each political party declares in its bio that it is the official account of the party. AKP and MHP marked their location as Turkey. Others don't state their location. All parties give their official website address in their bio. In CHP, MHP and BDP's bio the followers can see the date when the political party joined Twitter.

Additionally, all parties beside HDP give their other social media account addresses in their bio which is a positive point in line with the principle "The Rule of Conversation of Visitors". AKP, CHP and BDP give links to their Facebook account. MHP included the Instagram account of the party. BDP, besides writing its Facebook account also wrote the YouTube account of the party and a blog address.

In addition to their bio, the number of follower/following and the number of tweets were explored. To follow other accounts to a certain degree is a way of showing how symmetrical and dialogical the communication of the political party is. It may not be possible to follow back all the followers but it is important for a political party to follow back the ones who are producing effective content or the ones that the political party is targeting. It also has its advantages like knowing the target well, seeing the crises and opportunities. In this means, the accounts that follow few accounts can not fully benefit social media, in this case of Twitter.

From this point, it can easily be seen that the proportion between the follower and following of the political parties is out of balance.

As seen in Table 1, in total the gap between the follower and following numbers is big. AKP is followed by 63.902 users but follows nobody. CHP has the higher number of followers and following. The gap between followers and following numbers is smallest in BDP account and larger in MHP.

Table 5.1. Basic profile characteristic of the political party accounts

	Follower	Following	Total Number of Tweets
AKP	63.902	0	228
CHP	149.729	291	910
MHP	129.332	43	169
BDP	58.307	114	798
HDP	63.025	103	411

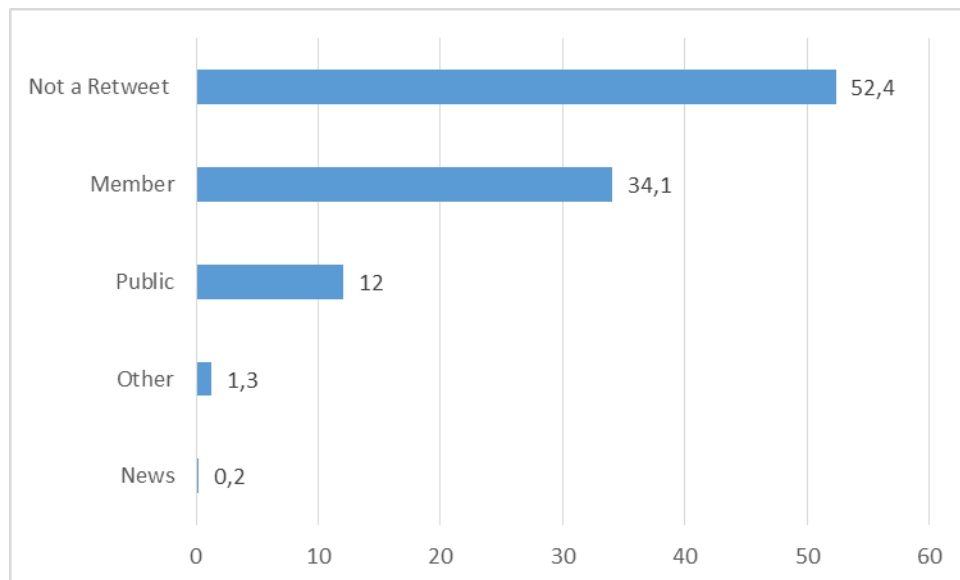
As seen in Table 5.1, CHP has the highest total tweet number with 910 tweets with the percentage of 36% of all tweets coded for the period March 15-March 30 2014. Right behind CHP, there is BDP with 798 tweets with 32% of all tweets. It is important to note that CHP and BDP tweets account to more than half of all the tweets combined for this period, making these two parties the most active in terms of tweeting. Here, it should also be noted that AKP did not send any tweet after March 20, 2014. To be able to compare this party's tweet number with others, you can see below the tweet numbers of all the political parties between March 15-20, 2014.

Account	Total Number of Tweets
BDP	373
CHP	239
AKP	228
HDP	173
MHP	75

5.3.2. Findings on Principle One: Dialogic Loop

A feedback loop is an appropriate starting point for dialogic communication between a political party and its targets. In this regard, when “reply” “retweet” and “mention” functions which are indication of dialogue are observed, a prominent issue is occurred. None of the political parties replied to their followers. They chose to use only the retweet and mention functions. As seen on Chart 5.1, most of the parties retweeted their own party member.

Chart 5.1. General retweeted posts



“Mention” is also another feature which provides some sort of dialogue with the followers. As seen in Table 5.2, this function is not widely used by the political parties. Even if it is used, mentions were made to their own members mostly.

Table 5.2. General mention posts

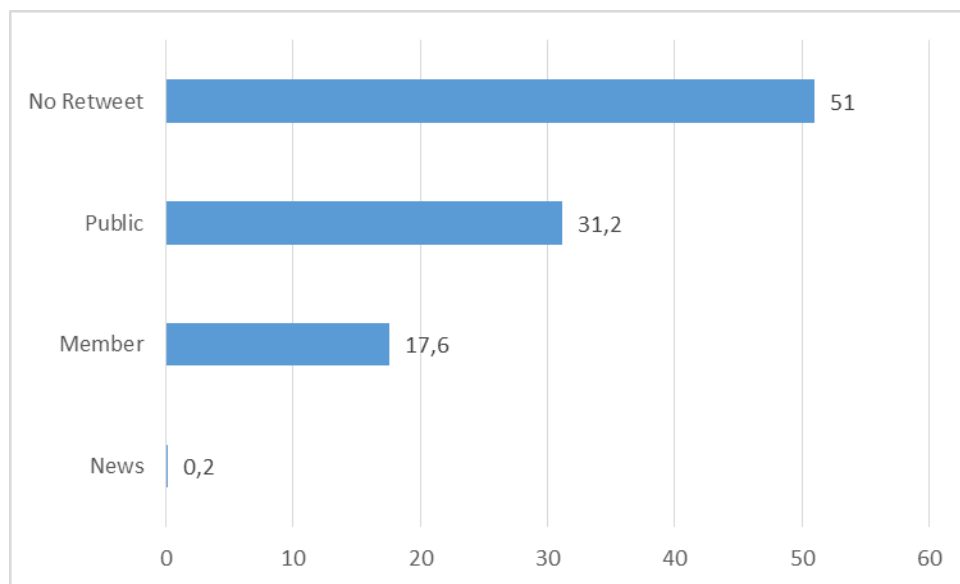
	Number of Tweets	Percentage
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No mention	2272	90.3
Mention to own member	229	9.1
Mention to news	9	0.4
Mention other	6	0.2

In dialogic loop principle, when the political parties are studied separately, it is seen that AKP did not reply to any of its followers, did not retweet any tweet and did not mention some other account.

CHP also did not reply to its followers but used retweet and mention functions. According to Chart 5.2, nearly half of the tweets of CHP are retweets. Among these retweets, tweets retweeted from public accounts had the biggest part.

Chart 5.2. Number and percentage of retweets CHP

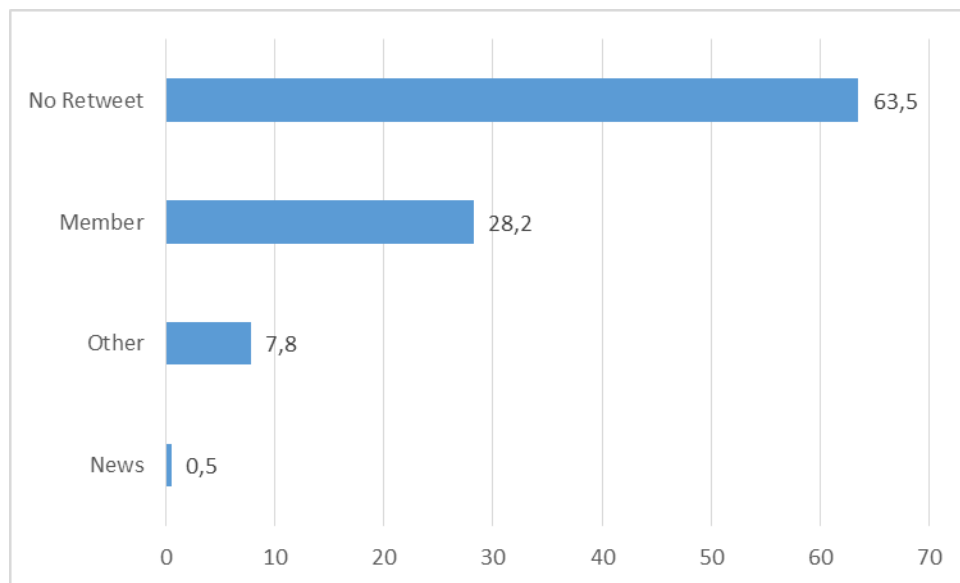


When the usage of “mention” functions is researched, it is seen that CHP did not used it very much but among other political parties CHP had the first place with 12.9%.

The findings about dialogical loop in MHP’s case is not much different. They did not also reply to any of their followers. Among the 169 tweets that they sent, only 5 tweets were retweets (all from party members) and 5 tweets are mention (4 to members 1 to a news site).

When it comes to HDP, as it is seen in Chart 5.3, they mostly retweeted their members. Among 411 retweets only 2 of them are retweets from a newsite. The “other” percentage of 32% refers to other political party in HDP case such as BDP. As BDP is a bloc party of HDP¹, it is seen that HDP retweeted BDP tweets about the campaign speeches where BDP’s politician is a figure for election not HDP.

Chart 5.3. Number and percentage of retweets - HDP

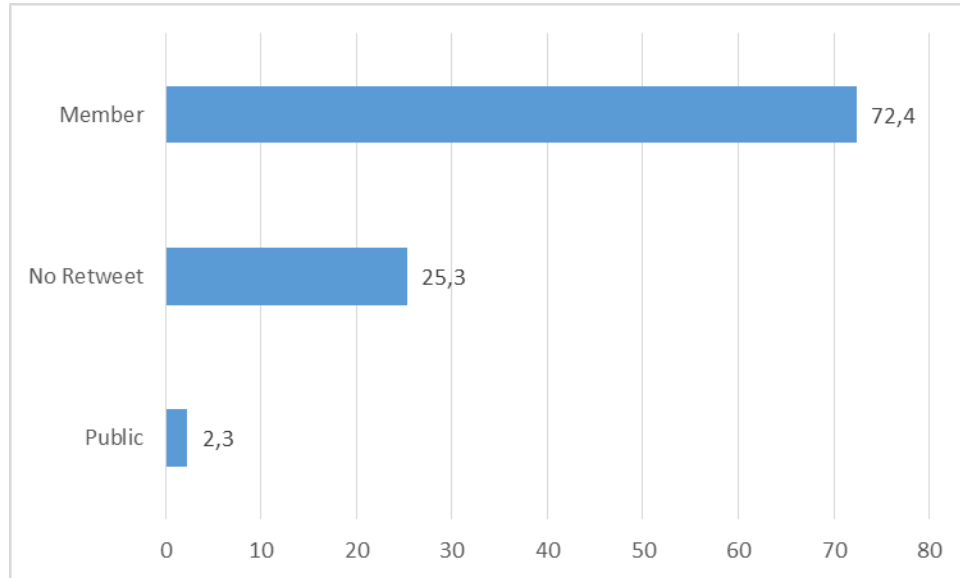


When the usage of “mention” functions is researched it is seen that 9.7% of the tweets of HDP are mentions. Among this percentage, 9.5% are mention to own member and 0.2% are mention to a news account. It means, almost all mention tweets are mention to own party members.

BDP is a little bit different from the other accounts when it comes to retweets. Among 599 retweets, 72.4% are retweets from members. This percentage is high because BDP had a specific “election account” dedicated to the municipal election campaign and mostly retweeted tweets from this “special” account.

Chart 5.4. Number and percentage of retweets - BDP

¹ People’s Democratic Congress, a platform composed of various left wing parties, feminist and LGBT groups, ethnic initiatives and trade unions became a party in 2013 headed by BDP’s leaders. In 2014 BDP joined HDP entirely.

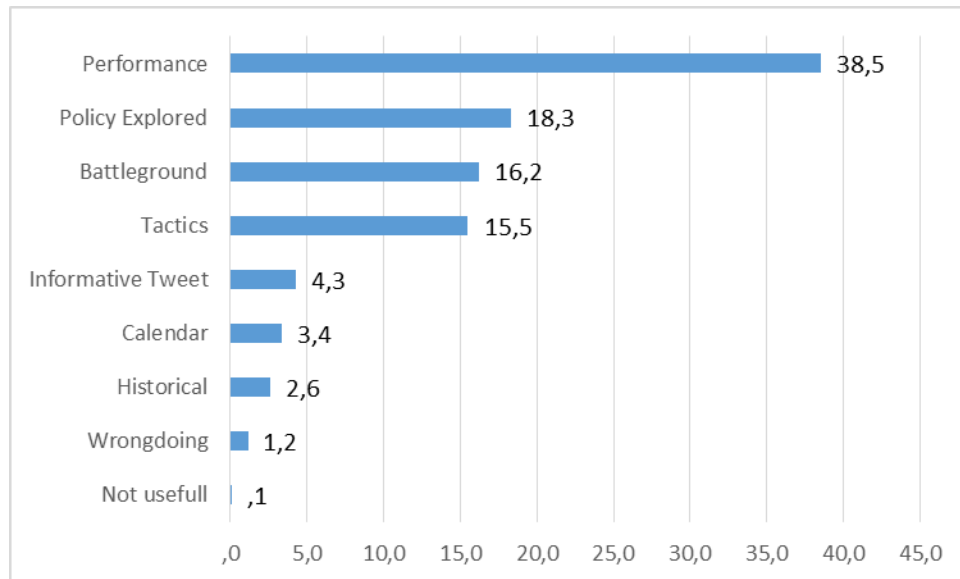


When it comes to the mention function, BDP is very similar to HDP. It is seen that 10.3 % of the tweets of BDP are mentions. Among this percentage, 9.9% are mention to own member and 0.4% are mention to a news account.

5.3.3. Findings on Principle Two: The Usefulness of Information

A political organization primarily targeting a group of publics in election campaigns, should make an effort to provide useful information to impress its target. From this point, a list of useful information in an election campaign were coded. As seen in Chart 5.5, in general the tweets containing information about the performance of the politicians are in majority.

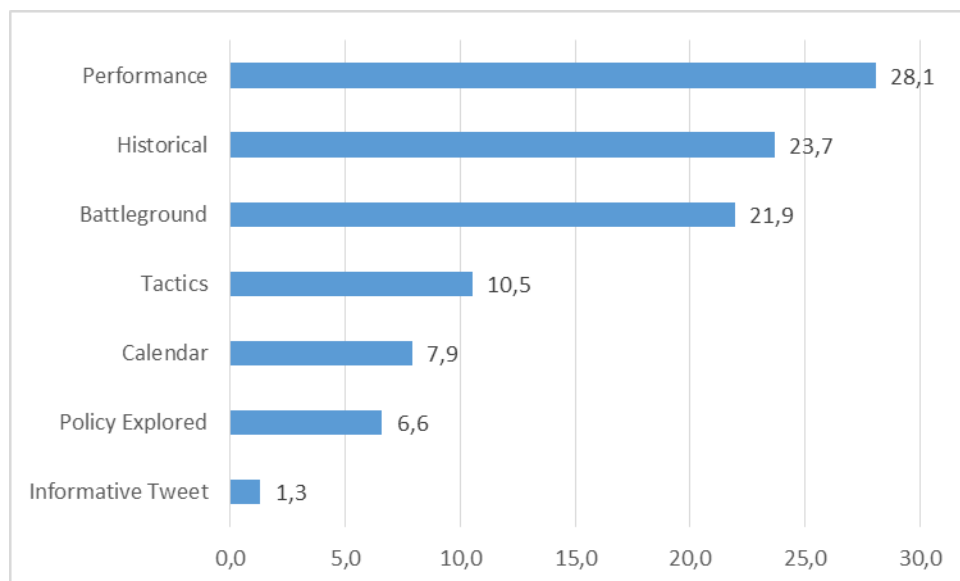
Chart 5.5. General usefulness of information



After the tweets about the performance comes the tweets in which the political parties let their followers know about their policies. Battleground tweets have the same percentage of 16% with tactical tweets. The tweets which belongs to other usefulness of information cathgory such as “informative”, “calendar”, “historical” and “wrongdoing exposed” have low percentages in general.

When we look at the political parties separately, as seen in Chart 5.6, AKP sent tweets mostly about their politician’s performance, the party’s historical accomplishments and tweets coded as battleground with other political parties.

Chart 5.6. Usefullnes of information – AKP

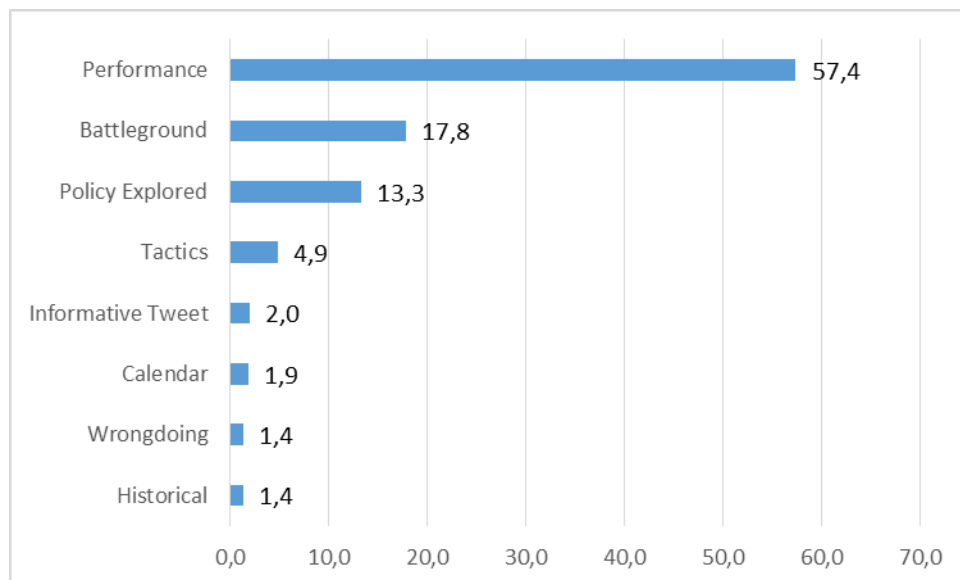


When it comes to CHP, the percentages are similar to AKP but the content of the tweets are different beside “performance”. CHP mostly sent tweets about their politician’s performance, their tactics and their policy. Among all the parties, CHP is the one with the higher percentage of tactical tweets.

According to the findings, it is seen that MHP gives more importance to the tweets about their politician’s performance like other political parties. Similar to AKP, the second higher percentage of the tweets of MHP is 27.8% with battleground and conflict content. According to the results, MHP did not give much importance to the tweets about their policy or tactics.

The information content of HDP tweets is different from other parties. Beside HDP, all parties have highest percentages in performance criteria. HDP gives more importance to policy explored with a percentage of 35% followed by performance, tactic and battleground. According to Chart 5.7, BDP has the higher percentage (58%) in performance tweets among all political parties. In addition to that, there is a notable difference between the performance tweets percentage and the others.

Chart 5.7. Usefullnes of information - BDP



5.3.4. Findings on Principle Three: The Generation of Return Visits

Based on Kent and Taylor's principle (2001), political parties accounts were searched for content that make them attractive for repeat visits of the followers. Here, as a nature of Twitter, accounts should work for preventing unfollows. Thus, the research looked for question/answer sessions, attractive content such as picture/video and interesting subjects when surveying this principle into the tweets of the political parties. The results show that in overall the parties are weak in terms of creating attractive content for followers. Information gathering tweets percentage is 1.4% in overall and the percentage is 0 for questions answered. When it comes to picture and video sharing, the percentage of picture sharing is analogically higher then video sharing. In 36% of the tweets of all parties a picture was shared and in 16.8% of the tweets a video were shared. To measure the ability of creating interesting subject of political parties' accounts, the variety of issues were surveyed and 15 issues were coded. According to the results, tweet numbers about the electoral activities of the parties are much higher than other issue related tweets. Electoral activities are premier with the percentage of 35.6. Then comes domestic politics with 17.7% and municipal services with 16.8%. There is a percentage of 15.5 tweets which were coded "other".

Findings about AKP's tweets show that they only asked 3 questions to their followers among 228 tweets and they did not provide an answer to any question asked. They shared 57 pictures and 29 videos in their timeline during the election campaign period coded in this study. All of them are about the performance of their politician. Table 5.3 shows AKP's top five subjects that they tweeted about. Their tweets are mostly about the municipal services that the party offers. Then they tweet about domestic politics and their electoral activities. Also, a high percentage of tweets are coded as "other".

Table 5.3. Variety of issues - AKP

	Tweet Number	Percentage
Municipal Services	68	29,8
Domestic Politics	39	17,1
Electoral Activities	37	16,2
Other	37	16,2
Nationalism	24	10,5

Similar to AKP, CHP also did not ask much question to their followers and did not answered any of the questions. But their percentage of sharing picture and videos were higher. The findings show that they shared a picture in 43.5% of their tweets and a video in 17.9% of them. When it comes to the variety of issues the top five of CHP is the same with AKP but with different ranking. 36.6% of their tweets are about their electoral activities. 25.1% of the tweets were coded as other and 16% were about domestic politics. Tweets about municipal services had a percentage of 14.9. Nationalism tweets were in their top five also but with a lower percentage of 1.5.

MHP, just like AKP did not ask any question to the followers and did not answered any question. They shared a picture and a video in most of their tweets as seen in Table 5.4.

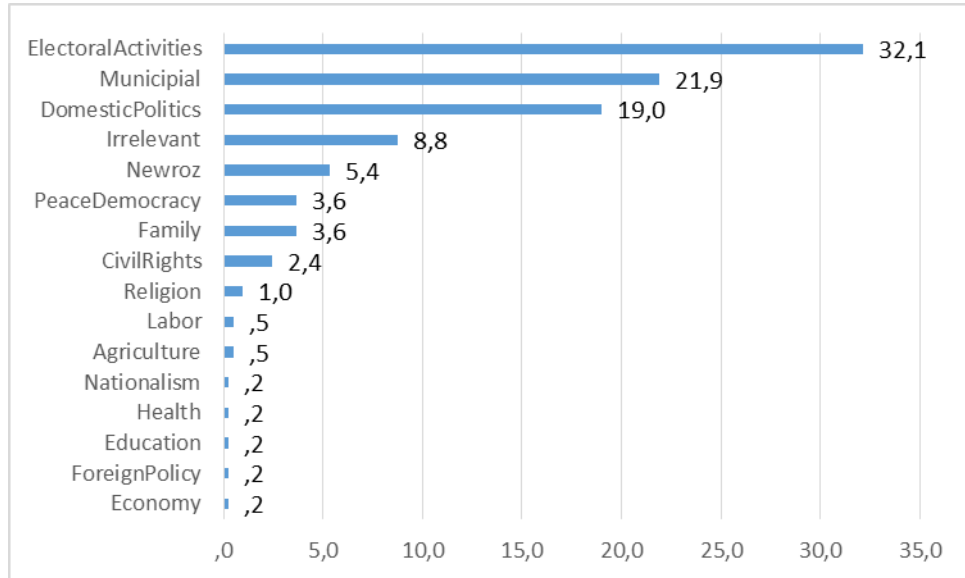
Table 5.4. Picture / Video sharing - MHP

	Number of Tweets	Percentage
Picture	90	53,3
Video	51	30,2

When it comes to the variety of issues it is not much different from other political parties but the percentage of the tweets about electoral activities is higher (57.4%) compared to other parties. Domestic politics ranked second in the chart with the percentage of 19.5. Like AKP and CHP tweets, a high percentage of (17.2%) tweets were coded as other.

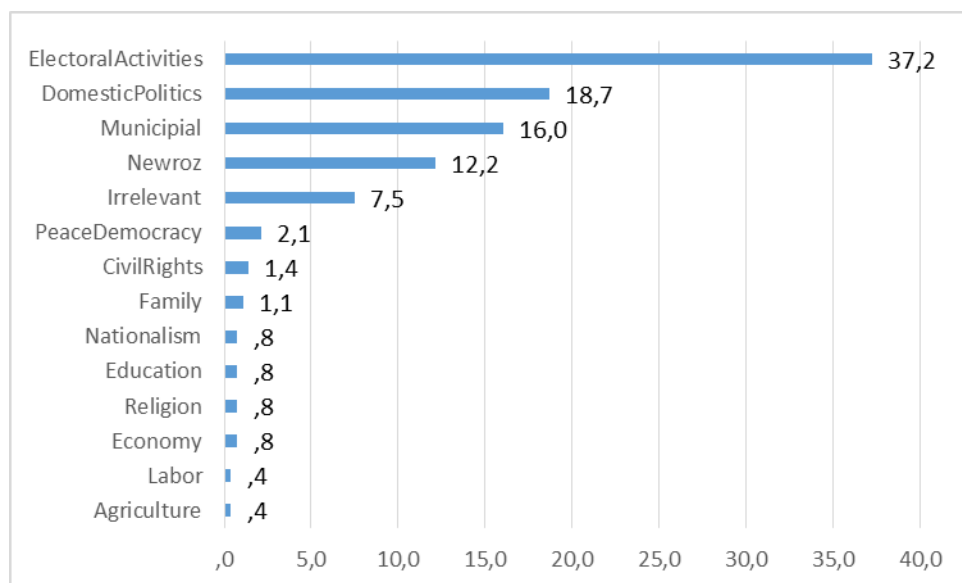
When it comes to HDP, it is seen that they asked much more question to their followers compared to the other political parties but like others did not answered any of the questions. In 38% of their tweets they shared a picture and in 13.4% of them they shared a video. The variety of issues is not much different from AKP and CHP. As seen in Chart 5.8 their priority is tweets about electoral activities. Municipal services tweets are right after them with a percentage of 22%. The tweet numbers coded as other are lower compared to AKP, CHP and MHP.

Chart 5.8. Variety of issues - HDP



In question/answer sessions, BDP findings are similar to AKP and MHP. They did not ask and reply to any question. They shared a picture in 25.8% of their tweets and a video in 15.7% of them. BDP has a little bit different variety of issue compared to other political parties. As seen in Chart 5.9 percentage of tweets about electoral activities is the highest similar to HDP, MHP and CHP. Then come the tweets about domestic politics and municipal services. As seen in Chart 5.8 and Chart 5.9, HDP and BDP have tweets about different issues then the other political parties, such as Newroz, peace and democracy, civil rights and family.

Chart 5.9. Variety of issues - BDP



5.3.5. Findings on Principle Five: The Rule of Conservation of Visitors

This principle focuses on how the political party maintains its follower in its own scope. To measure this principle, links and hashtags used by the political parties were coded. According to findings in general, links and hashtags were not used enough to direct the followers to the official websites or other social media accounts of the political parties or to the hashtags which mention the political parties. In overall tweets, only 20.7% contained links and 28.9% contained hashtag.

When we look at the usage of link and hashtag of the political parties, AKP has a very low percentage in link sharing. In total 14% percentage of tweets, 12.7% were linked to AKP's official website and 1.3% of them to their other social media accounts. Hashtag usage of AKP is higher than their link usage. AKP used a hashtag in 45% of their tweets and all of them are hashtags created by AKP.

When we look at the CHP findings, the usage of link is also weak similar to AKP. Tweets with no link percentage is 76.4%. In 23.6% part with links, the majority (18.6%) is link to other social media accounts. They put their official website's link only to 45 tweets among 215 tweets with links. They used a hashtag much more frequently than the links. In total, 40.2% of their tweets contains a hashtag and 37.7% of them are hashtags that CHP created.

Usage of links and hashtags by MHP account is also not considerable. As shown in Table 5.5, the tweet numbers with link are not high and they did not give any link of their official website. Still, the percentage of link to social media is considerable.

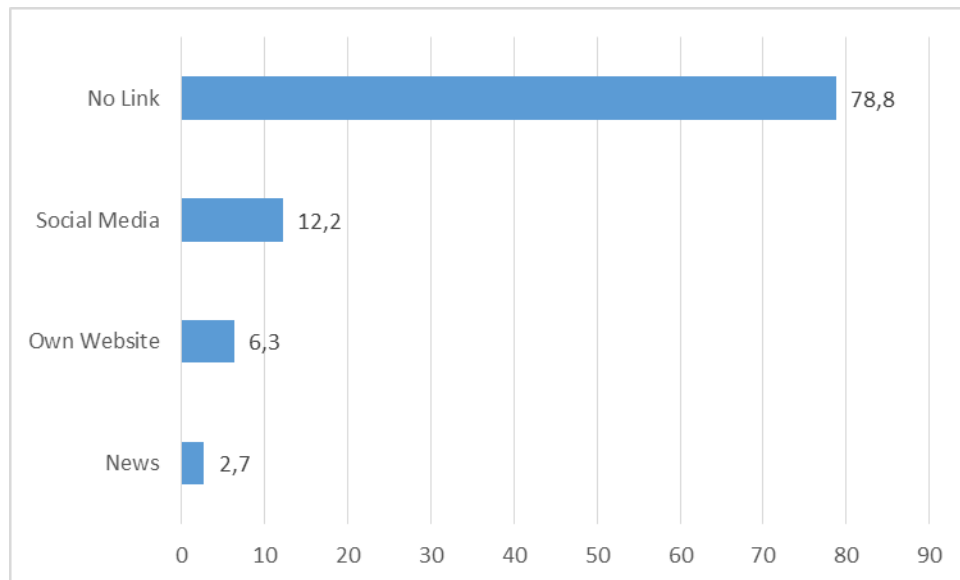
Table 5.5. Link usage - MHP

	Number of Tweets	Percent
No Link	104	61.5
Social Media	62	36.7
News	3	1.8

MHP's hashtag usage is also very low. They only used a hashtag created by themselves in 18.9% of their tweets.

When we look at the usage of links in HDP account, as we can see in Chart 5.10, it is not much but it is diverse. They used a link only in 21.2% of their tweets but they linked their tweets not only with their official website but also with other social media accounts and news sites.

Chart 5.10. Link usage – HDP



They also did not used hashtags frequently but in total, 16.8% of their tweets contains a hashtag and 15.3% of them are hashtags that HDP created. Other hashtags that they used belongs to social agenda, it means they made a comment about these hashtag's topics from their official account.

Similar to others, BDP also used a few links and hashtags in the tweets. The percentage of link usage is not high and similar to MHP, HDP account gave link only to other social media accounts and news sites. They did not link their tweets with their official website. They did not used hashtags frequently similar to others. The usage of a hashtag created by BDP is 18.9% among all tweets. They also sent a comment in other hashtags only in 5 tweets.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

As the information communication technologies become widespread, they play an important role in everyday communications. A key feature of the communication technologies, social media gain popularity and its use at both personal and institutional level increase. Under the light of these developments, social media gain popularity also among communication practionners and scholars. In this sense, it became an important tool for political communication, especially during election campaigns. Considering the advantages of social media, online political communication is in favor of political parties and their leaders to create a dialogue with their target, which is vital for democracy, politics and communication.

A symmetrical dialogue between the organization and its target is always important but it becomes more valuable when it has a place in political communication. In democracies, political parties and politicians are expected to be open to their target and to be vulnerable to feedbacks from them. One other important notion about political communication is that it should provide informative content to the target and must be interesting according to expectation of the target. Particularly in an election campaign period, political communication practionners should maintain the target's interest on their own political sphere. Dialogical communication as Kent and Taylor (2001) suggested, provide this openness and vulnerability in political communication. The principles of dialogical communication help us understand how dialogical is the organization, how qualified is the content and how the organization maintain its target audience.

For these reasons, in this research political parties have been investigated in order to measure their dialogical use of social media tools within Turkish political communication. In this study, official Twitter accounts and the tweets of Turkish political parties which are participating in the 2014 March municipal elections are analyzed according to dialogical communication principles framework. The selected theory of dialogical communication is used as the key tool for determining specific skills used in communication processes in new communication technologies, basically websites. In this research, it has been used as a framework for measuring the main characteristic analyzed in this thesis, the dialogue between the political parties and their target, within the social media Twitter.

As for listing the content of the research unit, scholars who contributed to the ideology behind the research theme needed to be analyzed. Therefore, firstly information society and liberal and critical approaches to the new communication technologies were investigated. Then, the internet, social media and its use in political communication was surveyed. Then, democracy and dialogue concepts were investigated along with dialogical communication.

According to the results, the percentages are lowest in dialogic loop principle. Among all parties, AKP's percentage is zero as regards as this principle. Considering the dialogical communication principles of Kent and Taylor (2001), the most important indicator of being open to feedbacks and dialogue is dialogic loop principle. From this point of view, it can be concluded that AKP is using the social media Twitter like conventional media, is setting a one way communication and its relation between its target is asymmetrical. For other parties, the results are not much different. But when we look at the percentages of "reply" "retweet" and "mention" functions, there is a significant point that the political parties are using these functions not to communicate with their public but to promote themselves.

The second notion which is important to create a dialogical communication is usefulness of information principle. From this angle, it is seen that all parties have higher percentages in tweeting their politician's performance beside HDP. It can be interpreted that tweeting the performances of the leaders is a way of promoting and it is not much different from what the conventional media does. But as mentioned above, HDP is different than the other parties by tweeting their policies mostly which is a considerably more useful information during an election campaign.

The third principle, generation of return visits, matters in a manner of providing interest and of maintaining the follower. In general, the political parties' accounts are weak in terms of creating attractive content for followers. Information gathering tweets percentage is very low and the percentage is zero for questions answered. The political parties have higher percentages in picture and video sharing. It means that they tend to use additional features like image and sound to make their tweets and contents attractive for their public.

When it comes to measure the ability of creating interesting subject of political parties' accounts, the variety of issues were surveyed and 15 issues were coded. The results show

that political parties mostly tweet about three basic subjects which are electoral activities, municipal services and domestic politics. The fourth subject varies according to the ideology of the parties. It is significant that MHP, AKP and CHP tweeted on nationalism and BDP and HDP tweeted on Newroz. Here, we should add that some tweets which were irrelevant to a political election campaign were coded as “other”. The “other” percentage is high in general and in particular in all party accounts. It can be concluded that the political parties are weak in terms of creating interesting content with a variety of issues. It is seen that none of the parties tweet regularly about significant subjects as women, economy, civil rights, education nor health (only HDP and BDP has low percentages on these subjects) but send only promotional campaign tweets.

The fourth principle which is an indicator of a dialogical communication is the rule of conservation of visitors. Political parties should maintain their target audience in their own political sphere according to this principle. By this way, the information flow comes from just one source and political parties obtain a focused target. They also prevent other information which can be disturbing and disadvantageous for them. The results show that the political parties are not adequately profit from the advantages of this principle. Their link and hashtag usage is low which is a sign of Twitter use at a basic level as conventional media.

Resembling findings and conclusions can be found in Taylor and Kent (2001:279), Sommerfeldt, Kent and Taylor (2012:311), McAllister-Spooner and Kent (2009:236), Rybalko and Seltzer (2001:339). In a survey done by McAllister-Spooner in 2009 based on Kent and Taylor’s dialogical communication principles on websites, it is found that websites are used weakly and in an incomplete way. It is seen that this new technology is used to build a basic level of relation between the organization and its public. The findings also show that there is an inconsistency between the organizations practices on what it can be done with the new internet technology and what the organization really do.

Under the light of these informations, if we return to the question which the study aims to answer, it can be said that internet cannot fulfill the mission of democratization as expected from it at this moment. The dominant form of communication continues to be one-way (claimed to be two-way) communication with the citizen also on internet. Under these

circumstances, it is seen that the internet makes the public matters more visible but at the same time contribute to the spread of power's discourse rather than promising a new democracy. The power maintains its position and uses social media in one way like traditional media; hence it can be argued that the citizen cannot find any answer to its efforts for dialogue.

Through the perspective of deliberative democracy, even if social media (internet in general terms) offers initiatives that enable social actions to come together and present their rights before the powers at a global level, it also brings on some questions regarding the continuity of the deliberative democracy because there is no organized action in right seeking process on Internet. From the angle of Freire's dialogue, the citizen becomes the oppressed while the oppressor maintains its power as Freire says. During the communication process on Internet, the monologue of the power leads to 'the organization knows the best' or 'deceptive/cheater' organization. In reality, there is not a healthy dialogical communication between the power and the citizen; instead, the dominant ideology is maintained.

Considerable further research is needed in order to obtain more accurate and efficient results in this specific field. As social media is a concept which came into the lives of Turkish people very recently, although political leaders' usage of social media increased, the notice of the electorate towards those online platforms was realized quite late. In order to determine the complete framework analysis, one must organize the delivered messages and the expectations within a wider perspective. This research measured only the data between March 15 – 30, 2014. In this sense, for further research, all of the delivered messages and full feedback contents in the election period should be analyzed in order to measure the dialogue from a broader and stronger perspective. Also, the research only analyze social media service Twitter. For a better understanding of the research theme, multi platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and official websites should be analyzed. With the establishment of an extended time period, multi platform analyze and the coordination of multiple researchers, certainly a better result will be achieved at the end of the work.

Social media is rapidly transforming into an indispensable communication tool, especially with the increase of its reach towards mobile devices. Although there are some restrictions when connecting the internet, ban of some websites (Twitter was banned between March 21 – April 2) and ‘anti social media’ expressions of government officials, in Turkey, social media still gaining popularity over time. With further improvements in information and communication technologies, the use of social media has the potential to increase personal platforms in order to deliver messages more easily and effectively. Those developments in future will eventually work for the benefit of the political agents.

As a specific topic, the social media use by Turkish political parties as a tool for political communication has been researched in this study. Social media is an effective tool for worldwide communication; it affects and changes the rules and regulations of the entire political communication framework, enabling the electorate to participate into politics more than ever. As this online technology develops, both Turkish political parties and the electorate will find better ways to increase their communication skills.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Nazlı Çetin

Nazlı Çetin

Personal Information:

Date of Birth: 14.01.1983
Place of Birth: İstanbul

Education:

Lise 1995-2002 Özel Notre Dame De Sion Fransız Kız Lisesi
Lisans 2002-2006 Yeditepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Halkla
İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Bölümü
Yüksek Lisans 2010-2014 Yeditepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler
Enstitüsü, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Anabilim Dalı, Halkla İlişkiler ve
Tanıtım Programı

Çalıştığı Kurumlar:

2013-Devam ediyor Yeditepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Halkla İlişkiler ve
Tanıtım Araştırma Görevlisi
2012- 2013 Ak Yatırım Uzman
2010 – 2012 Freelance Halkla İlişkiler Uzmanı
2008 – 2009 Homestore Pazarlama Uzmanı
2006 – 2008 Goldaş Kategori Uzmanı