



KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:
COMPARATIVE STUDY BASED ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN
ISTANBUL**

TUNCER BAL

Advisor: Prof. Dr., Murat Güvenç

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

ISTANBUL, JULY, 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

SNS	: Social Networking Services
RSS	: Really Simple Syndication
JDP	: Justice and Development Party
RPP	: Republican People's Party
CATA	: Computer Aided Content Analysis

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: COMPARATIVE STUDY BASED ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN ISTANBUL

RQ.1: What type of information is disclosed by local governments through their Twitter pages in order to legitimize their policies and actions?

Q.2: What kind of social media tactics are predominantly deployed by selected local governments that represent different political parties?



ABSTRACT

This study examines the social media use of selected local municipalities in Istanbul from a comparative perspective. Today, social media, as a new medium of communication, became prominent in politics, compelling political parties and their local representatives to use social media accounts. Web 2.0 technologies, which are mainly attributed to social media tools, empowered citizens and made them more willing to participate in political decision-making. Local politicians are increasingly using social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram for many reasons. These tools can be seen as an important facilitator to promote citizen-oriented governance, boost democratic participation, and increase public services' efficiency. Each Local municipalities representing different political parties may have different core strategies and communication methods but in e. Still, the way they use social media accounts can not be taken as a single entity independent from the political standing of the parties they represent. In this context, this thesis aim at analyzing selected local municipalities' social media tactics and the topics they mostly highlighted on their social media accounts. In so doing, the main question of this study is that “What type of information is disclosed by local governments through their

Twitter pages in order to legitimize their policies and actions.” In this thesis, ten municipalities 5 from JDP(Justice and Development Party) and 5 from RPP(Republican People’s Party), are chosen to analyze their official Twitter accounts. Two main methods of data collection and analysis are applied in this thesis: (1) the quantitative analysis aims to gather data regarding the social media usage frequencies of selected local governments. (2) Another method is based on the comparative content analysis of the local government's social media posts to understand how local governments differ in their communication tactics on social media and what kind of topics they focus on.

Keywords: Social Media, Justice and Development Party, Republican People’s Party, Political Communication, Web 2.0 Technologies, Public Services, Twitter, Content Analysis, Social Media Tactics, Local Governments

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, İstanbul'daki seçilmiş yerel belediyelerin sosyal medya kullanımını karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısıyla incelemektedir. Günümüzde yeni bir iletişim aracı olarak sosyal medya, siyasette öne çıkarak siyasi partileri ve yerel temsilcilerini sosyal medya hesabı kullanmaya mecbur bırakmaktadır. Esas olarak sosyal medya araçlarına atfedilen Web 2.0 teknolojileri, vatandaşları daha bilinçli hale getirerek, onları siyasi gelişmelerin bir parçası olmaya daha istekli hale getirdi. Yerel politikacılar, birçok nedenden dolayı Twitter, Facebook, Instagram gibi sosyal medya araçlarını giderek daha fazla kullanıyor. Bu araçlar, vatandaş odaklı yönetimi teşvik etmek, demokratik katılımı artırmak ve kamu hizmetlerinin verimliliğini artırmak için önemli bir kolaylaştırıcı olarak görülebilir. Farklı siyasi partileri temsil eden her Yerel belediyenin farklı temel stratejileri ve iletişim yöntemleri olabilir, ancak özünde sosyal medya hesaplarını kullanma biçimleri, temsil ettikleri partilerin siyasi duruşundan bağımsız tek bir varlık olarak ele alınamaz. Bu bağlamda, bu tez, seçilen yerel belediyelerin sosyal medya taktiklerini ve en çok vurguladıkları konuları analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu noktada tezin temel araştırma sorusu: “Politikalarını ve eylemlerini meşrulaştırmak için yerel yönetimler tarafından Twitter sayfaları aracılığıyla ne tür bilgiler açıklanır?” Bu tezde, resmi sosyal medya hesaplarını analiz etmek için on belediye (AKP'den 5 ve CHP'den 5) seçilmiştir. Bu tezde iki ana veri toplama ve analiz yöntemi uygulanmaktadır: (1) kantitatif analiz, seçilen yerel yönetimlerin sosyal medya kullanım sıklıklarına ilişkin veri toplamayı amaçlamaktadır.(2) Diğer bir yöntem, yerel yönetimlerin sosyal medyadaki iletişim taktiklerinin nasıl farklılaştığını ve ne tür konulara odaklandıklarını anlamak için, yerel yönetimlerin sosyal medya gönderilerinin, karşılaştırmalı içerik analizine dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal medya, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, , Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP, Siyasal İletişim, Web 2.0 Teknolojileri, Kamu Hizmeti, Twitter, İçerik analizi, Sosyal Media Taktikleri, Yerel Yönetimler

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Introduction to Social Media

Today, politics is not one-way communication in which citizens are passive observers who cannot transmit their opinions. The pace of technological developments enforced not only institutional changes within countries but also created digital-enabled societies. As Andrew Chadwick highlights in his masterpiece book “Internet Politics,” the internet has three essential functions as a fundamental means of this digital-enabled society. (Chadwick,2013) These are promoting participation, boosting community cohesion, and increasing political deliberation. The Internet also laid the foundation of new media channels, which have undeniably impacted politics, particularly local ones. Among these new media channels, social media emerges as a powerful channel that grows every day with dozens of platforms. According to current statistics, there are 3.80 billion active social media users across the world. Facebook is the most preferred social media platform with 2.4 billion active users, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp with 2 and 1.6 billion active users, respectively. Instagram is mainly preferred by the young generation, with %65 of its 1 billion active users being between 18-34 years old. (Hootsuite,2020)

Social media has deeply impacted our daily life by dramatically changing the traditionally accepted rules in social, economic, and political life. The transformation, at first, prominently displayed itself in the economic sphere of life, with companies striving not to lag behind the innovative developments. Then, social media gradually diffused into the political sphere. The distinctive characteristic of social media enabling people to spread information, forge community, establish engagement lured politicians; thus, having a presence on social media is widely accepted as an indispensable part of political communication. (Sobacı,2016) Social media also attracted political and administrative units keen to make governance transparent, involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, and deliver public services effectively. The interactive nature of social media provides public institutions with an opportunity to build trust through involvement, collaboration, and dialogue. (Knox,2013)

The opportunities social media offer extends to the different domains of politics, transcending central politics. As the proximate connection points between citizens and politics, local governments gradually adopt social media accounts for various purposes. Social media platforms may be used for information dissemination, cost efficiency in public services, reaching target groups, employing new talents, getting feedback about services. In this context, having a social media account does not mean that local governments implement a successful social media strategy. Therefore, it is highly of importance that local governments conduct an elaborative process to reach well-defined targets. Adapting social media has negative reflections as much as positive reflections. Yet, according to Gibson, “It is much riskier not to participate in Social media than to participate.” Because social media platforms are already part of the community and many people use these platforms as discussion forums to talk about local governments and their decisions and interact with stakeholders (Gibson,2010)

As I indicated above, there are many motivations for adapting social media by local governments. Each local government uses different functions it. While most of the local governments favor social media in terms of its feasibility as another communication channel to rapidly spread information to citizens; some local governments, especially ones that stick around the principles of the political party they represent, use social media as a complementary instrument of the mainstream political parties, and thus the way they interact underpin the prevailing political view. In this context, this thesis aims to understand the differentiation of social media usage among local governments representing different political parties.

1.1.2 Social Media and Communication

Social media emerges as a powerful tool offering various activities such as entertainment, networking, education, sharing opinions, etc. One of the striking characteristics of social media is its convenience for creating, designing, improving, and sharing content and services. (O’Reilly, 2007). Web 2.0 technologies, based on user-centric communication in contrast to web 1.0 technologies, created a space for every user to be more active and engaged. In this sense, Web 2.0 “is of the user, by the user, and more importantly, for the user” (Chu and Xu 2009,p.717). Digital communication and information channels, which are accessible and consumable regardless of the users' location, are defined as new media (Hennig et al., 2010: 312). As a result of the increase in sites related to social sharing and allowing individual participation at the maximum rate, the new media started to be known as social media. Kaplan

describes social media as “ a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creative exchange of user-generated content “(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p.61). Social media transformed the definitions of boundaries associated with physical, sociological, and economic limitations by creating a new brand structure based on engagement and sharing, in which localism and globalism exist simultaneously. The most basic feature of social media is that it includes a high level of participation. Users have the opportunity to comment, share, and interact with other users on any topic and area they want. This feature transforms the one-way communication model of traditional media into two-way, and users can find the opportunity to chat, discuss, and socialize via social media. Therefore, it can be said that the structure of social media that allows participation brings socialization and openness to it. Moreover, social media enable people to form or be part of communities where they communicate regarding their common interests or react to any situation that affects society. Social media includes numerous platforms that are used for different purposes based on user expectations. Kılıc (2015: 50-54) categorizes social media platforms as:

“Blogs (Weblogs), Wikis, Podcasts, Forums, Video Sharing Sites, Photo Sharing Sites, Social Bookmarking Sites, and Micro-blogs. According to Dawley, the general content of social networks are Social sites: MySpace, Facebook, Twitter; Photo Sharing Sites: Flickr; PhotoBucket; Video Sharing: YouTube; Professional Networking Sites: LinkedIn, Ning; Blogs: Blogger.com, Wordpress; Wikis: Wetpaint, PBWiki. Content tagging: MERLOT, SLoog; Virtual Word: SL, Active Worlds, There, Whyville, Club Penguin and HiPiHi.”

1.2 Social media Types

1.2.1 Wiki

A wiki is a collection of information pages that allow anyone to edit it as they wish. Groups can easily create extensive documentation thanks to the wiki and can track the differences in versions between these documents. Since the links and page formatting between the pages will be automatically configured by the system, accessing and documenting information is extremely easy with the wiki. The name wiki is derived from the word wikiwiki, which means quick in the Hawaiian language. Wiki pages are a virtual encyclopedia that everyone contributes

to its creation. It is an open space where all individuals can access these pages and modify information that has been written about a topic. In other words, wiki applications are open source environments. The open-source environment is a type of information developed by available developer groups, and anyone can use it. Wikipedia is a well-known example of a wiki. (Dikme,2013)

1.2.2 Blog

A blog is a website. However, these are not just static sub-pages; they cover different topics in individual articles. Another feature of blogs is that they usually have a single author responsible as the author of the content and often writes articles from a subjective first-person perspective. Blogs are a valuable tool for people to express their views. A blog on the Internet is like a public magazine in which several people write their thoughts or knowledge as one person can and share with others. Today, blogs have developed and gained immense popularity. Blogs are no longer just a diary; they have the characteristics of the content being published and ordered chronologically. Another characteristic feature of blogs is that users can comment and discuss bloggers' personal contributions, so blogs have become an essential communication tool for many institutions.(Gilmor,2006)

1.2.3 Microblogging

Microblogging combines blogging and instant messaging that allows users to create text messages to post and share with an online audience. Social platforms like Twitter have become viral forms of this new blogging, especially on the mobile web. This had made it much more convenient to communicate with people than when desktop web browsing and interaction were the norms. These text messages can take the form of a variety of content formats, including text, images, video, audio, and hyperlinks. After social media and traditional blogging, the Web 2.0 era came together to make it easier and faster to communicate with people online and at the same time learn about relevant, shareable information.

1.2.4 RSS

RSS is the general name of the reader system that uses the most simplified file types (XML, HTML, etc.), often used by news providers, Blogs, and Podcasts, allowing easy tracking of newly added content. It was derived from “Real Simple” expression. Real Simple Syndication

is an acronym for RDF Site Summary or Rich Site Summary. Users can control the information content to come utilizing RSS. In other words, users can control precisely what information they want to reach them. If they are satisfied with the information they receive, they can continue their subscription or cancel their membership. Furthermore, Internet users can subscribe to sites that regularly offer content with RSS technology and follow the content instantly through various RSS clients. On the other hand, the site administrator or the owner should make some technical arrangements to provide this service and send XML in the appropriate format when the RSS client requests (Güçdemir, 2012, p.38).

1.2.5 Podcast

"Podcast" is derived from the combination of "pod" in the name of Apple's portable player "iPod" and the "cast" term inside "Broadcast." Although podcasts were developed for iPod for the first time, the term podcast is not used for iPod today. The podcast is a system that allows any audio file to be shared via RSS when requested. The purpose of podcasting was for individuals to distribute their own music records. It is the broadcasting of digital media products (radio programs, videos, etc.), which can be downloaded to computers and portable devices (mobile phones, tablets, etc.) over the internet, usually via feed (notification). Typically "Podcasters," like "Video Bloggers," provide regular updates on their content for viewers to consume. The contents are generally offered through audio for the subscribers to connect, and download opportunities are offered through iTunes (Akar, 2010, p.106). Podcasting is used to listen to music or any program as a continuation of the radio habit. Still, beyond that, it can also promote institutions and organizations and maintain communication with their stakeholders. Podcasting is especially successful in reaching people who travel frequently, who have to spend time in airports or vehicles. (Scott, 2007)

1.2.6 Multimedia Sharing and Advergaming

The rich multimedia contents such as photos, videos, and audio are shared through multimedia sharing tools. These tools include YouTube, Flickr, Picasa, Vimeo. There is an upward trend in multimedia, with various formats becoming available on the social web (Sobacı,2016). In today's world, where internet technology has developed rapidly, it has become possible to come across different advertising applications every day in the virtual space and find environments where you can have fun (Soytürk, 2008). One of these environments and the new one is

advergame. Advergame has a potentially increasing importance in reaching young target audiences, such as viral marketing and blogging, emphasizing the use of the internet and mobile phones that are becoming widespread every day for innovative marketing pursuits. In the current period, one of the most effective ways to reach the target audience, especially children and young people, is either in-game advertising or game advertisements that create unique brand awareness placed on the website.

1.3 Social Media and Politics

Social media has become an indispensable part of politics in the last decade. After discovered by politicians, it was deemed by most as a game-changer in a rapidly changing political environment. (Ferrara, 2016). The increased impact of social media in politics enforces politicians to use social media tools effectively and consciously in order to reach mass audiences and resonate with them. Barack Obama's victory in the 2008 elections was a breakthrough in political communication and interaction with citizens. His massive emphasis on social media tools rather than traditional media channels to reach audiences utilizing more than 15 platforms was a significant step in transforming political communication strategies. In this context, politicians capable of successfully managing networking characteristics of social media may also steer public opinion in a positive direction. Calderaro points out that "Social Media enhance the impact of the Internet on politics by empowering its networking characteristics, enabling the creation of large political digital communities, and generating further political debate and political contents"(Calderaro, 2018. P.5)

Social media gave variety to the concepts of politics in the context of political participation. It leads to the emergence of a new understanding that is widely accepted as an alternative to the formal political processes and interaction between public institutions. The increased number of political systems leads to the emergence of new policy practices. These practices are enriched and differentiated based on the different political actors' perception, purpose, and aim. (Calderaro, 2018) social media, in this context, fit differently to the framework in which it is used. In order to better understand the concept of social media and politics, we first clarify the political practices we are arguing. We should describe, for example, if we are referring to the impact of social media on electronic turnout or to what extent social media is an effective instrument in manipulating floating voters. Can we say that the use of social media increases the efficiency of the public Administration? What is the implication of mass mobilization on

social media during the crisis, and how social media contribute? Addressing these questions helps us categorize different political practices and formulate a methodology to analyze the impact of social media on politics.

1.4 Social Media Adaptation of Local Governments

Social media adaptation is not limited to central governments. Local governments have been adopting social media at an increasing pace due to numerous reasons. 1- Cost efficiency: many local governments face the dilemma of managing their budget efficiently and offering adequate public services. It is crucial because local governments have a limited budget and are expected to provide services in a planned and affordable way. In this context, many local governments, particularly after the 2008 economic crisis, sought ways to increase cost-efficiency. (Sobacı, 2016) At this point, social media provides local governments with opportunities to adopt innovative technologies at a low cost and reduce the cost of delivering public services. 2- Strengthening the Local Democracy: Local governments have a significant responsibility to strengthen the local democracy since they are the closest connection point between politics and citizens. Local governments may utilize social media platforms to facilitate the communication between decision-makers and citizens, provide information about decisions and services and, constantly engage with citizens.

Moreover, involving citizens in a decision-making process and making them more active participants is vital in building trust. Social media offers opportunities to enhance accountability, transparency, and confidence at the local level. 3- Improving Policy Making: Social media may be a useful platform to initiate a constructive dialogue between local governments and stakeholders, contributing to the co-production of the policies. According to Sobacı, “ Social media tools provide new opportunities for involving citizens in problem-solving, community engagement, crowdsourcing, consultation, and cooperation process. (Sobacı,2016, p.11) Therefore, if local governments consider local knowledge and preferences through social media, the outcomes may be more rational, legitimate, and ultimately more acceptable. 4-Improving public services: Social media enables local politicians(the mayor or council members) to interact with citizens frequently. Although it sometimes may result in unintended consequences such as misinformation or misleading officials, social media platforms that provide open and direct communication include many opportunities to improve

public services and reach out to the people whom voices are mostly unheard of. In this way, local politicians may gather information from the citizens and use them to augment public services. Citizens may report any issues they face or express their suggestions in a way that leads to the co-production of public services as well as mediating the satisfaction of citizens.

5- Collaboration and Knowledge Management: Local governments need to ensure intra or cross-agency cooperation. Any inconsistency among agencies may undermine the efficiency and productivity of public services, especially at times of emergencies and disasters. On the one hand, social media helps intra agencies establish an effective information mechanism that could detect and solve any issues in a short period. On the other hand, social media tools can be incorporated in government agencies to provide cross-agency cooperation. Chun emphasis that “These social network systems allow large scale distributed collaboration, information sharing and creation of collective intelligence in government areas at all levels from local to federal. (Chun,2010, p.4-5).

6- Marketing the Political Image: Social media tools can also be convenient instruments to highlight the image of politicians. Commonly, many local politicians use official social media platforms of local governments as an integrated part of their own social media accounts. Not only does social media provides elected officials with opportunities to increase their appearance and awareness among citizens, but it also may be utilized to create positive sentiment about local officials by frequently sharing successful projects, plans and, public services on local affairs.

1.5 Benefits of Social Media For Public Sector

Social media offers two main benefits for public sector entities: Boosting public participation and enhancing accountability and transparency. These benefits can be acquired by extending the government’s visibility with data sharing and incorporating insights into the decision-making process to become more transparent, open, and participatory, thus enabling all stakeholders to become involved in the collaborative process.(Mergel and Bretschneider 2013).

1.5.1 Public Participation

At the beginning of the 21st century, the intensification in the usage of e-government technologies spread the positive perception that these technologies would transform governmental communication and openness and ultimately change the internal dynamics of government agencies. In this context, the studies aimed at investigating to what extent internet

technologies facilitated these purposes. Some findings proved that although e-government technologies have demonstrated the potential of strengthening democratic responsiveness and government effectiveness in the public's eyes, it is hard to say that they fulfilled the expectations for boosting citizen participation. (Thomas and Streib, 2003; West, 2004) Future studies are expected to take further the theories that revolve around web 1.0 literature. The previous literature focused on deliberative democracy, consensus building, and collaborative advantage by not including multi-stakeholder dialogue and citizen-centric models (see, e.g., Herranz, 2007; Huxham, 1996; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Weeks, 2000).

Currently, social media attracts many scholars who would like to study the impact of social media on citizen engagement as an extension of e-government technologies. (Banson et al.2012; Mergel and Bretschneider 2013; Snead;2013 Zavattaro 2013). Although social media, in nature, encourage collaboration and deliberation as an essential part of the digital space, the presence of any group or institution does not necessarily result in the emergence of constructive dialogue. As such, many local governments use social media platforms statically; in other words, they are less enthusiastic about engaging actively and collaborating with citizens. (Zavattaro,2011)

Agostino (2013) underscores the gravity of establishing a communication strategy that exploits the full potential of social media as an interaction instrument to enhance public communication and public participation. One of her most striking findings is that social media is not an option but somehow compulsory for many reasons. First of all, no matter local governments are using social media or not, these tools are being and will be used by a vast majority of society. Those people will continue to debate any topic relevant to their daily life and express their suggestions or critics to the local governments. In this context, social media offers an immense chance of exploiting the information gathered and preventing the spread of disinformation caused by the lack of official channels. Moreover, another point that needs particular attention is the requirement of a clearly defined engagement strategy based on noticing the functions of the platforms that may provide local governments with an opportunity to optimize their social media accounts. "The different contributions of social media to public engagement identify the need for public administrations to move from a general isomorphic social media adoption to a thoughtful social media strategy. What is social media used for? How can social media support the local administration strategy?" (Agostino,2013, p.233).

In some studies, social media was perceived as a critical apparatus that helps build bridges between users and citizens through active communication. In this context, (Ellison N. & Hardey M. 2014) look for the answer to how social media may contribute to decentralizing government and empowering local communities. According to them, “This state of affairs needs to be challenged, however, and the argument here is that local authorities are well placed to take the lead in shifting current perceptions of social media use, not in order to dominate or direct communication about local issues, nor of course to replace formal democratic processes, but to facilitate reciprocal, many-to-many interactions of the kind that social media have made progressively more feasible. (Ellison N., & Hardey M. 2014, p.36).

1.5.2 Transparency and Accountability

Today, the concept of good governance has evolved and is associated chiefly with embracing an open and transparent perspective. Web 2.0, as an enabler for bi-directional and collaborative dialogue, brought new momentum to the public administrations and their communication style. However, the new technologies are not commonly compatible with the long-held accepted norms and values and require a new way of thinking. (Kim, Halligan, Cho, oh, & Eikenberry, 2005) Thus, public administrators are under pressure to transform the way the communication channel between bureaucrats and citizens was established. On the other hand, Web 2.0 technologies, more specifically social media, offer several benefits to public entities, such as enhancing transparency and citizen participation. (Picazo-Vela, 2012; Guillamón et al., 2013; Mossberger et al., 2013; Oliveira & Welch, 2013; Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; Taskiran, 2019)

Moreover, the growing influence of social media provides local governments with a unique opportunity to efficiently use social media and, thus, gain citizens' trust by embracing open and constructive dialogue and constantly giving information about the public service provisions. This is clearly manifested in the report of AGIMO (2009. P.2) “Government 2.0 is not specifically about social networking or technology. It represents a fundamental shift in the implementation of government—toward an open, collaborative, cooperative arrangement where there is (wherever possible) open consultation, open data, shared knowledge, mutual acknowledgment of expertise, mutual respect for shared values and an understanding of how to agree to disagree. Technology and social tools are an important part of this change but are essentially [just] an enabler in this process.” In his study, Banson examines social media’s leverage to boost transparency and the level of its usage among local municipalities in western

countries. (Banson, et al., 2009) One of the findings in this study is that although western governments have an appetite to boost transparency and accountability via social media platforms, they refrain from adapting interactive tools such as podcasts, real-time webcasts, specific social networks. These tools facilitate and encourage corporate dialogue with citizens.

In a subsequent study, Social media was seen as a complementary innovation that enriches the policy implementations initiated with e-government toward a more collaborative, transparent, and accountable management style. (Bertot et al., 2010). In this context, It should be noted that social media, unlike other communication tools, empowered the ruled rather than rulers by giving them leverage to share, produce, and cooperate regarding any issue relevant to society. Bertot underscores that “The social media applications of the internet, on the other hand, have the potential to enhance existing approaches to transparency and foster new cultures of openness both by giving governments new tools promote transparency and reduce corruption and by empowering members of the public to collectively take part in monitoring the activities of their governments” (Bartot et el.2010, p.86)

Currently, several studies focus on the different themes of transparency through social media analysis for two main reasons:1- Central governments enforce local administrations to take more regulatory steps to promote an open and transparent government model.2- There is a growing demand from the citizen side for local governments to disclose necessary information about local affairs. The study of Royo aimed at examining the levels of financial transparency in Spain municipalities while contributing to discover other under-explored areas of public sector transparency. (Royo el et., 2020). The presence and transmission of social media indicate a paradigm shift from merely making information available to more engaged, accountable, and transparent governance in local governments. (Bearfield & Bowman 2017). In this context, future studies are supposed to expand the literature about the different impacts of social media on the transparency and accountability of local government by investigating the micro-level themes such as recruiting, public tender, etc.

1.6 Risk and Barriers for Local Governments on the Social Media Use

Social media itself includes both opportunities and challenges for public administrators to use it for different purposes. Thus, there are some drawbacks to using social media in the public sector due to its perceived negative impacts. (Kingsley 2009; Zavattro and Sementelli 2014). Yet, a significant portion of the literature emphasizes that social media's opportunities far outweigh the potential damage caused by social media use. Scarce studies explore the risk and barriers for social media use and offer prescriptions regarding how to get rid of them. (Bartot et al. 2012; Picazo-Vela et al. 2012; Zheng, 2013; Landsbergen 2010; Meijer et al. 2012; CIO Council 2009; Tappendorf 2012). "These studies use social, political, legal, organizational, technological and information related categories to understand barriers for the use of social media." (Sobacı, 2016, p.12) The main ingredients of social media barriers can be privacy, security, lack of resources, perceptions, governance, and social inclusion. (Bartot et al. 2012; Picazo-Vela et al. 2012; Landsbergen 2010).

Previous studies underscore that the most conspicuous barrier to using social media technologies in the public sector is not the technology itself, rather the public sector's adaptation of these technologies, as was the case with e-government practices. (Sobacı, 2016) Thus, social media use in the public sector requires a separation from the traditional mindset towards a more open, collaborative, and dialogue-oriented perception, built on the shared belief and consensus about opportunities social media offers for stakeholders. In this context, effective leadership stands out as a considerable barrier to use social media in the public sector. Influential leaders who embrace the potential benefits of social media (Cooperation, transparency, accountability, Participation) may spark the transformation as mentioned above and facilitate social media use in local governments. In other words, effective leadership is an indispensable factor for local governments to attain potential benefits for any innovative organizational initiative, most notably social media.

Moreover, Social media's use may be related to the prevalent culture, divided into organizational and political. Organizational culture determines to what extent local governments embrace social media. It is crucial to understand the ability of local governments to react to the ongoing innovations and not lag behind them. In this context, the organizational culture leading to the early adaptation of social media applications in local governments may be deemed relevant to being open and sensitive to the developments revolving around them. On

the other hand, the concept of political culture is associated with citizens having a more active role in contributing to transparency, participation, and cooperation. Social media, in nature, encourages two-way communications between citizens and public administrators. Yet, to reach the objectives mentioned above, social media should be used for political and administrative purposes by actively participating in constructive dialogue. Therefore, political culture in a country determines the boundaries of democratic participation, which is facilitated and nurtured by social media. Nevertheless, even if political culture prepares a sufficient ground for active participation in any country, citizens still should have fundamental skills, namely e-maturity, to generate content and be actively involved in the decision-making process.

An exploratory study (Kavanaugh et al., 2012) reveals that “Local government uses social media without knowing its costs and benefits, or who their actual audience is, who in their organization should monitor communications, how and when they should be responding, and what effect their social media communications have on the public” The authors insists that the combination of traditional and emerging media creates several risks for public administrations including record management and legal issues, noting that future studies would mitigate the pitfalls by benefiting from the experience that focuses on the transition from traditional media to new media . Another study (Vela et al., 2012) investigates the opportunities and challenges of social media use in local governments. The author argues that social media use may prompt positive and negative results at the same time. For example, opening up government information to boost transparency may result in mistrust of institutions. However, when underpinned by a good strategy, social media become a valuable channel to uphold democratic participation and increase the quality and quantity of communication, avoiding potential risks such as losing control over content or misinformation. They further suggest that institutional arrangements, including the amendment of rules and laws, are required to provoke the change in organizational culture to get intended results by using social media in local governments. Moreover, an empirical study (Khan et al.,2014) explores the connection between the satisfaction level of public sector employees and the risks and benefits associated with social media use. According to findings, the positive sentiment related to social media benefits is higher than the dissatisfaction resulting from its risks.

CHAPTER 2: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

2.1 Local Governments In a Historical Process

Local governments as a concept; outside of the central government, It is a form of administration created to meet the community's everyday needs; the people directly elect the decision-making bodies, have an autonomous management structure, and are defined as a local organization model. With these qualities, local governments constitute one of the essential elements of the democratic governance structure. They stand out as organizations structured in almost every society to increase efficiency in providing local public services. These organizations emerged in parallel with societies' historical developments to achieve specific goals and meet particular needs in the local community. (Keleş, 2012)

In historical circumstances, significant developments encompass the development of local governments concept: In ancient times, "Sites," as an example of minor democratic units, founded by a group of self-governing living in a particular territory, the "municipes," who benefited from an administrative autonomy besides having local and political powers in the Roman Empire, and one of the basic concepts of political thought in ancient Greece the city-states called "polis," which are perceived as the most developed form of organization of social life and the most suitable environment to create the ideal society, have shed light on today's practices as the first examples of local governments. As a result of these units losing their influence, the formation of "communes," which played a vital role in the liberation of cities, considerably increased the importance of local governments. Today, these units are regarded as the first examples where local governments have been fully institutionalized, with the full participation of the public and becoming administrative, political, and sociological units. (Tortop et al., 2006).

Since the 16th century, with the development of the nation-state, the state became the sole sovereign power, the communes lost their control and continued their existence as an intermediary institution. As a result, the ideological superiority of the state over the city gained strength. The development of local governments is mainly attributed to pragmatist philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and Turgot, who emphasized the significance of the cities. (Cicek,2014) Besides, the autonomous municipal trends emerging in the United States and the ideas of Fabian socialists and French thinkers such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Proudhon, and

Sieyes had made significant contributions to the development of local governments in this process. Local administrations were organized as local service organizations in the reforms introduced in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. At that time, local administrations perceived as a part of the state also served as local central government offices (Okmen&Parlak, 2012). The beginning of the 20th century can be deemed the "golden age" for local governments. During this period, local units could find resources for their compulsory services and offer more services to local people than the central government (Keleş, 2012). In the 21st century, local administrations, with the contribution of the international organizations and the globalization process, are becoming stronger and increasing their functionality day by day. It is undeniable that they strive to activate local service delivery in a broader spectrum with different organizational structures.

2.2 Local Governments in Turkey:Ottoman Legacy

Local governments' development in the modern sense in Turkey dates back to the Ottoman era when the Tanzimat(Regulation) proclamation ushered in dismantling the traditional governmental system and establishing the new administrative units in both central and periphery, including local governments and provincial administrations. (Ozgur&Kosecik,2009) This is the continuation of the modernization process associated with accepting Europe's superiority in the military field and diffused into other economic, social, and political spheres of life. Yet, it is essential to underscore that Seljuk and Ottoman states had some elements of decentralization. For example, in the Anatolian Seljuk State, the provinces were, in a sense, organized based on decentralization, and these provinces were administered completely autonomously. However, this organization model was the main reason principalities become so powerful that they revolt against Seljuk state, and ultimately Suljuk fell apart. In order to preclude the similar circumstance that Seljuk State face, the Ottoman Empire embraced strict control on the periphery, which hampered the development of local administration.

Avoiding local administration and strengthening centralization was the primary concern of bureaucrats in the center. These bureaucrats mainly interested in improving the traditional provincial system, increasing revenues, and ensuring consistent administrations and decisive control over influential groups in the periphery; therefore, absolutism and centralism became a political system rooted in the founding policy of the Ottoman Empire. (Ortaylı, 1979) Based on this, some historians state that a formalized local government status emerges only due to the

need to settle down the centralization system and the pressure exerted by external states for the political participation of minority elements and obtaining their ethnic rights in the Ottoman Empire. (Keleş, 2012) Accordingly, until establishing the first municipal organization, the services of local governments in the Ottoman Empire were provided by traditional institutions. These institutions did not have autonomy vis-à-vis the central government. Thus, just as in other empires, the understanding of local democracy was not fully developed in the Ottoman Empire. The local people did not have any authority to determine the persons or institutions that would perform the local services. Local services were conducted by either government representatives themselves or under the supervision of them traditional institutions. (Sengul,2012) *Kadı*, guilds, and foundations were those who handle the affairs of provinces.

2.2.1 Kadı

One of the administrators that played a pivotal role in providing local services in the Ottoman period was the "*Kadı*" (Muslim judge). During this period, *Kadı* was appointed by the sultan, as there was no election process. In addition to their administrative duties, *Kadı*, who had financial and legal control powers, acted as central auditors. (Sengül,2016) In the Ottoman administration, *Kadı* also took on judicial affairs of the city, although he was the city manager. However, those who help *kadı* fulfill the responsibilities and duties in city management, such as sect leaders (*Imam*), *Subaşı*, and chief architects, facilitated the service provision (Ozer & Onen, 2017). The primary function of the *Kadı* was to protect judicial authority. Besides, they were assigned to fulfill the duties ordered by the center, perform a marriage ceremony and supervise the foundations, mosques, and madrasa. *Subaşı*, one of the *Kadı*'s assistants, assumed the police's duty defined in the modern state. In addition, *Imam*, who were the representatives of the *Kadı* in the neighborhood and served in mosques, had essential duties. For example, the *Imam*, one of the authorities closest to the public, had a duty to resolve disagreements among residents and warn groups acting against social morality (Güven & Dülger, 2017).

2.2.2 Foundations

Foundations, an institution led by *Kadı*, were an essential pillar of service provision in the Ottoman Empire. (Sengul,2016) Public services that are provided by foundations and chaired by *Kadı* include environmental planning, maintenance, and repair, water supply, and public health. Among the reasons why the central state did not provide these services, researchers cite

the lack of a local community to carry out these procedures, the state not allocating a budget for local service provision, and the public's free use of these services. (Guven&Gulger,2017) Foundations are known as Institutions built by wealthy people for charity, providing services such as hospitals, roads, and public work. However, in addition to this, they undertake responsibilities of preventing the alienation of migrants by regulating relations between society and uniting the public, as a social benefit offered to local people. The fact that there was no mention of a local government structure in the relevant period has led to discussions in the literature that foundations cannot be considered local government units. Accordingly, Dursun (1998;p.95) states that it would be a mistake to define the foundations in the Ottoman Empire as old local government units. Foundations can only make arrangements specified by those who pay a certain amount for the foundation and do not include dealing with elections. Therefore, in this case, foundations cannot fully fall into the local government category.

2.3 The First Modern Municipality Attempt: Sehremaneti

The dissolution of the janissary corps, which was under the authority of Kadı until 1836, impacted the other branches of governance. Kadı was no longer responsible for providing public services in provinces, and instead, Ihtisab Ministry undertook the municipal tasks. This institution was also exclusively authorized to collect taxes having branches in different provinces. (Eryılmaz,2005) Besides, the tasks previously handled by foundations was transferred to the Ministry of foundations. However, Ihtisab Ministry was not capable of maintaining city order and performing municipal responsibilities in the capital(Istanbul) and other provinces (Ortaylı,2000). With the dissolution of the Ihtisab Ministry in 1854, providing municipal service become an urgent need in the Ottoman Empire with the accumulation of both external and internal factors.

Tanzimat Proclamation created a positive environment between Ottoman bureaucrats and the West. Relations intensified in many fields, which compelled bureaucrats to establish municipal governance similar to Western municipalities. Additionally, because of the Crimean war between (1853-1856), the residing of more than 100,000 fighters, providing suitable transportation for the dispatch of these soldiers, establishing buildings such as hospitals and hotels made it necessary to provide regular municipal service in the Ottoman Empire, as Istanbul was the center of allied powers.”The desperation of bureaucrats at the Porte(The central office of Ottoman Empire), and the criticism and demands of foreign diplomats, created

an urgent belief that Sublime Porte needed an organization to undertake city administration and daily services and to modernize Istanbul.”(Ozer & Onen, 2017,p.156) Following the dissolution of the Ihtisap Ministry, *Sehremaneti* was founded in 1855, headed by a mayor(Sehremeni) nominated by the Ottoman cabinet and appointed by the Sultan, as a first attempt to establish a modern municipality consisting of city council where trustworthy members of both Muslim and non-muslim community were included. Sehremaneti had duties such as providing the necessary supplies of the city, setting a fixed price and implementing them, building and repairing roads and pavements, cleaning, and controlling the tradesmen. However, this first attempt can not be regarded as a successful example of a modern municipality due to insufficient financial resources and adequate personnel. (Ortaylı,1979) Besides, council members were not experienced in managing city affairs. The mayor's knowledge and capacity were not fit enough to meet the expectations, as was the case in the *Ihtisab ministry*.

New municipal initiatives were conducted after some failures in Istanbul. As a result, the Cabinet decided to divide Istanbul into fourteen districts. The Beyoğlu-Galata region, called the 6th district, became the pilot region where municipal efforts were intensified. This region was distinctive since most residents contained non-muslims, foreigners, or the wealthy and elite segment of the Ottoman Empire and were an attraction center with the aesthetic architects and valuable real-estate sector. The most popular and prestigious street in France (Sixieme Arrondissement), the Sixth district, where most Ottoman bureaucrats lived, inspired the region's name. If municipal efforts successful, the initiative would be expanded to other Muslim areas.(Rosenthal,1980) The sixth district consists of two organs: the director and municipal council containing executive and decision-making bodies appointed by Cabinet. "The municipal council was composed of district residents and property owners, and the same condition applied to foreigners appointed to the council as advisers." (Ozer & Onen, 2017,p.158)

Later on, with the Municipal Regulations issued in 1869, the municipal organization extended to the whole of Istanbul except Beyoğlu and Galata, and Istanbul's *Sehremeni* organization was established. This organization is a two-level federative structure. There were 14 departments responsible for local governments of the various districts at the lower level, similar to the Sixth district model. In addition, there were 14 municipal offices at the upper level under the presidency of Sehremeni, as well as Sehremeni and Sehremaneti Council.

The 1876 constitution paved the way for the establishment of municipalities to be governed by elected councils in Istanbul and other provinces. Therefore, the establishment, duties, and procedures for the election of the council members should be specified by law. The Provincial Municipal Law prepared in 1876 stipulated the establishment of a municipal organization in each province and town. The Dersaadet Municipality Law dated 1877 was enacted to find solutions to the significant problems in Istanbul and the Provincial Municipality Law. Later, the regulation in 1912 entails abolishing municipal offices and establishing municipal branches instead. (Unal,2011) This structure survived until 1930. The Ottoman municipality functioned as a standardized structure in executing the city's services rather than implementing a local administration system in general. In Ottoman Empire, since the centralized state philosophy was dominant, these institutions could not have local communal features other than the execution of city services.

Special provincial administrations, one of the local government units, started to develop after the second half of the 19th century. In addition to the provincial general administration headed by the governor, with the Provincial Regulations dated 1864, a special provincial administration was established with a Provincial General Assembly consisting of four members from each district. Villages, another local government unit, are the first local government units in Turkish local governments. Since the establishment of the Ottoman state, it has traditionally emerged due to the consciousness of living collectively and has preserved its existence as a local administration unit over time. (Unal,2011) The main reason for the regulations containing villages is that the central government aimed to ensure both security and regular tax collection. In this context, villages were first included in the Provincial Regulations of 1864.

2.4 Local Governments in the Republic Period

“The Republic established in 1923 hardly inherited a tradition of local government,” as Heper stated (1986, p.2). It would be plausible to examine local governments in the early years of the republic within the policies developed by the center to reinforce the concept of revolution and strengthen the bureaucratic organizations nationwide. In this period, local policies can be evaluated as the extension of the policies implemented at the center, such as ensuring ethnic integrity, increasing the dwindling resources, and making population planning. In these years, meeting the basic needs of the public, recovering from the destruction of the war, and improving

transportation facilities have been the main focus of local policies. As the republic's capital, Ankara is a place where the first municipal activities took place. A similar model to Istanbul Sehrmanaeti was implemented by a law enacted in 1924 for Ankara. This model includes the appointment of the mayor and members of the city councils and the abolishment of precondition to pay property tax to be selected as a council member. When the Ankara Sehremaneti remains rather incapable of maintaining urban development, Ankara's directorate of urban development was founded to fulfill this function by members being directly elected by the cabinet. Thus, the directorate was accountable to the cabinet and Ministry of internal affairs instead of the Ankara municipality. (Gormez, 1997)

1924 constitution, unlike the one promulgated in 1921, did not recognize the special status of local governments. According to the 1924 constitution, local governments consist of four types: provinces, cities, towns, and villages. Yet, the classification did not work in practice, and provinces, municipalities, and villages became a major concern. Besides, Village act of No. 442 was adopted in 1924. This act defined the areas where less than 2000 people live as villages. Villages are positioned as independent units since the Ottoman era. In Turkey, where the special provincial administration and the municipal system were created inspired by France, it can be said that villages emerged as a natural result of social, administrative, and political needs, as in the commune administrations in the West. The Municipal Law No. 1580 of 1930, one of the longest-lasting laws of the Republican era, had an essential characteristic in demonstrating that the experiences of the last period of the Ottoman Empire were transferred and the expectations could be fulfilled for a long time.

The municipal act of 1930 entails the dismantlement of the previous municipal model and the emergence of consistency in the regulation for the provinces except Istanbul and Ankara. According to this model, The governor and mayor of the city were determined as the same person, and this system continued until 1956 in Istanbul. In Ankara, on the other hand, the municipality was separated from the provincial government until 1948; the mayor is selected and proposed by the government and approved by the President of the republic. As for the other municipalities, The mayor could be elected by the council members or the public. However, the mayor subject to the appointment of the interior ministry and approval of the president depending on whether the municipality was in the center of the province. Furthermore, as secondary decision-making and advisory body, the municipal committee was another municipal body consisting of municipal councils and heads of service departments.

2.5 Development of Local Governments in the Multi-Party System

In the early years of the Republic, the main functions of local governments were to repair the destruction of the national salvation war, provide basic services and contribute to the country's health problem with the policy of increasing the limited population. The expansion of industry to all the regions in this process paved the way for the emergence of new medium-sized cities. This required the presence of local services regularly. After the Second World War, Turkey's rapprochement with the West and its efforts to integrate with this system brought important changes after the war compared to the pre-war period. During that, the statism, which was implemented strictly in many spheres of life, was loosened so that the country gradually transitioned to economic liberalization and began to borrow foreign debt.

Furthermore, the development model, which focuses on the development of the industry, has left its place to growth led by agriculture through rapid mechanization in agriculture. This process set off a quick population break from the rural areas and irregular migration to the cities. Consequently, an urbanization phenomenon became widespread across the country, causing housing shortage, slums, and land speculation problems, which were observed only in Ankara in the pre-war period, to emerge in all country cities. (Ersoy ,1992)

The municipal approach of the republic changed after the Second World War for two critical reasons. One of them is the rapid urbanization that I mentioned above, and the other is Turkey's transition to multi-party political life. With the competition coming into the political sphere of life, local demands found more space in the political system, making politicians more responsive to the local voices even though they could not wholly sort them out. (Eryılmaz,2002) Despite these two significant changes, it can be said that the legal framework on which the municipalities are based has not undergone any significant changes, except for some changes in the development plan laws. Rapid urbanization has left the urban administrations confronted with solving urgent problems, legitimizing the developments in slum areas, and providing minimum infrastructure. An interesting feature of the municipal management of this period is that despite entering into a democratic process, important changes were not made in the direction of democratization of municipal administrations. The local governments' financial possibilities, positions, and powers against the central government remained largely the same. The importance of strengthening local democracy has not occupied an important place in the

political agenda. Until the 1970s, as a general trend, both central governments and local governments were generally from the same party. As a result of this situation, the habit of seeing the municipalities as complementary to the central government continued. Therefore, municipalities have been delayed to play an active role and take on main responsibilities in cities' lives.

The 1961 Constitution introduced a comprehensive understanding of freedoms. Within the political environment and administrative structure brought about by this Constitution, local governments were shaped with the idea of autonomy. Article 116 of the Constitution secure the judicial status of local government, "the control of elected organs of local administrations gaining and losing the status shall only be done through the judiciary. Thus, it is a significant step for our "local democracy" to bring judicial assurance to the organs of local governments. Although legal arrangements contained considerable opportunities for local governments to improve local democracy and enhance the financial resources, they were subject to strict surveillance in terms of administrative or financial by the center, which was under military tutelage. Overall, The 1961 Constitution laid down a framework that would allow local governments to be established autonomously and powerfully. The functionality of this framework would only be achieved by enacting the necessary laws. Yet, these developments were overshadowed by military tutelage.(Ersoy,1992)

After 1960, the high rate of urbanization in Turkey continued as in the previous period. Accordingly, the number of industrial establishments accelerated, leading to suburban regions where these establishments were built. Overall, after 1960, urban problems increased significantly, big cities entered the process of metropolitanization; therefore, municipal administrations became insufficient. (Alada,1991) Since the 1970s, the understanding of municipalism has entered into a actual democratization process . As a result, the demands of urban societies from municipalities, which are in rapid structural change, have changed. In particular, the transformation of the existing relations between metropolitan municipalities and central government into more democratic forms has begun to be forced from the bottom up. The intensification of the urban population after the 1970s, the prominence of the slums in the cities, and the development and differentiation of the social structure are the most substantial factors in this compulsion.

On January 12, 1978, the Ministry of Local Administration was established to eliminate the administrative and financial obstructions developing as a brand new reality in our society, which is in the process of rapid change, thus making arrangements that will bring efficiency and functionality to these administrations and adding power to democracy in that way. But, unfortunately, this ministry, which was established to strengthen local autonomy, could not take measures that could contribute positively to the development of local autonomy and local democracy. Therefore, ultimately, this ministry was abolished in 1979. (Giritli,1998)

The military coup in 1980 interrupted the democratization process in local government and brought about some dramatic changes, especially in the big cities. The first attempt to deal with these changes was abolishing the legal entities of small local governments in metropolitan areas. In addition, these settlements were merged with the larger cities where located in the same region. Some necessary arrangements made in the field of local governments: in 1984 Establishment of Metropolitan Municipalities (Law No. 3030) and the legal regulations that anticipate an increase in municipal revenues after 1980 and the Special Provincial Administration of 1987 (Law No. 3360) and the regulations made in 2004 and 2005 that replaced these laws.(Cicek,2014) With the transition to civilian administration, local governments were supported unprecedentedly under the influence of the same political party as the central government. Still, this situation did not gain continuity with opposition parties taking over local governments in 1989 local elections. Thus, the circle of strict dependence on the center could not be broken until today.

Today, a new division of duties between the central government and local governments and the restructuring of local governments in this sense has become one of the significant issues discussed in Turkey. The reason for these restructuring discussions is that the desired efficiency, active participation, satisfaction, and efficiency level of the public could not be reached during the realization of public services. As mentioned above, since the Republic's foundation, the central administration and provincial organization, which has been growing and getting cumbersome, have been inadequate in delivering public services, unable to intervene and bring solutions to problems promptly, which has turned the attention to local governments.(Cicek,2014) In this context, in the local government reforms carried out in 2004 and after, the main objective was to ensure efficiency and productivity in service provision by transferring some public services to local governments, and changes were made to respond to the closest and most suitable unit to the required service (Arslan, 2009)

2.6 Local Governments and Communication

Democracy, transparency, and participation are keywords of the 21st century. Local governments have essential responsibilities in spreading these concepts within the society and improving the quality of life. In light of this, local governments have to dialogue with the public and establish a continuous and effective communication bridge with the masses they contact. The robustness of this communication bridge will be determined by a planned, constant, and long-term process that includes informing the public and obtaining information from them.

It may be said that communication in local governments has two essential functions. Receiving feedback and informing the public. Receiving information from the citizens means getting positive/negative opinions about their region, environment, and public services provided, thus determining their expectations from local governments and getting to know them better. Information gathering is one of the indispensable elements of the democratic and open local government philosophy that wants to understand what the people think and feel and to continue their services in this direction. Local governments use various methods to understand what the people think. These include public opinion polls, referendums, face-to-face interviews, and personal applications of the citizens.

On the other hand, informing the public stands for the information flow from local politicians to citizens about the public services and activities in the region. Informing the public about local affairs is vital to improving Transparency and openness of the governance. Moreover, increasing efficiency and effectiveness in services and developing local democracy in this way, through the participation of the people in the planning, execution, and supervision of local services, depends primarily on the open and transparent services of the municipalities towards the public. (Saran; 1996, p.23)

From past to present, it has been observed that local governments have benefited from various communication methods to strengthen the management-public relationship and interact more effectively with the citizens. In order to achieve the determined goals, multiple tools are used in communication studies to convey the message to the public. Means and methods in public communication differentiate according to the selected target audience. While channels such as newspapers, radio, television, and cinema, called mass media, are used for typical target

audiences, tools such as brochures, magazines, newsletters, and letters are used for narrowly defined target audiences (Asna, 1998). It is crucial to consider factors such as the target audience's cultural level, age, income level, region, and gender for determining adequate tools. Otherwise, trying to convey the message with the means of communication that the target audience cannot understand or that is impossible to reach due to the possibilities of the target audience will cause public communication practices to be inaccurate and inconclusive.

Another vital point to consider while determining the means of communication is to make a cost and effectiveness analysis and ensure that the message reaches the target audience at a suitable time with nominal costs. In addition, the public relations officer should consider corporate values and standards. It should be determined whether the content of the message to be conveyed to the target audience is compatible to be achieved (Peltekoğlu, 2009). The tools used by local governments in political communication vary widely. For this reason, the immense communication tools are classified under specific headings.

2.7 Written Tools

2.7.1 Newspaper

Local newspapers are essential mass media tools to realize the social, cultural, and participatory democracy functions of newspapers locally and regionally. Starting from the last periods of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, local newspapers undertook vital political functions in the War of Independence and the first period of the Republic. Today, these newspapers are expected to contribute to the healthy development of local democracy, provide a platform for discussing the problems and solutions of the city in which they are published, and accelerate local progress by broadening the consciousness and horizons of their readers. Newspapers are an important media tool used by many local governments for public information purposes. (Seker,2005)

2.7.2 Magazine

Magazines are communication tools that can reach a target audience with specific characteristics through specially selected materials. (Peltekoğlu, 2009) Like newspapers, magazines also have audiences with particular traits. While there are magazines that focus entirely on youth issues, there are also magazines that focus on women's issues or social and

political events. While using magazines in the communication process, it should be taken into account that the target audiences of the magazines differ. In addition to articles and comments, photographs and other printed visual materials can be frequently included in corporate magazines. Although the cost of the magazine is high compared to the publications of other institutions, it is known that a well-planned and carefully strategized journal is an effective communication tool for local governments (Peltekoğlu, 2009). The most crucial factor that separates the magazine from the newspaper is “time,” that is, the time elapsed between two publications. Newspapers are published daily, while magazines are published once a week or once a month. In this respect, it can be said that the magazines aim to convey the exciting and unknown aspects of the event to the readers rather than the news purpose (Kazancı, 1980). Today, in addition to printed magazines, e-magazines, enriched with features such as video and audio, are widely used by many local governments to provide information to the public.

2.7.3 Brochure

The word brochure broadly includes all flyers and small booklets. In a narrower sense, it refers to a non-continuous printed communication tool consisting of six or more pages distributed to a predetermined target audience for a specific purpose. The brochure is used to enlighten the masses with whom it is contacted on many issues. In addition, since the brochure is prepared and printed by the institution, the content, scope, and supervision of the brochure will be entirely under the institution's control. In this respect, the brochure differs from the magazine and newspaper. Brochures are usually created with few pages, plenty of pictures, and colors. The design on the cover and front pages must be attractive, as the first and most outstanding attention will be drawn to the front pages of the brochure. In addition, the page layout should be created to allow the message to be conveyed to the target audience easily.

2.7.4 Newsletter

Newsletters are defined as multi-page letters published at certain times to keep people interested in the subject constantly informed about what happened. (Asna,1998) Newsletters have few pages in terms of volume and include various information on the topic. In addition, side information, current data, and events that may attract the reader's attention are also included in the newsletters (Kazancı, 2009). Newsletters can be used in the internal relations of local governments and the general promotion of the institution or organization. In the internal links

of the institution, newsletter boards or notification tables may be sufficient to inform the institution's personnel about the institution or to transmit the news about the institution.

In contrast, for the external relations of the institution, the information will be announced to the desired target audience by the newsletters. The main reason for the popularity of newsletters is that they are easy to publish, and their costs are low (Peltekoglu, 2009, p.270). Photocopying the newsletters to be prepared in a certain number is accepted as an easy and inexpensive method (Asna, 1998, p.119).

2.7.5 Poster

Another communication tool used is posters predominantly used to convey specific messages to large audiences in short phrases. In general, images are in the foreground on the posters. The words used in the posters complement or reinforce the idea expressed by the picture (Kazancı, 2009). The photo used in the sign should be close to the poster's subject; the words and the images should show parallelism and complement each other. Finding the most effective and short phrase to be used in the poster may require long studies. The use of catchy, easy-to-pronounce slogans with sound harmony on the posters made the poster stay in people's minds and gave positive results. When the slogans on the poster are also used in public relations tools, they are easily transferred between people and make the institution easier to remember. Therefore, local governments have seen poster boards as a source of income and increased poster boards in recent years. As a result, the number of poster applications is rising. Posters are frequently used by organizations with limited budgets due to their high efficiency and low cost. (Bilgin, 2008)

2.7.6 Letter

In personal relationships, letters are preferred as a communication tool if the issues to be conveyed to the addresses are too short of filling a brochure or newsletter or too urgent to wait for the brochure or newsletter published for specific periods (Asna, 1998). Another reason for writing a letter is to establish more sincere relations between the addresses and the organization. For this reason, as an indication of the importance given to the addressee, the written letter should be signed by the highest-level managers of the organization, and the letter should include particular courtesy sentences in addition to business-related issues.

2.8 Broadcasting Tools

2.8.1 Radio

Radio is an effective tool generally used in communication studies. Almost all programs such as news, interviews, panel discussions, interviews, and announcements broadcast on the radio can be used to communicate with the public. (Gainer, 2009) Radio, which is an audio mass communication tool, is seen as an essential communication tool because it is fast and has the opportunity to reach people who cannot be reached by printed media. In addition, the radio is a suitable communication tool to reach people whose reading skills are not at a sufficient level or who are illiterate (Bilgin, 2008).

Local governments can find the opportunity to reach large audiences with very different demographic characteristics through radio. It is considered a cheap and effective method, especially since it does not create a financial burden to send bulletins to the radio, a very effective mass communication tool in conveying social issues to the masses or participating in talk shows.

Open sessions on the radio are significant opportunities to introduce the organization and express ideas related to it. In the open sessions held on the radio, the activities that local governments should do as well as the activities they have done can be talked about and even discussed with the audience. The most commonly used methods to reach target audiences through radios are bulletins, summary announcements, talk shows, program sponsorships, and public service announcements (Peltekoğlu, 2009).

2.8.2 Television

Television's strengthening verbal expressions with images, helping to bring the image to the forefront, revealing specific ideas and opinions, and adding the power of the image to the power of sound, undoubtedly made television an effective communication method. By transmitting its broadcasts to large masses of the public and generalizing the symbols, television shrinks the world. Although television appeals to a more limited audience than radio, it is a more effective

communication tool (Bilgin, 2008). Local governments can utilize televisions for activities such as public service announcements and program sponsorships. In addition, the participation of corporate spokespeople in discussion and talk programs or being a guest in a program are ways of taking place on television.

2.8.3 Movie

Movies, which are methods rarely used by local governments in communication practices, are generally produced in two types: themed films and documentaries. The movie with the theme aims to convey the predetermined messages to the viewers in their natural spaces and without the viewer being aware of it, and the viewer's assimilation of these messages. Thematic films are challenging to produce and require high costs. Documentaries, another type of movie, do not have actors and stories. In documentaries, the message to be conveyed to the target audience is conveyed intensively through a narrator. Documentaries are film genres that focus on an institution, event, or social problem in detail (Kazancı, 2009). In the communication campaigns of local governments, movies can be created for documentary, educational, cultural or just promotional purposes (Bilgin, 2008).

CHAPTER 3:LITERATUR REVIEW

3.1 Aim of the Thesis

Social media has transformed the traditionally accepted communication and interaction practices. In a way, people become content generator rather than a receiver defined in one-way communication. Enrichment of technological tools such as Tablets, smartphones, and PCs facilitated social media usage among different groups, especially the young. Therefore, this incremental usage of social media attracted the attention of many scholars. In this context, academic studies on social media have expanded dramatically in the last decade due to social media's ever-increasing influence on the economic, political, and social spheres of life. Social media's proliferation in our lives also offers local governments numerous opportunities and encourages scholars to dig into this field.

Although the relations between social media and local governments remain primarily neglected in the literature, there is an intensification of studies in this field.. Initially, most of the studies focused on the importance of social media as an extension of communication strategies in local governments because social media was not perceived as a strategic tool that could be used in many fields. Besides, These studies mainly remained limited to developed countries such as the U.S, Australia, Great Britain. However, we are witnessing that social media and local government studies are enlarging into various fields, including public engagement, emergency management, democratic participation, and innovative developments in a more recent period.

There are four essential components of social media communication: Sources, messages, channels, and receivers (Holmes, 2012). As I mentioned above, social media enables two-way communication, namely from one to many and many to one. The scope of this study will not include the comprehensive analysis of the message receivers and the content they generated. The main concern of this study is to understand the message characteristics of the selected local governments that represent different mainstream political parties. Naturally, political parties embrace a communication strategy based on norms, values, ideologies, and socio-political backgrounds they represent. In this context, political parties utilize social media tools mainly to propagate their ideas to the masses. Yet, local governments commonly do not prefer to use social media with that purpose since they are supposed to deliver public services efficiently and promptly rather than involving in ideology-centric debates. But, we should not ignore the fact that social media strategies of local governments can not be conceived as an independent entity from the political parties they represent. Given the lack of literature that examines the local governments' social media use in the context of central politics extensively, this thesis aims to fill this vital gap by focusing on the social media posts of local governments and categorizing them to the themes based on these posts. In this way, it is significant to infer from the posts whether social media posts of local governments underpin the policies of the political party they represent. This study also further investigates which local governments successfully implement innovative social media tactics. All in all, This study aims to extend the literature by examining social media and local government relations in the context of political parties.

3.2 Political Communication and Social Media

3.2.1 Political Communication: From Past To Present

If television was the main driver of the election success for Kennedy in 1960, so was the social media for Obama in 2008. What has changed during this nearly half a century in terms of political communication and what lies behind Obama's success is primarily based not upon traditional media channels. Before going deeper into the evaluation and conceptualization of political communication, it is significant to give a few hints about Obama's success in order to gain awareness about the developing and transforming political communication. One of the most fundamental elements of this success is the coordinated use of all social media channels as complementary to the traditional strategies, reaching indecisive young people who are not interested in politics and mobilizing them within the framework of specific promises. (Barbieru,2015) In the struggle for the presidential race, he made use of all the internet possibilities, made advertisement placements on entertainment activities such as online games, and kept the interest of the masses alive through SMS messages. The campaign's website that mainly targets the republican candidate, John McCain, was promoted in coordination on many social media platforms by utilizing different media content such as pictures, text, and videos to transmit the messages. In this context, the impact Obama's campaign created was often compared to that of Kennedy in the age of television. The process which evolved in political communication after 2008 was called by many academicians the "4th phase of development, which indicates the transformation of traditional communication channels to which a large part of the society participates, making it even more complex than ever. (Tasante,2020).

In the common literature, political communication is defined as the voter persuasion paradigm (Nimmo and Swanson, 1990:). However, political communication is a much broader concept than "voter persuasion strategies" or "election communication." The concept of political communication first meant the communication between the government and the electorate. Later, it gained the meaning of exchanging discourses between the ruling party's politicians and the opposition party, especially during election campaigns. Over time, this meaning expanded, and It included the function of examining the differences between the behavior of politicians. Today, political communication involves exploring the role of communication in political life in a way that takes both media and opinion polls into account, political marketing, and advertising (Wolton, 1991).

To give a more general and inclusive definition, it is possible to consider the political dimension of communication as political communication. Similarly, Ferhat Kentel defines "political communication" as "a way of understanding and expressing each other in the political arena." (Kentel, 1991). Political communication is not limited to the communication taking place during the election processes; on the contrary, it covers every aspect of social life. Binark (1994) reckons communication where there is a constant power struggle as political communication, including family, school, and other social institutions. There exist similarities of this determination in contemporary communication theories (Fiske, 2003:), which emphasize that all kinds of communication and all meanings have a social-political dimension and cannot be understood apart from their social ties. In this context, political communication may be assessed in two dimensions; first, as a professional and technical field of work for professionals operating in this field. Second, all social and public activities are related to the production and exchange of political discourses.

The development of political communication in the modern sense took place after the Second World War. This first stage of political communication is called the golden age of political parties by Jay Blumer and Dennis Kavanagh (1999). It is known that print media is one of the essential elements of communication. In this phase, Political parties present their political doctrines to the public, shaped based on ensuring institutional trust and credibility in order to reach a consensus with the voter. The most critical factors affecting voting behavior are sympathy and loyalty to the party. For this reason, the voters' sense of belonging to the party is the primary determinant, and the voter does not easily change the decision made. Therefore, during this period, politicians strived to differentiate themselves from other parties by developing a discourse centered around citizens' expectations that request the change of previous policies and principles. The messages given took comprehensive coverage in the media. Another point to be emphasized is that politicians took the local campaign very seriously, and face-to-face communication was the preferred method.

Political communication entered a different era in the 1960s, with the emergence of television as a new communication medium. This period, which we can also call the age of television, has brought about several positive and negative shifts in political communication. In this period, communication gained a more professional ground. It became more functional with implementing additional techniques such as public opinion polls by consultants outside the party in coordination with the campaign executed by political party leaders. It also becomes

convenient for campaigners to reach a broader segment of society, including women and youth. However, the reduction in direct communication resulted in campaigners distancing themselves from voters, which also remarkably loosened the party loyalty. Furthermore, the number of print media has decreased, and a limited number of channels dominated television programs. Various political parties freely expressed their opinions in these programs; in a way, citizens could not apply to other sources to get the information.

The third phase of political communication coincides with the radical change in technology, communication strategies, and consumer behaviors of voters, so-called by many as the "Post-modern" era. Darrent Lilleker (2006) emphasis three main features of this post-modern era in terms of communication.¹ Political campaigns began to be managed in decentralized forms, indicating that political messages were framed based on the different groups' peculiarities and needs by opinion leaders, journalists, and civil society managers who have substantial leverage within a network they represent. 2- Narrowcasting: In the previous periods, political movements tried to reach out through magazines, newspapers, and niche television channels to communicate directly with the groups determined as the target audience. With the introduction of the internet into our sphere of life, more innovative and complex methods such as e-mail, newsletters, and, more recently, social networking have become a norm to reach target audiences. 3- Permanent Campaigning: Political communication has become an ongoing process in modern times, going beyond just the election period, with politicians using institutions as an instrument to maintain and expand their support. The notion of permanent campaigning was also addressed by former U.S presidents, including Reagan and Clinton, and has become an indispensable part of modern governments. Another distinct characteristic of this stage is adapting some concepts to the political communication borrowed by commercial communication, such as strategic management and political marketing.

Halelink (2007) went further and defined the target audience as "Political costumer." It has been noted that solid party loyalty, which was observed in the first stage of political communication, lost its effect on this stage. The party membership that constitutes the social base of political parties diminished considerably. "The voters have become pragmatic without solid doctrinal beliefs, willing to change the option of voting according to certain instincts or according to its sensitivity to the persuasion of political actors or the media. (Tasante, 2020, p.6)

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the increasing effect of web 2.0 technologies that paved the way for multi-directional communication, we have passed to the fourth stage in political communication. At this stage, the transformation was not limited to democratic countries, and totalitarian countries also experienced a significant change, of which three major characteristics exist: (1) The communication channel and its features are very different from traditional means. (2) The political discourse and message content has undergone a significant change. (3) The citizens are more active and empowered, capable of being part of the decision-making process or challenging the government act. In this context, the transformation in political communication can be attributed mainly to the liberalization of contemporary societies, the reduction in media control, even in countries governed by totalitarian regimes, diversification of mass media technologies, and rapid diffusion of them into communities. (Tsante,2020) As the number of new communication tools intensifies and challenges traditional media power, recent trends become inevitable at the national policy level. Sandra Moog and Jeffrey Sluyter-Beltrao (2001) addresses these new trends in political communication, indicating that "They have altered the ways in which social actors and issues of public interest are represented in the media, how political actors try to communicate with each other and with potential supporters and, as a result, even the forms of such organizations, such as political parties, interest groups and movements social, which have shaped, in their turn, the modern political processes" (Moog, Sluyter-Beltrao, 2001).

The new mass communication environment enabled the large section of society whose voices remained mostly unheard previously to participate in the conversation, particularly electorates. Thus, developing communication strategies at a time of new media requires understanding fundamental change in the relations between political actors and the electorate. When digitization began, and new media was not widespread yet, political communication operated in two ways: one-directional and two-directional. The e-mails politicians send and citizens' online behaviors such as visiting official websites are defined as the one-directional form of communication. The messages are well-controlled and strategically chosen in order to transmit messages to the audience. On the other hand, the bi-directional form of communication includes the mutual interaction between politicians and citizens; in a way, both entities become both communicators and message receivers. Politicians who adopt this type of communication aim to receive meaningful feedback and improve the quality of service by keeping their websites, blog pages, or other social media open to comment. With the introduction of new media into

political communication, communication has become multidimensional, where many actors are in contact with each other simultaneously.

Political actors as information sources had complete control over the information in the television era, transmitting messages to the recipients unidirectionally. With the development of internet technologies, the new media altered the previously defined message circulation in the context of the source-message-receiver communication model, of "one-to-many" to "many-to-many", which means electorates may circulate the message within the network they influence, and no entity longer has control over information. In light of these developments, electorates who have can connect with their peers and share media content in various forms are elevated to the strategic partner rather than passive message receiver.

3.2.2 Political Communication 1.0

Web 1.0 is called the first wave of the internet revolution. In Web 1.0, people also consume content shared on websites, just as they have consumed the content produced in the traditional media tools such as newspapers, radio, and television. However, the difference between web 1.0 and traditional media is that it allows more unrestricted access since the state or official organization cannot control it. With the development of web 1.0, several innovations such as accessing the content published on the websites, communicating quickly and simply via e-mail, downloading pictures, music, and video contents from digital archives came to life. The significant distinction of web 1.0 compared to web 2.0 is that citizens cannot produce and spread content, and hence they only consume. Publishing information on the Internet can only be done by technically skilled users. (Bostanci,2014) Therefore, web 1.0 is relatively static, yet it provides politicians to reach a wide variety of internet users. Starting from the end of the 20th century, Politicians used websites as a powerful instrument to promote campaigns, especially in the USA.

3.2.3 Political Communication 2.0

Web 2.0, refers to the aggregation of content produced jointly by internet users. The concept of Web 2.0 points to a new era in internet and web publishing. (Bostanci,2014) The internet, developed primarily with the internet site concept, has grown by enriching it with new media such as social networks, wikis, blogs, and microblogs. (United Nations,2010) These

environments, where sharing is essential, turn internet users into content producers, and Web 2.0 is fueled by this cycle. With the Web 2.0 revolution on the Internet, the development of social media is discerned in every field, from daily life to politics. Hence, the method of political communication is not immune from this change. Social media stands out as a new political tool for citizens. Even citizens who are distant from politics feel compelled to express themselves in the face of the events. This new form of political communication is social media-centric and can be called political communication 2.0. Political communication 2.0 can be expressed as the realization of political communication activities by effectively using the opportunities offered by social media. Political parties can transmit their messages over the internet, broadcast their videos on video sharing sites such as Youtube, meet, talk and discuss with their voters through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and can give advertisements at a low cost to many other online platforms including Google (Devran, 2011, 12).

Meijer et al. (2012) focus on the three main success factors for implementing Government 2.0. These are incentives for citizens, government leadership, and mutual trust. Social media use of political entities is a significant step towards communicating with citizens directly. Yet, citizens' interest is essential in defining the extent to which social media become functional. Besides, effective leadership is crucial to leave official discourse and embrace a more unofficial discourse to exchange ideas with the individuals in networks. Lastly, Mutual trust enables politicians to establish more robust and permanent relations with citizens, making them public defenders. According to (Roy &Gruzd 2016), “At the heart of 2.0 are notions of collective intelligence stemming from more open, flexible, and collaborative forms of governance associated with the internet as a platform for not only communicating but also generating content and engaging with one another. (Shirky 2008; Maier-Rabler and Huber 2011; Roy 2013)”

3.3 Twitter as a Political Communication Tool

Twitter has become an important and common political communication tool in recent years. Many politicians conduct their communication with voters and the media on Twitter (Lassen & Brown, 2011; Vergeer, 2017). Twitter, which was founded in 2006, has emerged as a new political communication tool, especially since the 2008 US presidential elections. Compared to other social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube, Twitter has a more political character and is more preferred by political actors as it allows both one-way mass and two-way

individual communication. (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012; Parmelee, 2014; Morini, 2015). Twitter is gaining more and more importance in political communication, especially in political communication campaigns (Francia, 2018). In this context, it is argued that a kind of public space is formed through political communication via Twitter as a social network (Ausserhofer & Maireder, 2013). On the other hand, various political analyzes such as election forecasts, public opinion orientations, political polarization have begun to be made through metrics such as Twitter messages, retweets, tags, likes, users, followed, and followers (Gayo-Avello, 2013; Jungherr, 2015; Ceron et al., 2017; Heredia et al., 2018). Despite criticism that Twitter users do not fully represent the general audience voting (Mellon & Prosser, 2017, and even operating as a kind of elite media of users by maintaining the current political power inequality (Tong & Zuo, 2018), Twitter, nevertheless, as an important political communication medium, it represents and shapes the political sphere in various dimensions (Fuchs, 2014b). Twitter, which has evolved from the original "friend tracking" function to the "event tracking" stage and has become convenient for "big data" analysis by being noticed for by the American Library of Congress, has now turned into a "revolutionary" political communication tool (Rogers, 2015).

The fact that US President Donald Trump conducts an integral part of his political communication on Twitter demonstrates how Twitter is influential in political communication. Increasing the character usage limit from 140 to 280 since the end of 2017 has made this social network platform even more feasible for political communication. Twitter, which has approximately 320 million users worldwide as of 2018, is used by roughly 13.6 million people in Turkey (Statista, 2021). As a means of political communication, Twitter's uses accelerated in Turkey. Turkish language support started to be provided by Twitter as of April 25, 2011, which is a crucial phase of becoming widespread. Especially after the June 12, 2011, general elections, Twitter has become essential and overall, a communication tool used by political parties and politicians in Turkey. (Genel, 2012; Guler, 2014; Goksu, 2014) The main focus of these studies has been the message content of the leaders and what kind of language they use in order to transmit their messages. (Dumlu, 2018) Politicians generally use Twitter only for informational purposes in Turkey. (Bayraktutan et al. 2014; Atabek, 2020). Similar results were obtained by Meriç (2015), who analyzed the Twitter accounts of party leaders during the 2014 local elections. In the study conducted by Cetinkaya, Sahin, and Kırık (2014), it was found that a significant portion of the users (67.7%) mostly used Twitter for discussions on political and social issues. Although problems such as access bans have recurred from time to time in Turkey,

Twitter use has become a norm among politicians. This is also valid for local politics. (Cetin, 2015; Onat and Okmeydan,2015)

3.4 Political Communication and Local Governments

Local politics encompasses political activities at the local level by local political actors and belongs to a narrower geographic area than global and national political activities. However, it is not possible to precisely define locality boundaries local politics can often be intertwined with international and national political movements.(Atabek,2020) Similarly, the distinction between urban and rural areas as local politics is gradually becoming blurred. This is the continuation of the process which began a long time ago, and the difference between rural and urban areas is diminishing in Turkey. The urban-rural division in the industrial society was thought to provide an appropriate representation in terms of the structures of the settlements; however, this division has been eroded, especially with the latest legal regulations. Tekeli (2016) emphasizes that the definition of the city concept based on the dichotomy of the village and the city has lost its validity today. As for the media content, the distinction between the city and the rural has also gradually disappeared, and programs for rural areas are almost non-existent. Moreover, parallel to the developments in satellite broadcasting and internet technologies, rural residents are also directly exposed to the content produced by the global media. In this context, studies about local political communication covers studies related mostly to metropolitan municipalities in today's literature, and in this study, selected local administrations in Istanbul are examined.

3.5 Social Media and Local governments

Due to the profound impact of social media on social and political life, the number of studies on this field has increased rapidly in recent years. Although the literature on the use of social media by local governments is relatively limited, there are notable studies in this area and are expected to increase in the coming period. In the early stages of social media, the studies focus on the presence and use of social media by local governments:Vaccari(2013)(Italy-Facebook, Youtube, Twitter);Avery and Graham(2013)(USA-Social Media in general): Scullion(2013) (England-Twitter and Facebook);Larsson (2013) (Sweden-Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Flickr); Mainka et al. (2014) (Various Countries-Social media in general). In the study, Banson

et al. (2012) aim to explore the relations between citizens' engagement and municipality's activity through Facebook in the western European municipalities. The finding proved that higher activity of municipalities did not result in a higher citizen engagement on citizens. This is attributed to municipalities' initiative that has experienced an economic crisis to increase mutual trust beyond citizens' demands. Yet, this study did not analyze the nature of social media posts in-depth to measure what kind of posts garner more engagement. A later study (Willimson & Ruming, 2016) investigates social media adaptation and use by Australian capital city local governments. This study reveals a positive correlation between the mayor's social media activity and the municipality's social media use, and capital city local governments focus more on engagement than suburban local governments.

On the other hand, social media management is a complex process when considered at the corporate level, requiring more than simply opening an account and sharing posts. What kind of departments are responsible for managing social media accounts? Is there any guidebook or formalized social media strategy that becomes prominent in social media adaptation? What are the risks and barriers in adopting social media, and is there any awareness about how to handle them in local governments? What kind of technologies are preferred to use, and are they responsive to the corporate culture? These are the questions that researchers look for answers to while exploring the adaptation diffusion of social media in local governments. Zheng (2013) (China-Microblog); Mundy and Umer (2012) (UK-Twitter); Omar et al. (2012) (Australia social media in general); Ma (2014) (China-Microblog); Oliveira and Welch (2013) (USA-social media in general); Reddick and Norris (2013) (USA-social media in general); Sharif et al. (2014) (Australia-Social media in general).

Their study (Martin&Criado, 2015) explores the dynamics of adaptation of social media in Spanish local governments with over 50.000 inhabitants. With the realization of qualitative and quantitative methods, the researchers concluded that municipalities that indicate numerous objectives in social media adaptation barely achieved these objectives. For example, although obtaining transparency and accountability at a greater scale are expressed as the main goal for Spanish municipalities, the data obtained show that the municipalities are below expectations in this regard. Another study (Kleftodimos et al., 2016) investigates the factors leading the social media adaptation in Greek local governments. According to findings, the population density

has a positive impact on social media adaptation since municipalities prefer to reach the citizens and reduce the distance by using social media technologies. Besides, education level is another factor that increases the rate of social media adaptation. It is recorded that the regions with higher education levels are more prone to adopt social media in Greek municipalities.

The increasing impact of social media on people's lives implies changes in expectations in using these technologies. In this context, local governments, which are the closest political authorities to the public, are expected to develop reciprocal communication rather than simply providing information. Therefore, many municipalities have started to focus on citizens' feedback in order to increase the quality of service with the awareness of this demand from the public. Accordingly, the studies on communication and citizen engagement have intensified in the literature that analyzes the different aspects of reciprocal communication. Agostino (2013) (Italy-Facebook, Twitter and YouTube); Banson et al. (2013) (European Countries-Facebook); Ellison and Hardey (2013) (England-Facebook, Twitter and Youtube); Graham and Avery (2013) (USA-Facebook and Twitter); Hofman et al. (2013) (Germany-Facebook); Lovari and Parisi (2012) (Italy-Facebook); Mossberger et al. (2013) (USA-Social media in general); Lukomska et al. (2018) (Poland-Facebook)

Freeman (2016) presents an interesting study that investigates to what extent local governments in Australia realize engagement with citizens. The finding of this study verifies the previous research (Banson et al. 2012) that the current administration's approach and practices do not align with the civic demand. Although there is significant progress in implementing innovative technologies such as the MyRandwick mobile application in the urban local governments, the potential of sufficient space for reciprocal communication and more interaction needs to be created. (Ellison&Hardey 2013). Reddick and Norries (2013a) draw our attention to the necessity of understanding citizens' demands and act on purpose to fulfill them. It is unrealistic to envision that the digital space for digital civic participation will entirely transform the representative government. Yet, they offer a greater chance to contribute to the development of citizen-government communication and enhance local democracy. (Banson et al.2012). In this context, Perez et al (2016) indicate that the existence of large number of followers on Facebook does not automatically ensure an engaged audience. It has been observed that citizens prefer to press the like button instead of commenting on the posts of local governments and sharing them with their networks. This demonstrates that the active participation potential stated in previous research has not been reached in social media, particularly Facebook.

The proliferation of social networks and incremental public use of social media lured politicians to use actively these technologies in order to reach an outcome they intended during the elections. Social media started to be used extensively both in central elections and local elections by politicians. Social media is deemed as very functional in facilitating democratic deliberation in which people discuss and exchange opinions on various subjects regardless of who they are, where they are living, and which organization they represent. (Nielsen&Segaard, 2012) In this context, scholars gave close attention to social media's particular use to enrich democratic participation and create a virtual public sphere, in a way, to engage with target groups. Therefore, Initial studies highlighted the contribution of social media to exalt democratic principles and communication strategies of politicians during the elections in the sense that whether they embrace participatory, consultative, and engaging methods or they simply use social media to transmit political information and mobilize support. (Nielsen&Segaard,2013; Lev-on, 2012; Ozdesim Ikiz et al.,2014;Criado et al., 2012; Effing et al.,2013; Raynould & Greenburg, 2014). In their study, Nielsen and Segaard,2012) argues based on their empirical evidence that social media usage practically and the way politicians intend to use does not contest in election times. Findings support that social media is being used during local elections in Norway mainly to disseminate information and mobilize support, rather than promote democratic participation of citizens.

The study of (Lev-on,2012) proves social media usage to be deeply connected with the intensity of competition and eligibility of electorates. He concludes that "There is still a long way to go for the full realization of more participatory and bidirectional democracy through advanced online platforms."(Lev-on,2012, p.214) In another study (Cetin,2014) examines the social media usage of the local candidates based on the political party they represent via Twitter in Turkey. This study uncovers the social media usage characteristic of candidates by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods. It provides significant details about what kind of features of Twitter and web 2.0 technologies was frequently used by political parties during local elections. Chen and Chang explore the user's motivation to use two different social media channels, Facebook and Blogs, by gathering cross-sectional data before the local elections. (Chen and Chang, 2017). As a result of the regression analysis conducted, the study has shown that blogging is preferred mostly with the aim of political discussions, while Facebook usage is related to motivation for general information and entertainment.

Social media also may be a valuable tool for city governors and planners to utilize to provide more efficient and acceptable services in cities. (Cowley,2010; Cowley Hollander,2010; Fredericks Foth,2013; Rania,2016; Ruming Williamson,2020) In this context, notwithstanding remaining relatively limited, significant studies particularly explore social media's impact on city planning. Initial studies regarding the impact of social media on city planning focused on the extent to which local governments engaged with citizens and effectively managed social networks. The early stages of social networking sites' use by local governments (Cowley 2010) underscore the importance of designing social media strategies to reach target groups and mobilize them to contribute to the city planning process. "local governments should evaluate how they collect input and whether input from online social networking groups can become part of a government's dialogue around planning issues." (Covley,2010, p.247)

Various studies draw our attention to the significance of combining traditional and public participation by utilizing the innovative functions of Social media and web 2.0 technologies, which are imperative for offering citizens a wider variety of options. The efforts toward enhancing digital participation and including citizens in the city planning process should not be perceived as a path that is entirely independent of traditional participation; rather, both are what (Frederic&Foth, 2013, p.254) call " supplementary and complementary." Some studies focus on the characteristics of the participants who participate in the city planning process through social media. It is important because most of the literature examines the public participation process within the confines of city governors' or planners' perspectives that mostly ignore the participants' demographic, social, and economic backgrounds. (Rani,2016) the emphasis that public participation through social media should be deliberate, in a way that targets a group of people who would prepare the ground for success in city planning. The author insists that " Public participation, therefore, is not only about objects, but also about subjects: who is participating and who needs to participate? It is a matter of constructing the right public"(Rani,2016, p.41). Current studies concentrate on the necessity of turning social media input into a valuable outcome, thus solving complicated issues in an effective and timely manner. Therefore, social media data for city planners became an indispensable opportunity to increase the quality of services through cooperation between policymakers, experts, and inhabitants.(Zhao,2018)

As the number of digital technologies and social networking sites rapidly increases, public agencies are searching for how to utilize these tools best to handle extraordinary circumstances

such as natural disasters or terror attacks. In this context, social media use by local government at a time of crisis became highly important, and the studies in this emerging area that explore different aspects of crisis communication through social media are intensifying. (Panagiotopoulos et al. 2014; Tyshchuk & Wallace, 2013; Neely & Collins, 2018) Social media has proved to be an essential tool to manage emergencies during the crisis and before and after the crisis. (Comfort et al. 2012, p.547) notes that “Channels like Twitter and Facebook ‘are being rapidly integrated into disaster environments and warrant systematic study of their viability in support of the improved public response.’” Social media stands out more notably than the previous applications that underpin the information and knowledge management system about the emergency in public administrations. It is mainly because of social media's nature that allows to share information with as many people as possible and get their feedback rapidly. (Dorasamy et al., 2013)

The main purpose of crisis communication is to reach the right people, through the right platform, and at the right time. American Red Cross(2011) draws our attention to the growing influence of social media which outweighs the traditional media during the crisis. The survey indicates that the number of people who use social media during a crisis increase significantly, as people want to stay informed, share information, and get updates about the crisis. The study of (Carter et al., 2014) focuses on social media use during and after weather-related disasters including snowslide and flood by exploring keywords often used through social media platforms. A later study conducted by (Graham et al., 2015) examines the merits of municipalities that successfully tackle crises through social media. Authors particularly pay attention to the extent of social media use rather than the number of platforms municipalities have for getting success in handling crisis, noting that “ In addition to the many crisis response strategies to select from during a crisis, communications practitioners also must decide which social media tools are appropriate to use and how frequently they should post updates.”(Graham et al., 2015, p.389)

The study of (Rodriguez, 2015) explores the level of engagement in the aftermath of the Paris terror attack not only in the places which are directly affected by the attack but also in other European countries. Therefore, it presents us an opportunity to understand the engagement of citizens from different countries against a specific tragic event and the communication methods local municipalities carried out through social media in a comparative manner. This study reveals that although terror attacks increased the level of activities on social media, this did not result in a high level of engagement in Facebook pages of local governments.

3.6 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Numerous studies have analyzed the social media use of local governments according to the frequency of posts, number of followers, and engagement rate generated on social media platforms. (Scullion, 2013; Vaccari, 2013; Avery&Graham, 2013; Mainka et al., 2013; Cetin,2014). Few studies strived to focus on the connection between political ideology and social media use in local governments. In this context, authors such as (Tolbert et al., 2008) and (Rodriguez et al., 2011) draw our attention to the connection between the governing party's ideology and the implementation of e-governments technologies in municipalities. Based on this assumption, left-wing local governments are more likely to use social media in a way that engage citizens, boost transparency and accountability, and focus on social policies. Right-wing local governments, though, are more prone to use social media to implement and mention “programs and activities of a financial nature.”(Rosario et al., 2014) We can propose a hypothesis in light of the view above:

H1: Municipalities that are governed by left-wing political parties favor participatory social media usage and are enthusiastic to disclose a variety of information regarding political affairs through social media posts than right-wing political parties.

3.6.1 SOCIAL MEDIA THEORIES

The framework formulated by various theories such as dialogical communication, stakeholder, and legitimacy theory helps us understand strategies and actions carried out by the local government through social network technologies (SNS).

The Theory of dialogical communication, built by (Kent and Taylor,1998), provides an imperative framework for understanding how the public sector initiates and steers its social relations with citizens within the digital space. This theory is based on the perception that if public institutions strive for more open and genuine dialogue with citizens instead of pushing merely information, it helps improve user satisfaction among citizens, encourages democratic participation, and strengthens trust between institutions and stakeholders.(Bortree and Seltzer,

2009; Banson et al., 2013). According to this theory, two primary guidance exist in communication. First, being agree or disagree is not an objective but communication should lead to a point at which both parties agree upon a satisfactory outcome. Second, communication is about negotiation over the conflict of interests, rather than concluding objective truth. Dialogical communication theory has received broad acceptance and becomes an essential theoretical framework that examines the social relations of public institutions, particularly on social media in the last decade. (Waters et al. 2009; Rybalko & Seltzer 2010; Rodriguez et al. 2018; Thelen, 2020).

According to stakeholder theory, the interests of all the related groups of the corporate environment, including customers, suppliers, local communities, and political groups, should be considered and taken care of. (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, the demands of stakeholders are decisive for companies to evaluate options and choose the ideal ones. (Guthrie et al. 2006) claim that organizations should keep their stakeholders informed about their various activities apart from financial and economic information, which provide them added value. Besides, authors (Deegan & Samkin, 2009) have proven that good social relationship should be established based on loyalty to stakeholders. One of the fundamental factors that local governments may use in the management of relations with stakeholders is to establish more direct and flowing channels of communication.

The theory of legitimacy presumes that the relations between business and society rest on a social contract. (Deegan, 2006). In this context, society consists of a broader category compared to the "Stakeholders." From the political administration's point of view, this theory argues that local government's policy and actions should be limited to what society identifies as socially acceptable behavior. (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). "This pressure is stronger on local governments than in the private sector because the former is politically visible and attracts more attention from external stakeholders." (Sobaci, 2016, p.221). Therefore, they are supposed to be more responsive to legitimize themselves before society. (Frost and Semaer 2012)

The studies in the field of "Legitimacy" can be divided into two main groups: 1-Strategic Tradition: Studies in the field of strategic tradition (e.g. Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Pfeffer, 1981; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) embrace a managerial perspective and focus on how organizations deliberately manipulate and deploy evocative symbols in order to obtain societal support. 2- Institutional tradition, by contrast, (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983;

Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Meyer & Scott, 1983a; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Zucker, 1987) indicate that the existence of sector-wide differentiation in the structural mechanism generates cultural pressures that exceed any single organization's purposive control (Suchman,1995). (Dowling&Pfeffer,1975) points out three distinct ways to become legitimate. First, the organization can transform its output, objectives, and methods of operation to comply with prevalent definitions of legitimacy. Second, the organization can use communication to modify the definition of social legitimacy and make it compatible with the organization's current practices, output, and values. Lastly, the organization can strive to be identified through communication, symbols, values, or institutions essential to social legitimacy.

This study will use "Legitimacy theory", one of the essential academic research theories focusing on communication strategies of institutions, as a framework to analyze and categorize social media posts of local governments. This theory helps determine the extent to which local governments apply to the voluntary disclosures of information regarding public affairs. Although the abstract nature of legitimacy does not let us entirely explore the fundamental structure by which organizations are motivated to share information about the various topics, in this search, legitimacy theory will be utilized as an explanatory mechanism to understand the symbolic representation of local governments' image, which is associated with the culture through social media posts to attain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. In this context the research question will be directed:

Q.1: What type of information is disclosed by local governments through their Twitter pages in order to legitimize their policies and actions?

3.6.2 SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS

Various models help us construct a framework to understand the social media tactics of local governments. Mergel's categorization of social media use in local governments provides us significant fingerprints to interpret social media posts and categorize local governments based on the methods preferred to communicate with citizens. (Mergel, 2013) According to this model, local governments implement three essential social media communications tactics: 1- Representation (Push): An increasing number of social media users and a significant amount of time these users spent on social media necessities local governments to adapt social media

accounts and use them regularly. In the representation strategy, social media is used to reach audiences who could not get information from different channels regarding local affairs. The resources allocated for social media-specific content are minimal, and in most cases, do not even exist. Furthermore, these local governments do not see social media as a significant opportunity to initiate bi-directional communication and gather citizens' feedback to increase public service quality. They define themselves primarily as "Conservative organizations".

2- Engagement (Pull): The second tactic which local governments implement in maintaining their social media account is "Engagement." Local governments following this tactic are prone to start conversations with citizens and include them in the decision-making process rather than pushing information out without letting citizens interact directly. This strategy has gained momentum recently and, an incremental number of local governments have set to embrace social media's dialogic nature and pay attention to what citizens complain or suggest about the local affairs.

3- Networking: The last tactic revolves around the integration of both push and pulls tactics. Networking tactic does not necessarily include active engagement with citizens. Social media can also help public agencies understand emerging issues, reactions to the public services, and citizens' demands by passively listening to conversations and using them as input for developing new projects. Therefore, social media, on the one hand, may be used to facilitate interactions among citizens and let them co-produce content in order to gain valuable insight concerning a variety of projects and plans. On the other hand, it can enable citizens to circulate content produced by local governments and make them visible to the larger segment of society. In this way, citizens gain immense control over the content produced by local governments.

To conclude, Mergel's communication tactics provide a basis to understand the nature of social media posts preferred by local governments. This study aims to integrate Mergel's model with the legitimacy theory upon which the local government's theoretical framework of social media communication is built. Based on this model second research question is:

Q.2: What kind of social media tactics are predominantly deployed by selected local governments?

3.7 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique that makes sense of the communication content, whether audio, images, symbols, or text, based mainly on the research questions. Although content analysis focuses on examining text and messages as others, such as rhetorical, conversational, or discourse, it is distinctive in many respects, as can be recognized from well-known quotes:” it is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” (Krippendorff, 2004). In this context, Content analysis is based on making inferences through precise and clearly defined coding, utilizing previous studies and theories. Moreover, contrary to the other empirical techniques employed by researchers, it is sensitive to the impact of messages transmitted by people and what it can change in society.

The rapid transformation in communication, which goes hand in hand with the progress in communication technologies, has inevitably altered the perspective towards traditional notions of contents, intents, and symbols. In this context, the contemporary content analysis focuses on the message intended to be given in texts by going beyond the limited scope of traditional presentations and symbols and not dwelling on the questions of whom, by which channels, and where the message goes. In content analysis, the inference is made by measuring the frequency of certain words, phrases, or themes. In this process, the context hidden in the text to be analyzed is determined with objective patterns. Two similar sentences may be evaluated in different categories under different conditions.

Although the concept of content analysis dates back to much earlier in terms of application, it was first used in the literature in the mid-20th century to study mass media. In the beginning, the content analysis was applied to the communication text to measure the frequency of words or phrases in line with the hypothesis formulated within a positivist approach, which is described as quantitative content analysis. The messages in the newspaper were coded into prior categories and then delineated utilizing various instruments, including regression analysis, correlation, cross-tabulation. (Jacobs,2017) The main components of the quantitative analysis are to establish a hypothesis, decide sampling technic, and generate a coding scheme that should be exhaustive and unambiguous. In this context, the quantitative analysis is deductive, which implies that “Its objective is to test hypotheses, not to develop them. Drawing on related research and existing, relevant theory, a researcher first establishes one or more hypotheses that

can be tested using content analysis. These hypotheses flow from what is already known about the problem and the extant research questions (White & Marsh, 2006, p.30). One of the oldest yet most frequently used definitions of quantitative content analysis in the literature " "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communications" (Berelson, 1952). Manifest content refers to the noticeable and attainable message, contrary to the latent content, which is not apparent and needs an effort to make sense. Neuendorf also defines the Quantitative content analysis as "summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that rely on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing)." (Neuendorf,2001)

On the other hand, qualitative content analysis focuses primarily on the meaning of the text: The classification of large data set based on a similar meaning, either explicit or inferred, rather than the merely counts of words or phrases. (Weber,1990) In qualitative content analysis, the researcher concentrates on understanding the characteristic of language through which communication occurs with scrutiny of the text's content or contextual meaning. (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990). Although this type of analysis does not completely exclude numerical data, which is indispensable for quantitative studies, it does concern supporting the interpretations, usually with the presentation of the counts and percentages, since its nature is hermeneutics. In this context, Mayring(2000) claims, "qualitative approach consists of preserving the benefits that quantitative content analysis had, with more attention to the (theory behind) the creation of categories. "Qualitative analysis is inductive in nature, in that research questions lead to the thorough investigation of the text in order to discover different themes and evaluate research accordingly. An inductive approach often ends in descriptive statistics (percentages, cross-tabulation), and several measurement standards (such as reliability and validity) to verify the trustworthiness of the research are applicable to qualitative approaches as well, such as transferability (instead of external validity) or confirmability (instead of inter-coder reliability) (see White & Marsh, 2006, p. 38).

It is significant to emphasize that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative has also blurred with the development of content analysis method. Some researchers argue that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two approaches. Krippendorff (2004) underscores that "quantitative/qualitative distinction is a mistaken dichotomy between the two kinds of justifications of content analysis designs: the explicitness and objectivity of scientific

data processing on the one side and the appropriateness of the procedures used relative to a chosen context on the other.” Some also go further, arguing that text is qualitative at first sight and categorizing textual data is the essential form of measurement.(Steven,1946) While the areas based on the quantitative approach are criticized for accepting the measurement techniques indicated by natural sciences without question and treating content analysis with a narrow pattern such as counting numbers, those based on the qualitative approach, on the other hand, are criticized for being methodically unsystematic and impressionistic in their interpretations. (George, 1959b). Although qualitative content analysis defends that each article has its characteristics and therefore should be handled separately, both approaches aim to differentiate and contextualize the relevant data in the text in the light of research questions in mind.

As for the historical development of content analysis, Since the mid-1990s, the use of content analysis has accelerated in many areas. We witness that the number of studies in this field has become immense, due mainly to the easy access to data and the emergence of new techniques in the last decade. Some scholars examined the violent content showed in television (Wilson et al. 1997), a reflection of the gender role through movie characters (A. M. Smith,1999), characteristic of the news web sites (Scharl 2004), even Reliability of motion features in surveillance videos (Pokrajac et al.,2005) In political science, the content analysis was applied to many studies, from identity terms used by newspapers to the assembly reports regarding a particular topic. Laitin (1998) investigates the identity terms in Russian-language newspapers in post-Soviet countries. This study successfully integrates many technics, including surveys and experimental research, into qualitative ethnographic and discourse analysis. Yoshika Herrera(2005) implements content analysis for the local newspapers in the Ural region to discover the underlying reasons for sovereignty movements in the region.. This study integrates traditional economic, historical, and discourse analysis in which regionalism took shape into the traditional content analysis. According to the findings of this study, The concerns over constitutional inequality and negative interpretations of economic conditions are the main determinants of the movements.

Content analysis studies have also intensified in social media, where the use of social media in political science has become widespread. Joseph (2012) focuses on the risks of social media use in the U.S by analyzing the 100 e-government websites and associated social media accounts with a content analysis method within a comparative perspective In another study,

Tuncay (2012) offers a comprehensive outlook of Turkish political party leaders' social media communication language utilizing the content analysis method. This research is significant since it contains a period in which social media use in Turkish politics was a relatively new phenomenon. The messages given by the party leaders through different social media channels were subjected to comparative analysis. Later studies regarding political communication on social media focus on the election period, particularly the 2014 presidential elections in Turkey. (Guler,2016; Goksu,2018). In his study, (Göksu 2018) concluded that the content produced for traditional media was transferred to the new media without modification by examining the messages posted by the candidates during the 2014 presidential elections on social media with the qualitative content analysis method. In a subsequent study, The Twitter accounts of politicians who were candidates in the presidential election held on June 24, 2018, and their tweets for the June 24, 2018 elections were analyzed with content analysis. Dumlu (2018) Currently, the studies on the social media use of local governments by utilizing the content analysis method intensify. In a study Guveyi (2020) examines the posts of selected municipalities through the most popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Gocoglu (2020) explores the message types posted on the official Twitter accounts of the metropolitan municipalities in Turkey through the content analysis method. The finding of this study reveals that metropolitan municipalities mostly use Twitter for information purposes.

3.7.1 Content analysis options

There are two main ways of implementing the content analysis: human preset coding and computer preset coding.

3.7.2 Human Preset Coding

Human preset coding is the measurement of a specific group of messages by trained individuals through pre-determined written rules. It is a norm in classical content analysis that a coding scheme is generated for measurement. A researcher designs metrics based on theory, past research, and pilot work that often involves diving into the set of messages under exploration.

(Neuendorf,2009) The coding scheme consists of a codebook (Instructions to the coders) and a coding form (A spreadsheet that coders enter their evaluation). Inter-coder reliability is essential for any content analysis to be valid, just as other human-coded studies. Variables that do not meet this validity should not be included in the study. Moreover, the coding scheme is the crucial instrument of the content analysis, which needs to be applied rather than solely relying on the knowledge and experience of the coder or coders.

3.7.3 Computer (CATA) Preset Coding

Computer-assisted (automated) content analysis, which has no or limited human influence, has gained importance in recent years to analyze a more extensive set of messages. The CATA coding includes the preset dictionary, which allows the computer to count a particular word or word groups assigned by the researcher or by the system itself. This kind of analysis is “the most quantitative versions of content analysis. Not just the processing of the results of a content analysis is quantified, but so is the actual data-processing itself.” (Jacobs,2017, p.14) In general, we can evaluate (CATA) under two headings, supervised or unsupervised, depending on whether its outlines are determined by humans or software. This method is distinguished by reducing the burden of existing human resources, allowing more data to be processed in a much shorter time than would be done with manual coding. The crucial point is to get the tool to produce salient and relevant outputs. Accordingly, validity comes out to be a primary concern, particularly at the unsupervised analysis. Yet, in a deeper context, consideration of research set-up in-depth, how a particular language modeling carried out by a tool is practical, why a specific tool is selected, and its benefits to the analyst's subjective reflection are essential the CATA. Some exciting programs, including MonoConc and WorldFish(Unsupervised), quantify the word occurrence with an alphabetical information order and offer user-centric configuration options in a given corpus. Among other programs, WordStat and DIMAP(Supervised) enable researchers to build their dictionaries utilizing various textual databases with which a complex categorization of data is possible. Such programs also allow creating a vast word pool by enabling options such as synonyms, antonyms, similar terms to be added to the dictionary.

CHAPTER 4: COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS: TWITTER POSTS OF MUNICIPALITIES

4.1 Method of the Study

This research will be carried out through detailed quantitative content analysis. The official Twitter accounts of selected local governments in Istanbul were analyzed. Twitter is selected because it is dominant and widely used by local governments and citizens. It should be noted that only texts shared on Twitter will be examined, and videos or images will not be considered. Besides, any post retweeted by an official account will be counted as a social media share of local governments. Verified social media accounts were determined based on the blue check icon indicating that the selected account is official. This study also applies the classification proposed by Ines Mergel to measure the social media tactics of local governments (push, pull, and networking) in order to attain legitimacy. Therefore, content analysis of the local government's social media posts helps us determine their implicit social media tactics to communicate with the citizens. At first, ten municipalities in Istanbul were selected based on their population density. Owing to the preliminary research, it was discovered that populous districts are prone to use social media more actively.

Selected municipalities: Five municipality from the left-wing “Republican People’s Party (RPP)” and Five municipalities from the right-wing “Justice and Development Party(JDP)” were selected for content analysis:

- 1- Esenyurt Municipality (RPP)
- 2- Küçükçekmece Municipality (RPP)
- 3- Maltepe Municipality (RPP)
- 4- Kartal Municipality (RPP)
- 5- Kadıkoy Municipality (RPP)
- 6- Bağcılar Municipality (JDP)
- 7- Pendik Municipality (JDP)
- 8- Ümraniye Municipality (JDP)
- 9- Üsküdar Municipality (JDP)
- 10- Fatih Municipality (JDP)

4.1.1 Content analysis of Local Government posts

The content analysis method was selected to analyze the local government posts on the official Twitter pages. The main objective here is to build the nature of communication or messages from local governments to citizens. Next, this is the basis for characterizing the level of information disclosure and categorizing local governments' social media tactics: whether push, pull, or networking. Social media data was gathered by hand and processed with a quantitative approach. The data that contains the posts of municipalities in January and February 2021 were collected systematically every week starting from the 7th of January. To address the characteristics of social media communication, content analysis of local government's social media posts was realized through two steps. In the first step, social media posts were subjected to a preliminary examination, and a codebook was prepared. This includes gaining a bird-eyes view of the available posts and proceeding to the second phase-the descriptive analysis. In this phase, selected social media posts were coded based on the concept it represents. The frequency of the types of social media posts led to the categorization of municipalities governed by different political parties according to their social media tactics.

It should be noted that some social media posts may include the same tactics at the same time. Yet, the overall purpose of publishing social media posts was the main determinant to defining social media posts' character. For example, any social media post inviting citizens to comment on their ideas about public services can be conceived as both "push" and "pull." Still, the main purpose of the post is to get feedback from citizens. Therefore, this kind of post should fall under the "Pull" category.

4.1.2 Unit of Analysis

Each tweet is a unit of analysis and thus evaluated independently in order to be included in coding instruments. Tweets were assessed precisely based on content. Videos, images, and links were not taken into consideration for the assessment. Furthermore, During the post-extraction from Twitter, some phrases or hashtags which are irrelevant from the meaning of the sentence or repetitive of the previous sentence, such as "Good morning," "Dear neighbors," "#publicservices," "Our municipality," "Today's picture," were not included for content

analysis. It should be noted that when the themes, which are irrelevant from the main text, were posted alone, they were put under the “Announcement” category so that every social media post was categorized.

4.1.3 Sample

This study included the selection of 1000 social media posts (100 from each municipality) for coding. As a result of the examinations, no serious variations were observed in the social media posts every week. For this reason, tweets gathered manually every week were subjected to content analysis by utilizing a systematic sampling method.

4.1.3.1. Systematic Sampling Method

Systematic sampling, which is a variation of probabilistic sampling, is a selection of groups from the whole population based on a regular interval to create a sample. In systematic sampling, the researcher chooses components from a target population by determining any starting point and then select sample members following a fixed "sampling interval". Sampling interval (k) is calculated by dividing the whole population (N) to sample size(n). For example, when the 100 samples are selected from the Twitter data pool which consists of 300 tweets in total, the sampling interval should be 3, which is the result from the division of total population (N) 300 to the size of the sample (n) 100. Formula for interval(i)=N/n 300/100=3. This study implemented systematic sampling method to each municipality’s Twitter data. As a consequence, 100 sample from each municipality, 1000 in total, was chosen by assigning the interval number as a starting point. It was observed that more frequent samples were taken from municipalities that share fewer Twitter posts compared to others.

4.1.4 Content Analysis Guidebook

A content analysis of the 10 twitter profiles maintained by municipalities in Istanbul was conducted. Analysis of selected 100 social media posts from different local governments (10 posts from each) through pilot coding in December 2020 provided an idea of basic types of messages. During the sample selection, duplicate posts that mention precisely the same topic were ignored, so that preliminary research was conducted to include as many topics as possible to construct content analysis guidance. Based on gathered data, the table below which consists

of four sections was generated as an instrument to guide both content analysis and coding mechanism. These sections: (a) post Type (b) definition (c) example post (d) some trigger terms by coder.

Table 4.1 Guidebook for Content Analysis

Post Type	Definition	Example Post	Some trigger Terms by coder
Environmental and Public Health	Statements aiming to create awareness about environmental issues and display efforts to protect public health	The health of our neighbors is our priority. We regularly disinfect our District Governorship building, which is one of the common areas.	health, mask, hygiene, epidemic, cleaning
Education	Messages to support educational efforts regarding any particular field	Support for your master's and doctoral theses; At the Zeyrek Academy. Our registration for your academic studies has started.	Thesis, master, doctorate, YDS, trial exam, course, courses, training,
Public Survey	Messages to promote public participation about public services	Last day to vote!	Vote, express your opinion, participate in our survey
Praising Political Party Leaders	Expressing support to political party leaders	Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is what it seems, taking its power from the nation visited the tradesmen in Üsküdar after the Friday prayer yesterday.	Indigenous, national, man of the people, Erdogan, our leader, Kılıçdaroğlu, , our president

Waste and Recycling	Messages expressing recycling activities and explaining the importance of social support in this regard	These recycling collection units are the design and production of our municipality. Thank you to our masters who design and make.!	Waste, processing, recycling, collection, units, processing center
Emergency Management	Messages explaining the measures taken against natural disasters and the importance of raising awareness on this issue	Our Urban Design Directorate received 300 applications within 50 days. Our teams continue their tests with the appointment system.	Earthquake, damage, detection, resistant, risky, flood, fire, warning, disaster, civil, defense, heavy snow
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	Messages that congratulate community members and expressing goodwill to them and that mourn the important public figures.	I congratulate European Men's National Team won the silver medal in the Artistic Gymnastics Championship in Turkey.	Congratulate, thank you, achievement, national. Team, sport, gold, silver. Our loss,
Announcement	Statement that conveys general information about future plans or ongoing events	Our officials visited more than 3000 of our neighbors last week.	Plans, future events, ongoing works
Entertainment	Messages that invite public participation for both online and offline fun events.	Our concert is going to start soon.	theater, talks, concert
Maintenance and Repair	Messages to inform public about the maintenance and repair activities.	Our road maintenance and repair work continues without interruption	Asphalt, pavement, repair, Maintenance, renovation
Argumentative	Criticizing rival parties for their approach to any policy or their hindrance to implement any political idea	The Presidency's proposal was rejected with the votes of AKP and MHP	AKP, CHP, MHP, rejected, vote

Contests	Messages aiming to invite public participation for the competition which offers a variety of rewards	-We present a set of 3 books to 3 people. -Join today our quiz program at 18.00 p.m	Win,rewards, quiz program,join us,send us
Social Solidarity	Messages that promote assistance to community members who are in need of help.	We continue to distribute winter clothes to our neighbors who need them free of charge.	Winter clothes, our distributions, free, Homeless, help, hungry,
Feedback	Messages to solicit information from citizens regarding any topic	Please share us your best winter photo via email below so that we share on our social media accounts	Send us,feedback, your ideas
Interview	Publishing content regarding public's idea about public services gathered through street interview	We talked about the new projects with our neighbors via interviews in streets.	Microphone,the pulse of the streets
Strategic Information Sharing/Snowballing of content	Messages that allow citizens to actively participate in the debate and that aim at the circulation of content by citizens	Today, our social media influencer also participated in recycling efforts, and interesting images come out.	Influencer,media channel,
Community Building	Messages that aim to increase the subscription rate of social media posts and, and that invite citizens to take collaborative actions with municipality	Dont forget to subscribe our Youtube channel!	Share,subscribe,donate membership

4.2 Coding Mechanism

Owing to the pilot coding, 11 categories defining post types were generated using pilot coding to systematically select 100 social media posts in December. Additional categories were added during the manual post-extraction process in January and February 2021, and ultimately 17 categories were generated for coding. These categories include (1) Environmental and Public Health (2) Education (3) Public Survey (4) Praising Political Party Leaders (5) Waste and Recycling (6) Emergency Management (7) Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning (8) Announcement (9) Maintenance and Repair (10) Argumentative (11) Contests (12) Social Solidarity (13) Feedback (14) Interview (15) Strategic Information Sharing/Snowballing of content (16) Entertainment (17) Community Building. Binary coding was implemented as a coding method to measure the frequency of post types preferred by municipalities. (1: Presence 0: Absence). This is also the basis for categorizing the social media tactics of municipalities. In this context, content analysis of the social media posts in line with RQ1 leads us to determine the prominent social media tactics employed by municipalities in order to communicate with citizens. Accordingly, this study's RQ2 revolves around the outcome resulting from the content analysis method. The table below demonstrates the three essential social media tactics predominantly deployed by municipalities:

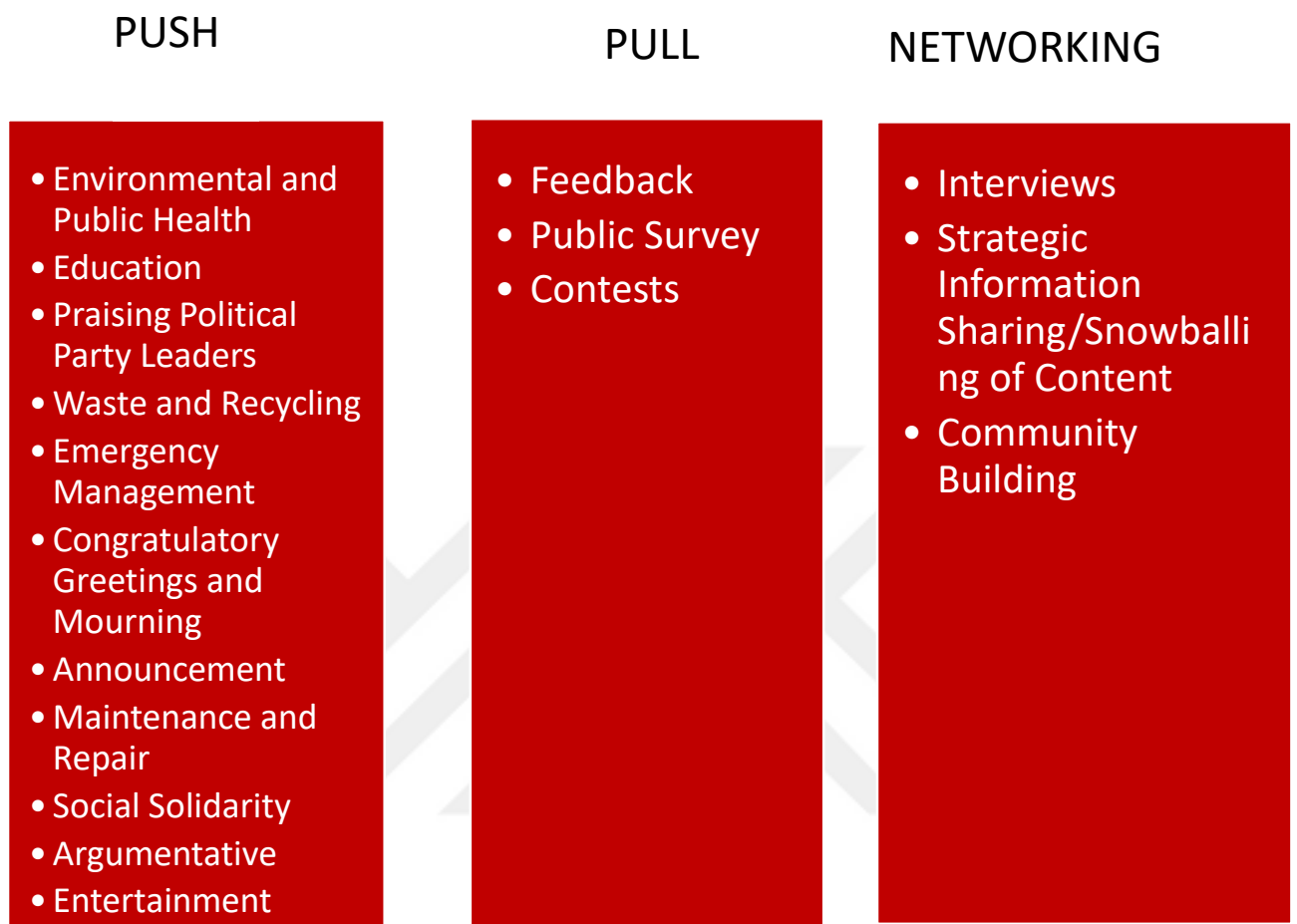


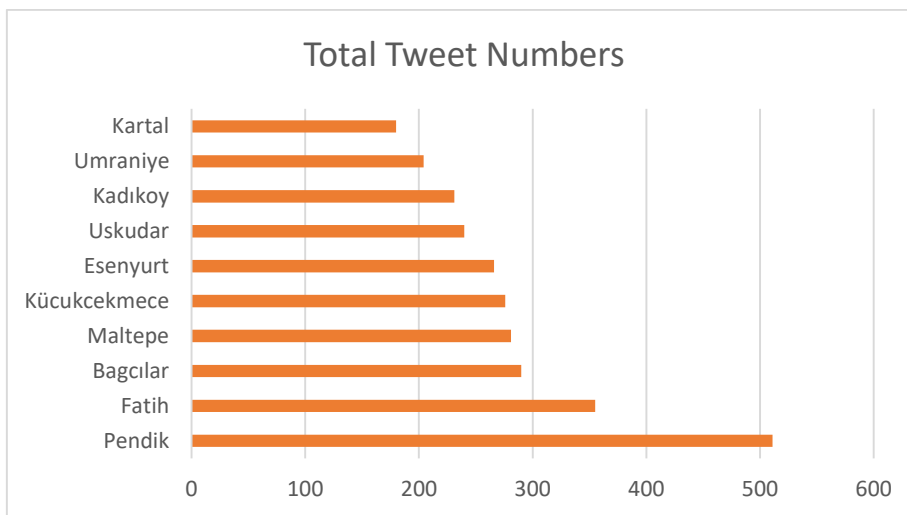
Figure 4.1 Social media Tactics Chart

4.3 Results

The social media strategies of municipalities cannot simply be inferred from the texts that connect sources and recipients, thus requiring comprehensive qualitative and quantitative studies. Text messages, however, provide us significant clues about the established social media strategies as part of the ways social media communication is channeled into the audiences. In this context, three essential social media communication tactics, which were elaborated in previous sections, are crucial parts of the effective message delivery to constituents and the social media strategies of institutions. In this chapter, the social media data of municipalities

will be analyzed in two steps. First, the statistical data of Twitter use among municipalities will be presented from a comparative perspective. The first part covers the total Twitter post shared in January-February 2021 and follower numbers of municipalities. The second step deals with the categorization of municipalities according to their preferred themes while using Twitter. In this step, every municipalities will be evaluated separately based on their Twitter share and then subjected to the evaluation in the context of the political party they represent. This comparative assessment will provide us a framework from which the social media tactics of each municipality will be analyzed in line with research questions.

Figure 4.2 Total Tweet Numbers



According to data (Figure 4.2), the most active municipality in Twitter use is Pendik with 511 total tweets in January and February and 8.7 on a daily average, followed by Fatih and Bağcılar with 355 and 290 Tweet respectively. Thus, data demonstrates that most active municipalities in Twitter belong to Justice and Development Party (JDP). Kartal emerges as the least active one among selected municipalities with 180 tweet totals. Umraniye is ranked second least active municipality with 204 tweets, slightly higher than Kartal. Another striking result from the data is that Kadıköy is one of the municipalities with the lowest number of tweets despite having the highest number of followers. Maltepe is the most active municipality among Republican People's Party (RPP), with 281 Tweets in total and 4,8 on a daily average, followed by Küçükçekmece and Esenyurt, with 276 and 266 Tweets, respectively.

As for the follower numbers on Twitter, Kadıkoy appears to have the highest number of followers, more than the other municipalities' total number of followers with 2.1 million. Unlike many municipalities, Kadıköy's dissident and activist attitude can be regarded as an effective factor in having such a high number of followers. The analysis of this issue in the context of Twitter posts will be made in the following sections. Pendik comes as second having the highest number of followers with 102k followers, followed by Maltepe and Uskudar with 79k and 72k followers. Kucukcekmece emerges as the municipality with the least number of followers with 30k. The data below (Table 4) clearly demonstrates that there doesn't exist a positive correlation between follower numbers and the number of tweets, as is the case between population density and the number of tweets. Although Bagcılar is the most populated municipality among all selected, its total Twitter posts ranked third. Similarly, Kadıkoy has by far most follower numbers, yet Twitter shares remained under average.

Table 4.2 Twitter data

Municipality	Political Party	Follower Number	Total days	Tweet number	Average daily Tweet
Esenyurt	RPP	32.000	59	266	4,5
Küçükçekmece	RPP	30.000	59	276	4,7
Maltepe	RPP	79.200	59	281	4,8
Kartal	RPP	65.000	59	180	3,1
Kadıkoy	RPP	2.100.000	59	230	3,9
Bagcılar	JDP	33.800	59	290	4,9
Pendik	JDP	102.000	59	511	8,7
Umraniye	JDP	54.400	59	204	3,5
Uskudar	JDP	72.900	59	240	4,1
Fatih	JDP	33.000	59	355	6,0

Figure 4.3 Political Parties

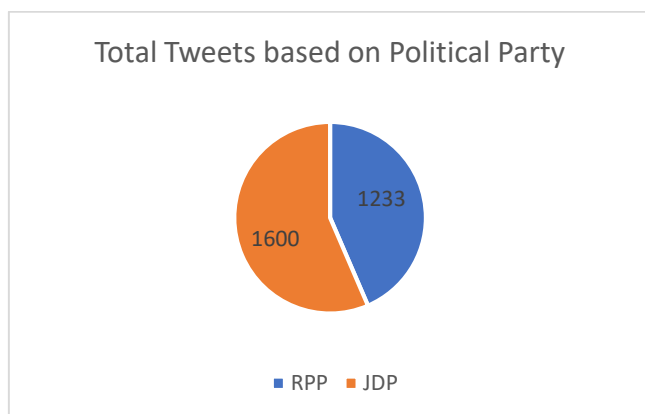


Figure 4.3 above displays which political party was more active on Twitter. As shown in the chart, municipalities of JDP are more active on Twitter than that of RPP based on the total number of Tweets posted. The municipalities of JDP shared 1600 tweets in total, whereas this number is 1233 in the RPP during the two-month period.

Municipality	Participation Year	Account Name
Esenyurt	2015	@EsenyurtBLDYS
Kucukcekmece	2011	@Kucukcekmece
Maltepe	2013	@MaltepeBelTr
Kartal	2009	@kartalbld
Kadıkoy	2010	@kadikoybelediye
Bagcilar	2010	@BagcilarBld
Pendik	2010	@Pendik_Belediye
Umraniye	2011	@umraniyebeltr
Uskudar	2010	@uskudarbld
Fatih	2011	@FatihBelediye

Table 4.3 Participation Year

Table 4.3 demonstrates the year in which local governments participated in Twitter. According to results, Kartal emerges as the earliest user of Twitter participating in 2009, while Esenyurt is the latest user participating in 2015, followed by Maltepe in 2013. Kucukcekmece, Umraniye, Fatih participated in the same year, 2011, whereas Bagcilar, Pendik and Uskudar participated in 2010.

4.3.1 Assessment of Frequency of Topics

4.3.1.1. Esenyurt

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	7
Praising Political Party Leaders	1
Announcement	70
Maintenance and Repair	3
Social Solidarity	5
Waste and Recycling	1
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	4
Emergency Management	3
Environmental and Public Health	5
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	1

Push=99	Total=100
Pull=0	
Networking=1	

Table 4.4 Esenyurt

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Esenyurt municipality is shown in table 4.4. The frequency of topics covered on Twitter demonstrates that Esenyurt municipality embraces open and transparent social media use by constantly sharing information regarding political affairs, social support plans, economic initiatives to keep citizens updated. Accordingly, it was found that education, social solidarity, environmental and public health, and general announcements are the most focused topics by Esenyurt Municipality. It also regularly posts council meetings

so that citizens may follow the political affairs and express their opinions. However, as the table above demonstrates, the two-way interactive nature of social media remains neglected on the Twitter account of Esenyurt since no post promoting public participation was detected. Furthermore, it was noted that only one tweet was posted to promote community building among citizens. Although Esenyurt municipality's Twitter use offers imperative insights about transparent management, it displays the lack of adaptation to the innovative social media use such as gathering public feedback and promoting networking activities

4.3.1.2 Kucukcekmece

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	7
Praising Political Party Leaders	1
Announcement	34
Maintenance and Repair	5
Social Solidarity	5
Entertainment	15
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	3
Emergency Management	2
Environmental and Public Health	10
	<i>Pull</i>
Feedback	4
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	14
<hr/>	
Push=82	Total=100
Pull=4	
Networking=14	

Table 4.5 Kucukcekmece

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Kucukcekmece municipality is shown in table 4.5. Based on the high frequency of topics, entertainment appears to be the most emphasized topic after the announcement. It includes free concerts, theatres, and talks to its followers through its social media channels. Besides, due to the pandemic process, we see a high volume of content shared to pay attention to the ongoing public health services provided by Kucukcekmece with 10 posts. The municipality also strives to boost the online community through posts that guide followers to subscribe to other social media channels such as Youtube and Telegram. Kucukcekmece also stands out as the municipality that most frequently share topics related to community building with 14 posts. It also adopts participatory social media management by gathering citizens' feedback. This study did not find a high-frequency topic associated with emergency management and praising political party leaders, and none concerning waste and recycling, public survey, argumentative, and contests. (Emergency management:2 Praising political party leaders:1). We may deem Küçükçekmece as one of the successful examples of new generation social media usage, based on the application of different social media tactics such as promoting online community and gathering public feedback.

4.3.1.3 Maltepe

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	2
Waste and Recycling	1
Announcement	62
Maintenance and Repair	8
Social Solidarity	4
Entertainment	6
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	12
Emergency Management	1
Argumentative	1
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	2
Strategic Information Sharing/Snowballing of content	1
<hr/>	
Push=97	Total=100
Pull=0	
Networking=3	

Table 4.6 Maltepe

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Maltepe municipality is shown in table 4.6. The most frequently shared topics are announcement, congratulatory greetings and mourning, and maintenance and repair. This study did not find high-frequency topics associated with emergency management and argumentative and strategic information sharing, and none concerning praising political party leaders, public surveys, and environmental and public

health. (Emergency management:1 Argumentative:1 Strategic information sharing:1) Other topics which were covered on Twitter are community building, education, and social solidarity. However, there no exist any social media post aiming to gather feedback from citizens. Thus, it may be said that Maltepe did not go beyond simply conveying a message to the audiences in a way most of the posts were only intended to provide general information rather than enabling public participation. Yet, it is clear from the data that, despite being substantially limited, the municipality had some networking activities with 3 posts.

4.3.1.4 Kartal

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	1
Environmental and Public Health	5
Announcement	35
Maintenance and Repair	4
Social Solidarity	3
Entertainment	30
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	6
Emergency Management	9
	<i>Pull</i>
Feedback	1
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	1
Strategic Information Sharing /Snowballing of content	5
Push=93	Total=100
Pull=1	
Networking=6	

Table 4.7 Kartal

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Kartal municipality is shown in table 4.7. The most frequently shared topics are announcement, entertainment, and emergency management. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with education, social solidarity, community building, and feedback. (Education:1, social solidarity:3, community building:1, feedback:1) It was observed that Kartal strives to provide information flow to citizens by establishing emergency support lines, especially during heavy snowfall. Besides, it is one of the municipalities that frequently presents entertainment such as concerts, talks, and theater to the public in the quarantine periods. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on the home visits of the public servants to listen and solve the problems of citizens in line with social municipalism. Another striking point is the relatively high volume of strategic information sharing, primarily about the promoting media appearances of the municipality with posting president's videos in which community affairs are discussed. However, this study did not detect that Kartal extensively encourages participatory social media among citizens since only 1 post aims to solicit feedback from citizens.

5.Kadıköy

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Argumentative	5
Waste and Recycling	4
Announcement	46
Maintenance and Repair	2
Social Solidarity	2
Entertainment	11
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	16
Emergency Management	5
	<i>Pull</i>
Feedback	1
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	2
Strategic Information Sharing /Snowballing of content	6

Push=91	Total=100
Pull:1	
Networking=8	

Table 4.8 Kadıkoy

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Kadıkoy municipality is shown in table 4.8. The most frequently shared topics are announcement, Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning, and entertainment. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with feedback, social solidarity and maintenance and repair, and none concerning praising political party leaders, education, and environmental and public health. (Feedback:1, social solidarity:2

maintenance, and repair: 2). Compared with other municipalities, Kadıkoy shares argumentative content most frequently by opposing the government’s local government policies and other actions with 5 posts. It was observed that posts containing political statements of the mayor were frequently shared through different media channels. We can also observe a high rate of congratulatory and mourning content on Twitter with 16 posts. Another significant finding is that Kadıkoy is one of the municipalities that use networking activities most actively on Twitter with 8 posts, whereas participatory social media usage remained considerably low. Municipality’s effort to encourage citizens to support musicians was recorded as an example of collaborative municipalism. Furthermore, Emergency management and waste and recycling were included in the posts to raise awareness within society.

6. Bagcılar

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	2
Emergency Management	1
Announcement	68
Maintenance and Repair	1
Social Solidarity	5
Entertainment	10
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	8
	<i>Networking</i>
Interview	2
Strategic Information Sharing/Snowballing of content	3
<hr/>	
Push=95	Total=100
Pull=0	
Networking=5	

Table 4.9 Bagcılar

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Bagcılar municipality is shown in table 4.9. The most frequently shared topics are announcement, entertainment and, congratulatory greetings, and mourning. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with emergency management, maintenance and repair, and education. (Emergency management:1, maintenance and repair:1, education:2). Bagcılar covers 9 out of 17 topics on Twitter, which is relatively low compared to other municipalities. (Average 11 topics) As the table demonstrates, In Bagcılar, we may say that an important proportion of social media posts provide general information to the public. These include national radio awards. Bagcılar stands out as the only municipality that organizes a national participation competition program and announces it through active social media posts. It should also be noted that Bagcılar municipality shares the news about Bagcılar published on different media channels in order to increase its media appearances as part of the networking activities. Twitter posts regarding the support provided to citizens in a difficult situation due to the epidemic were also observed. Yet, this study did not detect any post for participatory municipalism.

7.Pendik

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Environmental and Public Health	1
Waste and Recycling	1
Announcement	42
Maintenance and Repair	5
Social Solidarity	1
Entertainment	20
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	4
Emergency Management	3
Education	1
	<i>Pull</i>
Feedback	8
Contests	8
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	3
Strategic Information Sharing /Snowballing of content	3
<hr/>	
Push=78	Total=100
Pull=16	
Networking=6	

Table 4.10 Pendik

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Pendik municipality is shown in table 4.10. Not only does Pendik come out as the most active municipality, but it also differentiates with the number of topics covered on Twitter. It was determined that Pendik ranks second in terms of topic diversity with 13 topics after Uskudar municipality. The most frequently mentioned topic is the announcement, followed by entertainment, feedback, and contests. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with environmental and public health, waste and recycling, social solidarity and, education, and none concerning praising political party leaders, public survey, and interview. (Environmental and public health:1, waste and recycling:1, social solidarity:1, education:1) It was determined that online theater, talks, and concerts were shared with a high frequency. Based on our findings, we may say that Pendik is the most participatory municipality with 16 posts, including feedback and contests. It was observed that the municipality frequently contacted citizens and received their feedback through online competitions. Pendik also stands out with networking activities by publishing 6 posts, including community building and strategic information sharing. All in all, Pendik municipality is very innovative in social media use by adapting various social media tactics at the same time and intensively keeping the audience's interest alive by applying their feedbacks.

8.Umraniye

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	3
Praising Political Party Leaders	2
Announcement	41
Maintenance and Repair	7
Social Solidarity	4
Entertainment	14
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	18
Emergency Management	7
Argumentative	1
	<i>Networking</i>
Strategic Information Sharing /Snowballing of content	3
Push=97	Total=100
Pull=0	
Networking=3	

Table 4.11 Umraniye

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Umraniye municipality is shown in table 4.11. The most frequently shared topics are announcement, congratulatory greetings and mourning, and entertainment. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with argumentative and praising political party leaders, and none concerning feedback, waste and recycling, public

survey, and community building. (Argumentative:1, praising political party leaders:2) It was observed that Umraniye municipality frequently presents online theater, interviews, and concerts to its audiences during the pandemic with 14 posts. Furthermore, Umraniye ranked the second municipality after Kartal that the most frequently mention about emergency management topic with 7 Twitter posts. Another finding is that Umraniye municipality was involved in political debates on Twitter by blaming the opposition party (RPP) for its actions. This study did not detect any Twitter post that aims to gather public feedback, whether it is about public services or not. Therefore, the findings lead us to infer that Umraniye embraces mostly one-way communication by constantly disclosing information regarding political and social affairs, rather than implementing two-way communication methods. However, it was noted that Umraniye employed networking tactics primarily through promoting media appearances by applying strategic information sharing with 3 posts.

9.Uskudar

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Environmental and Public Health	1
Waste and Recycling	6
Announcement	53
Maintenance and Repair	6
Social Solidarity	8
Entertainment	6
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	6
Emergency Management	1
Education	1
Praising Political Party Leaders	2
	<i>Pull</i>
Contests	1
Feedback	3
	<i>Networking</i>
Community Building	2
Strategic Information Sharing /Snowballing of content	4
<hr/>	
Push=90	Total=100
Pull=4	
Networking=6	

Table 4.12 Uskudar

The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Uskudar municipality is shown in table 4.12. The most frequently shared topics are announcements and social solidarity. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with contests, environmental and public health, emergency management, and education, and none concerning the public survey, argumentative and, interview. (Contests:1, environmental and public health:1, emergency management:1, education:1). The Twitter data demonstrates that Uskudar mentioned 14 topics out of 17, which is the highest number compared to the other municipalities. Thus, Uskudar municipality can be deemed the most transparent municipality in terms of the diversity of social media posts. We observed that Uskudar municipality focuses on social solidarity by helping citizens in a difficult situation due to the pandemic on Twitter with 8 posts. Besides, waste and recycling are other topics that Uskudar draws particular attention to, promoting recycling efforts to have citizens actively involved in this process with 6 posts. It was determined that two-way communication, though not excessive, was supported, and accordingly, the content was shared on subjects such as contests and feedback with 1 and 3 posts, respectively. Furthermore, Uskudar supported networking activities through posts that aim to increase media appearances and subscriptions rates of social media channels with 7 posts. Overall, Uskudar municipality embraces innovative social media use through adapting three social media tactics on Twitter.

10.Fatih

Topics	Frequencies
	<i>Push</i>
Education	9
Emergency Management	1
Announcement	45
Maintenance and Repair	8
Social Solidarity	2
Entertainment	19
Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	4
Waste and Recycling	5
	<i>Networking</i>
Interview	1
Strategic Information Sharing/Snowballing of content	2
Community Building	4
<hr/>	
Push=93	Total=100
Pull=0	
Networking=7	

Table 4.13 Fatih

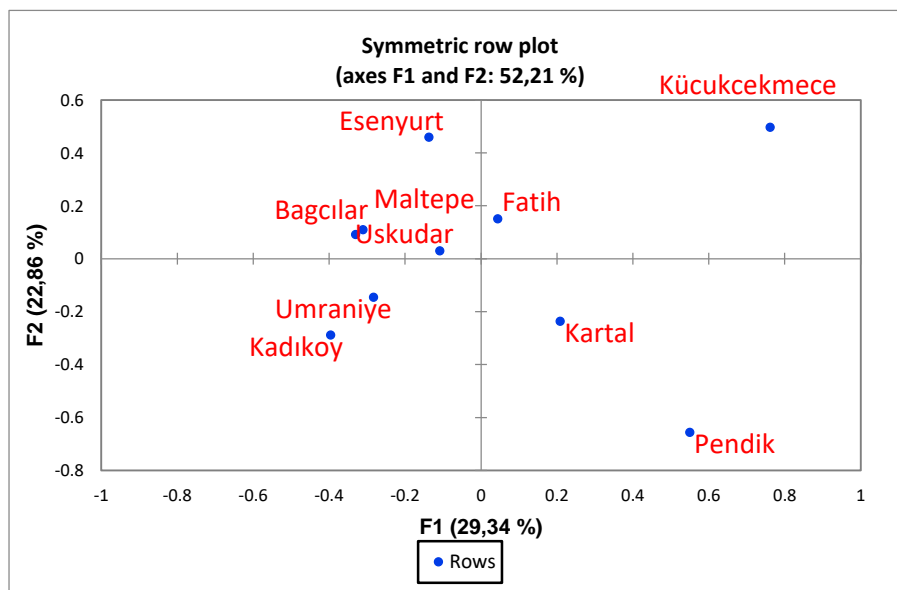
The summary of topics posted on Twitter by Fatih municipality is shown in table 4.13. The most frequently shared topics are announcements, entertainment, and education. This study did not find a high frequency of topics associated with emergency management and interview. (Emergency management:1, interview:1) It was recorded that Fatih is the municipality that focused on education the most compared to others with 9 Twitter posts. Fatih also stood out as the only municipality that discloses public bidding through Twitter under the memo of the

“Transparent municipality.” Maintenance and repair, and recycling other topics Fatih focused on with 8 and 5 posts, respectively. This study did not detect any post that solicits feedback from citizens in line with participatory municipalism. However, it was observed that the municipality promotes networking activities by making use of several social media posts under three essential topics such as interviews, strategic information sharing, and community building. For example, the municipality’s effort to include citizens through Twitter in a voluntary project that supports street animals was recorded as the implementation of collaborative municipalism to aim citizens to join off-line activities.

Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the content shared on Twitter and message variables of selected local governments, thus determining how they disclose information and what kind of social media tactics are primarily employed in social media communication. As a result, this study revealed the results above in light of the RQ1 that “What type of information is disclosed by local governments through their Twitter pages in order to legitimize their policies and actions?” The chi-square test was conducted to determine whether there are significant differences between the social media messages of the municipalities; the null hypothesis that “there are no differences between the social media” posts was rejected. (p-value<0,0001; alpha=0.01) After the realization of quantitative analysis, the data has shown significant variations between different political parties and municipalities of the same political party.

Figure 4.4 Map Based on Twitter Post



To measure the which municipalities similar to each other in terms of the message they post on Twitter, we conducted correspondence analysis applied to selected 17 message variables. As a result, figure 4.4 illustrates the degree to which municipalities are similar to each other based on their Twitter use. Each municipality represented by dots is clustered according to the message subjects and frequency they use. In the figure 4.4, especially 3 municipalities differ in terms of their messages. Esenyurt is the municipality that publishes the most announcement messages with a rate of 70%, and the most prevalent social media tactic for Esenyurt was "Push," with 99% of its total share. Kucukcekmece, on the other hand, is distinguished as the municipality with the highest community-building messages, 14 in total, which account for 40 % of networking posts in RPP. Finally, it is interesting to note that Pendik differentiates itself as the most participatory municipality from others, with 80% of the JDP's total "Pull" messages.

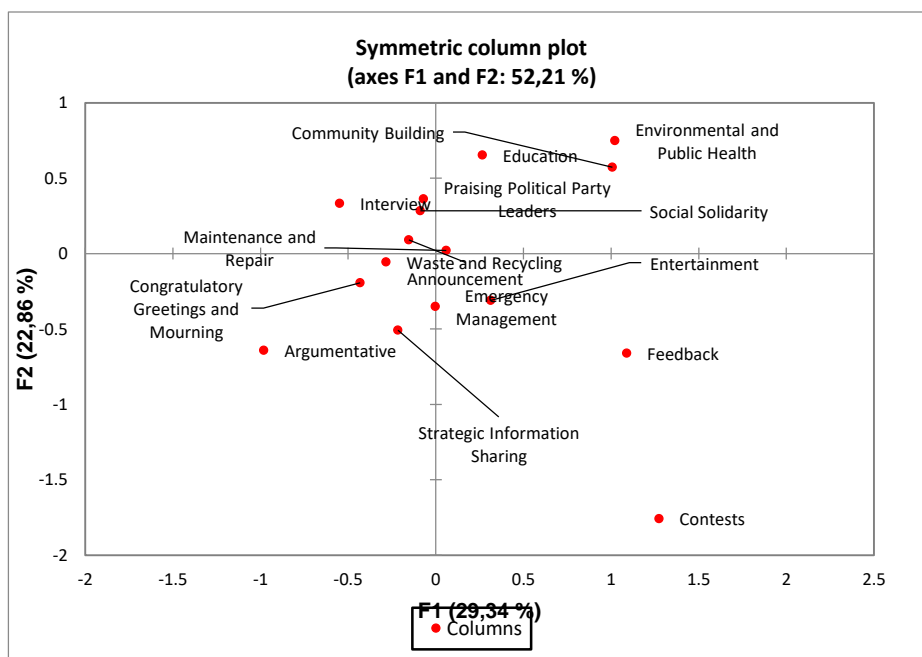
Moreover, Some of the findings of this study confirm the previous researches involving municipalities in Istanbul. For example, in the figure 4.4, it was noted that the social media posts of the RPP's Kadıköy and the JDP's Umraniye municipality demonstrate serious similarities in some areas. Accordingly, in comprehensive studies conducted in Istanbul in 2017, it was determined that these two cities ranked at the top in the social inclusion index (Kaplıca, 2018). Besides, in the same study, it was concluded that the JDP's Uskudar and the RPP's Maltepe municipalities, which demonstrate significant similarities in the map, are at the top ranking in the governance and transparency index.

Table 4.14 Colored Graphic Based on Frequency of the Topics

Topics	Environmental and Public Health	Education	Praising Political Party Leaders	Waste and Recycling	Emergency Management	Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning	Announcement	Entertainment	Maintenance and Repair	Argumentative	Contests	Social Solidarity	Feedback	Interview	Strategic Information Sharing	Community Building
Esenyurt	1,9	2,0	0,5	-0,6	-0,2	-1,4	2,9	-3,6	-0,9	-0,8	-0,9	0,6	-1,3	-0,5	-1,6	-1,1
Küçükçekmece	5,3	2,0	0,5	-1,3	-0,7	-1,8	-2,2	0,5	0,0	-0,8	-0,9	0,6	1,8	-0,5	-1,6	6,5
Maltepe	-1,5	-0,7	-0,8	-0,6	-1,3	1,4	1,8	-2,0	1,4	0,4	-0,9	0,1	-1,3	-0,5	-1,0	-0,5
Kartal	1,9	-1,3	-0,8	-1,3	3,1	-0,7	-2,1	4,7	-0,4	-0,8	-0,9	-0,5	-0,5	-0,5	1,4	-1,1
Kadıköy	-1,5	-1,8	-0,8	1,6	0,9	2,8	-0,5	-0,6	-1,3	5,1	-0,9	-1,0	-0,5	-0,5	2,0	-0,5
Baglar	-1,5	-0,7	-0,8	-1,3	-1,3	0,0	2,6	-0,9	-1,8	-0,8	-0,9	0,6	-1,3	3,1	0,2	-1,7
Pendik	-0,8	-1,3	-0,8	-0,6	-0,2	-1,4	-1,1	1,9	0,0	-0,8	7,5	-1,5	4,8	-0,5	0,2	0,1
Umraniye	-1,5	-0,2	1,8	-1,3	2,0	3,5	-1,2	0,2	0,9	0,4	-0,9	0,1	-1,3	-0,5	0,2	-1,7
Uskudar	-0,8	-1,3	1,8	3,1	-1,3	-0,7	0,5	-2,0	0,5	-0,8	0,1	2,1	1,0	-0,5	0,8	-0,5
Fatih	-1,5	3,1	-0,8	2,4	-1,3	-1,4	-0,7	1,6	1,4	-0,8	-0,9	-1,0	-1,3	1,3	-0,4	0,6

Table 4.14 is a colored table based on which messages are used mainly by municipalities. In this table, white cells represent less than expected, pink cells a little more than expected, yellow cells more than expected, and blue cells too many messages sent by municipalities about given topics. According to this, Kucukcekmece shared too many messages about environmental and public health and community building. Kadıköy, on the other hand, focused the most on argumentative messages. Lastly, Pendik shared messages about contests excessively compared to others.

Figure 4.5 Distribution of Topics



As for the distribution of message variables, the results can be analyzed in figure 4.5 above. Based on the Chi-square test, It has been concluded that messages such as entertainment, waste and recycling, announcement, congratulatory greetings and mourning show a regular distribution covering many municipalities and are clustered in the center. However, Some topics, especially feedback, argumentative, and contests, were frequently mentioned by only a few municipalities and showed an uneven distribution, therefore situated off the center.

To answer the RQ2 that “What kind of social media tactics are predominantly deployed by selected local governments that represent different political parties?” Social media posts belonging to each municipality are classified and evaluated based on the political party they represent. Figure 4.6 demonstrates three main social media tactics of political parties.

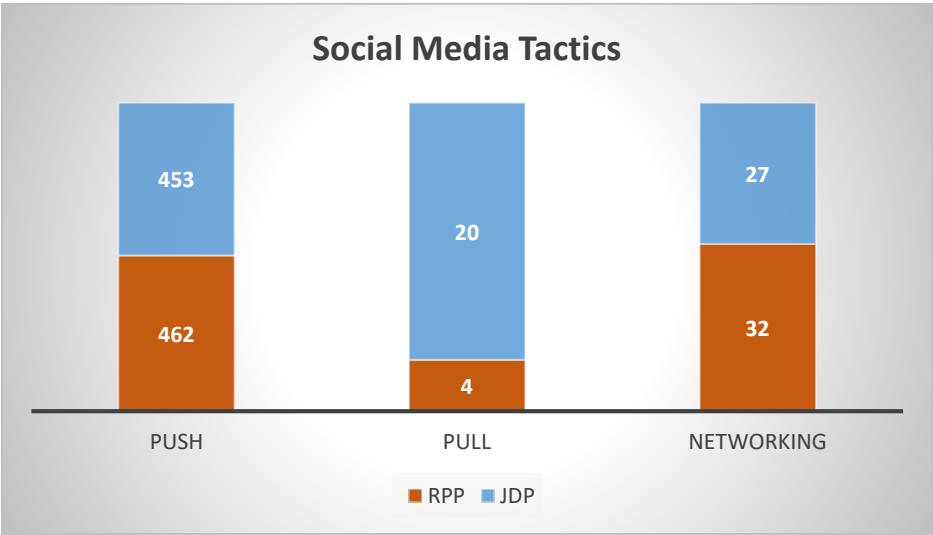


Figure 4.6 Social Media Tactics: Political Parties

Overall, “Push” is by far the most preferred social media tactic the municipalities of both political parties employed at a proximate percentage. RPP utilized this tactic slightly more than JDP, 462 to 453. As it is reflected in figure 4.1, 11 topics out of 17 were recorded as "Push"

content that aims at directing the message to the receiver without soliciting feedback or snowballing of content. One of the most significant functions of this tactic is to promote open and transparent municipalism as much as possible through social media in a way that increases trust toward local governments. Although it was observed that the municipalities of both political parties have an awareness of this issue, we cannot say that the potential was fully achieved. RPP, as a leftist party who embrace open and transparent memo, did not reflect this approach thoroughly on Twitter posts. Municipalities of RPP shared monthly council meetings as well as plans and projects, yet they did not share detailed information about the administrative processes related to recruitment and public tenders. On the other hand, some municipalities of JDP developed a strong open and transparent municipal language and reflected this by sharing administrative processes such as public tenders live on Twitter.

In general, Congratulatory Greetings and Mourning, announcement, and entertainment become the most focused topics for both political parties. The vast majority of the content was produced to provide general information and announce upcoming activities. Announcement accounts for 50% of the total Twitter post in both JDP and RPP. However, The pandemic process has been one of the important factors shaping Twitter posts. Pandemic is the main reason why the municipalities are compelled to present physical activities such as theatre, talks, concerts online so that citizens could interact with the social media accounts. Besides, environmental and public health became another concern during the pandemic and it was unevenly mentioned in Twitter posts. Municipalities of RPP appear to have mentioned environmental and public health much higher than that of JDP. While this topic was mentioned in 20 posts in RPP, the number of post was only 1 in the municipalities of JDP. It was observed that the waste and recycling issue was discussed twice as much in municipalities of the JDP compared to RPP with 12 to 6. Argumentative as well as environmental and public health is the least posted topic in JDP. In RPP, praising political party leaders comes as the least posted topic. Yet, municipalities of JDP published some posts that praise the president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and stated their support against domestic and international struggles.

Another social media tactic “Pull” is the least preferred one compared to others. It fundamentally enables municipalities to gather feedback from citizens in order to improve public services or include them in the decision-making process. Based on the data demonstrated in figure 4.1, the "pull" content consists of feedback, contests, and public surveys. Unlike the preliminary research, during the content analysis that comprises the two-month period, it was

determined that public surveys were not used by both political parties in their Twitter posts. However, while RPP never used contests in social media posts, JDP used both contests and feedback in social media posts. The finding of this study contradicts the hypothesis, which is forged upon the previous investigations that “Municipalities that are governed by left-wing political parties favor participatory social media usage, and are enthusiastic to disclose a variety of information regarding political affairs through social media posts than right-wing political parties.” According to results, as it is demonstrated in figure 4.6, The JDP is clearly ahead of the RPP in terms of posts that encourage participatory municipalism. The right-wing (JDP) employed “Pull” content three times higher than the left-wing (RPP). This indicates that the RPP, as a leftist party, does not adequately apply to citizens' feedback that both enable them to be active participants and make them part of the decision-making process. Furthermore, the data shows that RPP and JDP have the same number of topics discussed on Twitter with an average of 11, which indicates that no serious differentiation on the level of disclosure existed.

The last tactic is “Networking.” It refers to the posts that promote the circulation of content by audiences and encourage citizens to join off-line events in cooperation with the municipality. It also includes posts that aim at enhancing the online community. “Networking” consists of Interviews, strategic information sharing/Snowballing of content, and community building. The number of posts shared by the municipalities of RPP for networking is slightly higher than that of JDP, 32 to 27. As for the topics, it was recorded that interview was not used by RPP, whereas JDP used all of the topics related to networking. Community building accounts for 55% of all the networking posts in RPP, while this rate is 33% in JDP. This information shows us that municipalities of RPP focused more on enhancing the online community compared to JDP.

Conclusion:

Since the end of the 2000s, the use of social media has become widespread in Turkey as well as in the rest of the world. The rapid, cheap, and active communication facilitated by social media has paved the way for its use in many fields, from economy to politics. Thus, politicians could not remain unresponsive to this increasing trend. The unique nature of social media, which in its essence points to many-to-many communication, has enabled communication to transform by getting rid of traditional patterns. Although there was a prejudice against social media among

politicians at the beginning, the structure of social media, which allows reaching a broad audience and enabling the public reaction to be measured in a short time, has made it an appealing communication channel. As a matter of fact, social media has turned out to be one of the most important tools of political communication.

Local governments are not immune to this change in communication. They have started to adopt social media at an incremental pace for various purposes, including reaching audiences, boosting public participation, and enhancing transparency and accountability. The closest political units to the public, local governments now opt for social media instead of traditional channels to provide information, advertise, and receive feedback constantly because it is cheaper, fast and more measurable. With the data received from social media, local governments can develop public services in line with people's expectations and gain opportunities to increase satisfaction and reduce costs.

Today in politics, we can say that old-fashioned intense campaigns covering only election periods have been replaced by a period in which citizens participate more actively in political process and propaganda becomes a continuity. Campaigns carried out by local politicians in this direction are of great importance for political parties. In a shrinking world, where citizens are quickly aware of and react to developments around them, local governments must provide continuous information to citizens. For this reason, it has been examined what kind of communication tactics the municipalities apply and what issues they focus on, regardless of the election period in this study.

The fact that local politics have become the significant field of competition between political parties in Turkey and even the prediction that future leaders will emerge from local politicians has made social media a significant research topic in this field. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to the development of academic literature by examining the social media posts of municipalities representing two important parties in Turkey, such as JDP and RPP, in the context of message variables. Each tweet sent by the municipalities has been subjected to content analysis and classified according to the mentioned topic. Thus, it has been investigated to what extent the tweets of municipalities representing different political parties differ, whether there are significant differences or common features.

In the examination to understand the frequency of Twitter use by municipalities in the two months, it has been determined that Pendik municipality was by far the most active Twitter user with 511 tweets. These municipalities were followed by Fatih and Bagcılar with 355 and 291 tweets, respectively. Maltepe emerged as the most active municipality in RPP with 281 tweets. This data demonstrated that municipalities of JDP are more active on Twitter than of RPP. Besides, this study did not find a positive relationship between the number of followers and the number of tweets posted. Although Kadıkoy has the highest number of followers with 2.1 million followers, the tweets of this municipality in the two months remained below the average of 10 municipalities. This study revealed that Kadıkoy is the municipality that exhibits the most politically oppositional and controversial style compared to other municipalities on Twitter messages. This can be shown as one of the reasons why Kadıkoy is a municipality that is constantly followed by a significant part of society on Twitter.

The selected theory of “Legitimacy Theory” has been used to determine the information disclosure of selected municipalities. Although legitimacy theory provides a framework to understand the communication strategies of institutions multi-dimensionally, in this research, it has been merely used as an explanatory mechanism to evaluate the characteristics of social media posts. Thus, this thesis specifically answered the research question “ What type of information is disclosed by local governments through their Twitter pages in order to legitimize their policies and actions,” and rejected the hypothesis “Municipalities that are governed by left-wing political parties favor participatory social media usage and are enthusiastic about disclosing a variety of information regarding political affairs through social media posts than right-wing political parties.”

As a result of the preliminary study of the previous posts and the Twitter data collected manually in the two months, 17 topics were determined, and the posts made by municipalities were subjected to content analysis. This study did not find considerable differences between the municipalities of the two different political parties in terms of topics discussed on social media. It has been determined that both political parties shared an average of 11 topics out of 17 on their social media posts.

Ines Mergel (2013) stated that local governments primarily adopt three different communication styles (Push, Pull, Networking) in social media. This approach is generally accepted in the academic literature. In this study, by seperating the 17 selected topics according

to these three styles, it strived to understand which tactics are commonly used by the municipalities in Istanbul. “Push” messages only contain general information sharing about municipality affairs. “Pull” messages request feedback and ideas from citizens. Finally, “Networking” content invites citizens to be online and offline cooperation and is produced for intense interaction of the masses with content regarding political and social topics. If we are to classify content as “Networking”, followers should engage excessively with content.

Accordingly, the second research question, “What kind of social media tactics are predominantly deployed by selected local governments that represent different political parties?” has been answered based on the categorization of message variables, whether “Push,” “Pull,” or “Networking.”

According to the results of the content analysis applied to official Twitter accounts of selected municipalities in Istanbul, some significant findings were obtained. First, The differences in the use of social media by municipalities cannot merely be evaluated in the context of political parties. Such that, despite representing different political parties, municipalities with similar social media messages have been identified.

A comparison was made by creating a map showing the social media usage habits of the municipalities. In the results, it was observed that some municipalities from different political parties were quite similar. In addition, it has been determined that the social media map created in this study is similar to some studies examining the communication styles of municipalities in the past and even confirms these studies. For example, in this study, it was observed that Kadıköy and Ümraniye municipalities, located very close to the map, are similar in social inclusion indexes in the previous study. Likewise, Üsküdar and Maltepe, also similar on the map, were similar at an earlier governance and transparency indexes. The fact that these municipalities are geographically close has also emerged as an interesting detail.

We may say that the pandemic conditions have had a significant impact on the social media shares of the municipalities. It was observed that especially online entertainment activities were shared frequently by the municipalities of both political parties. Apart from this, announcements, congratulatory greetings and mourning posts comprise more than half of the total Twitter posts. It has been determined that while municipalities of RPP highlight more environmental and public health in their posts, the municipalities of JDP focus more on social

solidarity content. National pride and historical achievements were more common in JDP posts, Twitter posts of RPP on these topics remained quite limited. Municipalities of both parties are prone to share information within the understanding of open and transparent municipalism. However, the municipality that uses the open and transparent municipality concept the most as the motto is Fatih. This municipality has been the municipality that shared the most information on administrative issues such as public tenders.

Moreover, In the municipalities of both political parties, it was seen that unilateral communication "Push" dominates, and the use of social media to gather feedback was not preferred much. Although it is concluded that JDP municipalities share more feedback-oriented "Pull" posts, it should be taken into account that the Pendik municipality makes a significant part of these shares. Similarly, the "Networking" posts of RPP are proportionally higher than that of JDP, yet Küçükçekmece shares a significant portion of these posts. At this point, it could be misleading to generalize the social media messages based on political parties since several municipalities exceedingly share some messages compared to others. Overall, both political parties are aware of the transformative power of social media, but they could not benefit from it sufficiently in practice.

Future studies may further enhance the research by focusing on the following topics: (1) Which municipalities are more responsive to citizens' demands and use bilateral dialogue more effectively? And what are the reasons to use social media in this way? (2) Which political parties represent more dialogic communication in municipalities and what kind of issues are discussed frequently? (3) How do citizens perceive social media? And do they believe that social media offers a great opportunity to improve local democracy, increase public participation, and boost transparency or accountability, or just another channel that provides information about local affairs? (4) What kind of municipality image are local politicians striving to display with shared videos, photos, and hashtags on social media? Does social media adequately reflect the identity represented by the municipality based on motto?

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