

Use of Social Media in Political Communications: Example of Facebook

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Abstract : The transformation that is seen in every area of life by technology, especially internet technology changes the structure of political communications too. Internet, which is at the top of new communication technologies, affects political communications with its structure in a way that no traditional communication tools ever have and enables interaction and the channel between receiver and sender, and it becomes one of the most effective tools preferred among the political communication applications. This state as a result of technological convergence makes Internet an unobtainable place for political communication campaigns. Political communications, which means every kind of communication strategies that political parties called 'actors of political communications' use with the aim of messaging their opinions and party programmes to their present and potential voters who are a target group for them, is a type of communication that is frequently used also among social media tools at the present day. The electorate consisting of different structures is informed, directed, and managed by social media tools. Political parties easily reach their electorate by these tools without any limitations of both time and place and also are able to take the opinions and reactions of their electorate by the element of interaction that is a feature of social media. In this context, Facebook, which is a place that political parties use in social media at most, is a communication network including in our daily life since 2004. As it is one of the most popular social networks today, it is among the most-visited websites in the global scale. In this way, the research is based on the question, "How do the political parties use Facebook at the campaigns, which they conduct during the election periods, for informing their voters?" and it aims at clarifying the Facebook using practices of the political parties. In direction of this objective the official Facebook accounts of the four political parties (JDP-AKParti, PDP-BDP, RPP-CHP, NMP-MHP), which reach their voters by social media besides other communication tools, are treated, and a frame for the politics of Turkey is formed. The time of examination is constricted with totally two weeks, one week before the mayoral elections and one week after the mayoral elections, when it is supposed that the political parties use their Facebook accounts in full swing. As a research method, the method of content analysis is preferred, and the texts and the visual elements that are gotten are interpreted based on this analysis.

Keywords : Facebook, political communications, social media, electorate

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