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**THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION AND
PUBLIC RELATIONS IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS:
ANALYSIS OF 2023 TURKEY PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION CAMPAIGN ON TWITTER**

Master thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance. Although the general field of political communication covers almost all communication studies, definition in such a broad field poses a challenge (Soukup, 2014). The roots of the field of political communication are deep and multi-disciplinary (Semetko & Scammell, 2012, p. 2). Commentaries by some prominent scholars acknowledge the historical impact of a number of disciplines in the arts and social sciences (The Future of Political Communication Research, 2005; Graber, 2003; Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). In fact, many different academic departments, schools, and programs at universities around the world today provide the institutional foundations for what is defined as research and teaching in political communication (Semetko & Scammell, 2012). Research and theory regarding elections and campaign effects, marketing, public relations, and public diplomacy are all defined as 'political public relations' by Jesper Strömbäck & Spiro Kioulos (2011) and they define political public relations as follows: "Political public relations is the management process by which an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals". Davis (2010) makes an introduction to political communication from the perspective of social theory, introducing theories of democracy, comparative politics, media sociology and popular culture. Within the framework of this approach, it covers many issues of political communication, from campaigns to marketing, from media influence to policy making, and touches on the role of new media, especially as they may be directly related to democracy.

The role of public relations and communication in political campaigns is important in various aspects. Political candidates can influence voters' attitudes, preferences and actions with the communication and public relations strategies they implement. A study by Sides et al., (2021), revealed that television advertisements have a significant impact on voter behavior in the United States elections, and television advertisements can increase a candidate's vote rate. On the other hand, public relations and communication strategies can influence the quality of democracy by informing the public about issues that are important to them and by facilitating dialogue and negotiation between different groups and perspectives. Therefore, it can be thought that the political use of communication and public relations strategies has an impact on public emotions. According to Redlawsk (2006), politics and emotions are very closely related to each other. Since politics, at its most basic level, is about the allocation of scarce resources, and this means that some people get things while others do not, it is normal for people's emotions to be an important part of any political calculus. It is certain that any attempt to explain political action by considering only its cognitive

origins will result in only a partial explanation and, ultimately, not a very good one (Redlawsk, 2006).

Level of investigation. This research aims to improve the public's understanding of political communication and public relations strategies used in political campaigns by making an analysis of their applications on Twitter. Since the name of the platform was changed to X in July 2023 and the period subject to our research was before July 2023, Twitter will be used as the name of the platform. In particular, it is aimed to determine and analyze the effectiveness of communication techniques, social media use and messages sent. According to Strömbäck & Kioussis (2014), strategic political communication does not only take place through mass media. Recently, social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, wikis and the blogosphere have been emerging with a new wave of technological optimism. The hallmark of this second generation of Internet democracy is the replacement of the public sphere model with a networked citizen-centered perspective that provides opportunities to connect the private sphere of autonomous political identity to a multitude of selected political spheres (Loader & Mercea, 2012).

This research will examine the political communication and public relations strategies of the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in the first round of the 2023 Turkish presidential election, and the political communication and public relations strategies they used on Twitter to convey their messages to the public during their election campaigns.

Aim of this research is to investigate and describe the political communication environment formed on social media (in terms of Twitter) during the 2023 Turkish Presidential election campaigns by focusing on current scientific literature, discovering its unexplored aspects, and the way political communication and public relations strategies are implemented. According to Knowledge at Wharton Staff (2020), social media has led to major changes in the political landscape. It allowed both incumbents and newcomers to communicate directly with voters on many issues, including policy. Barack Obama was the first presidential candidate to use the nascent tool during his 2008 candidacy, and Donald Trump used Twitter almost daily to express himself without the limitations of traditional media. According to Petrova et al., (2020) political newcomers can get a substantial boost in support by using social media channels, which costs next to nothing and are easily tapped by anyone with an internet connection. The finding is important since it indicates how social media can help level the playing field in politics, where money and access to formal communication channels pose huge barriers to new entrants.

This research will examine the current scientific literature on communication and public relations strategies used in political campaigns and highlight the main trends and findings in this field. It also

aims to reveal the role of emotions and ideologies in political campaigns within the framework of public relations and communication strategies.

This research explores the critical role of public relations and communication in political campaigns by evaluating and analyzing the political communication and public relations strategies that contribute to the 2023 Turkish presidential election campaigns. It also aims to give an idea about how communication and public relations strategies are shaped in line with political ideologies and for what purposes they are used.

Novelty. The influence of political communication and public relations strategies on shaping public and voter opinions has been explored across diverse contexts and countries. However, there exists a research gap regarding how presidential candidates in Turkey utilize social media, particularly Twitter, to convey their ideologies, ideas, projects, and messages during election campaigns. Twitter holds significance as a political communication platform in Turkey, especially during elections, providing candidates a direct route to their supporters without relying on traditional media channels (Baloğlu, 2021). Recognized for its broad reach and diverse audience engagement, Twitter allows candidates to interact directly with followers and construct their own narratives.

Despite its advantages, Twitter poses challenges in political communication, including the potential for negative feedback and the spread of misinformation. Hence, it is crucial to comprehend how Turkish presidential candidates strategically employ Twitter in the realms of political communication and public relations, and the consequent impact on public perception and election outcomes. This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting a case study and content analysis of posts shared by presidential candidates on Twitter during the 2023 Turkish Presidential election campaigns. We seek to explore the relationship between candidates' communication strategies, public image, and election performances.

Moreover, our research aims to go beyond examining tweet content and its message. With this multifaceted approach, our study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Twitter serves as a strategic tool in political communication and public relations during the election cycle and offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of the Turkish political environment.

Research problem. It is a prevalent practice for political candidates to utilize social media platforms, including Twitter, as a means of communicating messages and ideas to the public during election campaigns. Despite an extensive body of research exploring the roles and impacts of political communication and public relations strategies in political election campaigns, there exists a knowledge gap concerning how candidates strategically and effectively employ Twitter to convey their messages and narratives in the context of the 2023 Turkish Presidential elections. This gap arises from the lack of literature addressing the unique features and challenges of Twitter as a tool

in political communication and public relations strategies in Turkey, the communication strategies of candidates and its relationship with the public.

The purpose of our study is to investigate the political communication and public relations strategies employed by presidential candidates on Twitter during the 2023 Turkish Presidential elections.

Research object. In this research, on the subject of "The Role of Communication and Public Relations in Political Campaigns: Analysis of 2023 Turkey Presidential Elections on Twitter", we focus on analyzing the Twitter contents shared by the presidential candidates during the 2023 Turkey Presidential Election, election campaign, in terms of political communication and public relations strategies. It aims to define the communication and public relations strategies used and to evaluate how these strategies are used in line with the ideologies of the presidential candidates and to provide an understanding of these strategies.

To fulfill this purpose, further **objectives** are formulated:

- 1) To offer a comprehensive perspective on the concept of political communication and public relations and its utilization on social media platforms by conducting a theoretical analysis of scientific literature.
- 2) To analyze existing theoretical models and empirical studies on political communication and public relations on Twitter, focusing on issues relevant to the Turkish context.
- 3) To develop a theoretical framework based on scientific literature analysis to conduct content analysis of the posts shared by presidential candidates during the 2023 Presidential election campaigns.
- 4) To discern the communication strategies, public image, and election performance of presidential candidates on Twitter and assess their impact on public opinion and voting behavior through the analysis of qualitative case study and content analysis results.

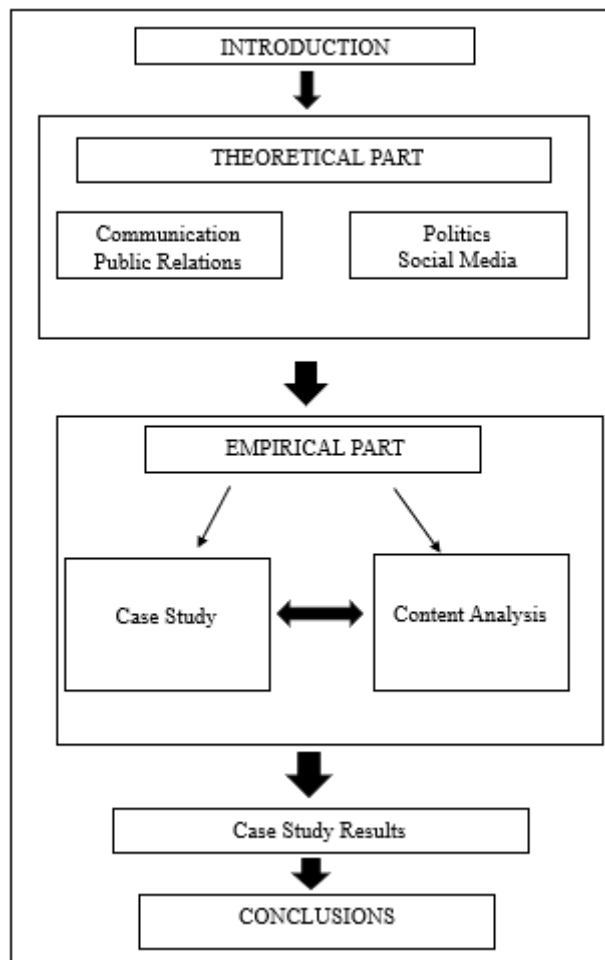
The research questions are:

- How did presidential candidates use public relations and communication strategies to influence voters and society in order to gain their support?
- What communication and public relations strategies did the presidential candidates use in their Twitter posts during the election campaigns?
- How did the political ideologies of the presidential candidates affect the communication and public relations strategies they used?

- What are the differences between the candidates in terms of the communication and public relations strategies they use?

Research methods. A qualitative research strategy was chosen and a case study was conducted due to its ability to comprehensively investigate a phenomenon within its natural context, revealing and comprehending many aspects of the phenomenon using a variety of data sources (Yin, 2015). The study focused on Twitter posts shared by presidential candidates competing in the second round of the election during the 2023 Turkish Presidential election campaigns, which covered the three months between February 28 and May 28, 2023. Since the platform was renamed to X in July 2023, and the time frame of our research was prior to this change, we will refer to the platform as Twitter. Qualitative methods were applied to explore and identify candidates' potential strategies and themes related to political communication and public relations. This involved reviewing existing primary literature and content analysis, which involved examining posts on Twitter, considering factors such as number of followers, likes and views.

Figure 1. Structure of Thesis



Source: Created by the author

1. INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND PR STRATEGIES

Within this section, we will scrutinize concepts and theories encompassing political communication and public relations, exploring their application in political contexts. Simultaneously, we will investigate the diverse roles and impacts that political communication and public relations exert within politics, with a particular focus on their influence on public opinion and political elections. Furthermore, an inquiry into the methodologies employed by political actors to deploy various communication strategies and techniques for conveying their messages and political ideas to the public, particularly during election campaigns, will be undertaken.

1.1. Definition and Historical Evolution of Political Communication

The field of political communication includes the creation, sending, reception and processing of messages that are likely to have a significant impact, directly or indirectly, on policy. Message senders or message receivers may be politicians, journalists, interest group members, or private, unorganized citizens (Graber & Smith, 2005). ‘‘Although political communication can trace its roots to the earliest classical studies of Aristotle and Plato, modern political communication research is very much an interdisciplinary field of study, drawing on concepts from communication, political science, journalism, sociology, psychology, history, rhetoric, and other fields.’’ (Kaid, 2004, p. xiii). Graber & Smith (2005, p. 479) define B.C. as the starting point of political communication. they point to Aristotle's Rhetoric and Politics from the fourth century; according to Aristotle, the purposes of the art of rhetoric include deliberative and persuasive discourse that will guide decision-making in the political structure. This art, which Plato and Aristotle characterized, criticized and defined as the art of persuasion, forms the basis of debate and has long been the basis of public civic participation. Even if all political communication conforms to the concept of speech, in some cases it literally includes campaigns, advertisements, television, etc. It means conversation rather than an encompassing category (Soukup, 2014). Political communication is largely mediated communication, transmitted through the print and electronic media. The media alter the message, in their roles as reporters of and commentators on it (McNair, 2007, p. 27). According to Denton & Woodward (1990, p. 14) political communication is ‘‘pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes).’’ Political communication is a process in which multiple parties interact, consisting of the exchange of information between politicians, news media, and the public. This process works downwards from governing institutions to citizens, horizontally through connections between political actors, and

upwards from public opinion to authorities (Norris, 2004). Regarding the relationship between media and political power, political power can generally be positioned as a power that has an impact on all types of media. One of the most well-known elements in the field of political communication is that political elements with political power have an advantage in receiving news as well as in conveying their messages. While media types are more interested in the elements that hold political power, this has comprehensive effects in terms of the role the media plays in politics (Wolfsfeld, 2022). A dynamic and interdisciplinary field, political communication draws upon theories, methods, and approaches from communication, political science, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines. Researchers employ qualitative and quantitative methods, including content analysis, discourse analysis, surveys, experiments, interviews, and observations, to explore aspects like the content, effects, and implications of political messages, media influence on politics, strategies of political actors, public opinion, voting behavior, policy outcomes, and social changes (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). Responding to changes in the political environment and communication technologies, political communication is a rapidly evolving field. The advent of the internet and social media has transformed its production, distribution, and consumption, presenting new opportunities and risks for political actors and citizens. Scholars have investigated the effects of digital media on political participation, mobilization, negotiation, polarization, misinformation, and activism, developing new concepts and frameworks for understanding political communication in the digital age (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). Contributing to the comprehension and enhancement of the democratic process and quality of life, political communication informs, educates, persuades, and engages citizens while holding political actors accountable and fostering dialogue and consensus. It also promotes critical thinking, civic engagement, social change, and addresses issues affecting society and the world (Jamieson & Capella, 2008).

Political communication stands as a dynamic and continually evolving field, confronting novel challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. Ongoing and forthcoming issues and avenues for political communication research encompass several key dimensions. Negrin & Papathanassopoulos (2011, p. 42) states that “many of the changes taking place in the conduct and content of political communication as coming out of the interaction between emerging and/or maturing media and emerging and/or maturing political parties within continually changing and modernizing societies.” In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a significant impact on political communication. This involves scrutinizing communication strategies and responses from political actors and institutions, analyzing media coverage and framing of the crisis, understanding the public opinion and behavior of citizens, and evaluating the role of communication in coping and fostering resilience (Aelst & Blumler, 2021). In recent years, it has been observed that technology companies are motivated to operate in the political arena for marketing, advertising revenue and relationship

building in the service of lobbying activities. To facilitate this situation, technology companies are developing organizational structures and personnel patterns that suit the partisan nature of American politics. Technology companies and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Google are actively shaping campaign communications by working closely with political operatives, going beyond promoting their services and facilitating digital ad buys (Kreiss & McGregor, 2018).

Overall, the scope of political communication is expansive, covering all facets of the political process, from election campaigns to the implementation of public policies. It manifests in various forms, such as speeches, discussions, advertisements, press releases, interviews, and social media posts. The effects of political communication are diverse, influencing public opinion, voting behavior, policy outcomes, and social changes. Political communication is influenced by factors such as the political environment, media system, communication technologies, political actors, and public opinion.

1.1.1. The Role of Political Communication in Political Campaigns

The starting point of political communication dates back to Aristotle and Plato's first works on democratic discourse. However, modern political communication stands out as an interdisciplinary element that draws from communication, political science, journalism, sociology, psychology, history, rhetoric and others (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2007). Pfetsch (2004, p. 349) states that "in contrast to other societal subsystems such as politics, law, or the economy, which can largely be distinguished from one another by their functions and codes, the political communication system is a construct composed of elements from two other social systems, politics, and the public sphere in its mass-media format". Election campaigns are shaped around political communication. Communication between campaign leaders and volunteers, donors, activists and supporters is important in running election campaigns. During election campaigns, communication is essential to mobilize supporters and persuade them to actively support the campaign (Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014). In the context of strategic political communication, the strategic goals of political parties and campaigns are thus crucial. The primary goal of political parties and campaigns is to maximize political support for political parties and political candidates (Downs, 1957). However, parties generally have many goals and the main strategic goal may differ between parties (Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014). According to Strøm (1990), there are three different types of parties according to political priority goals. These party types consist of vote-seeking, office-seeking and policy-seeking parties. While efforts to increase vote rates are not common among office-seeking parties, these parties are making efforts to increase their political control. The first priority of policy-seeking parties is to have an impact on public policy (Strøm 1990). In line with these distinctions, it can be

thought that votes-seeking parties attach more importance to election campaign communication in terms of political communication (Strömbäck and Kioussis, 2014).

Political communication, which has an important place in communication studies, has developed relationships with other communication or media studies fields and theoretical approaches. These areas include agenda-setting, rhetoric, persuasion, framing etc. (Soukup, 2014)

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others. Simply put, the more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people. Since this first simple definition of the phenomenon, agenda setting has expanded from a theory describing the transfer of issue salience from the news media to public to a broader theory that includes a "second-level" describing the transfer of attribute salience for those issues and many other "object" such as political figures (Coleman et al., 2009, p. 147). Dearing & Rogers (1996, p. 6) states that "the agenda setting process is an ongoing competition among the proponents of a set of issues to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and the policy elites". The considerable impact of the media in shaping the agenda arises predominantly due to the consistent recurrence of key issues in the daily news cycle. The public is informed about these agenda-setting issues with minimal exertion on their part. Given the casual manner in which this awareness is acquired, these issues swiftly transition from the media's agenda to the public's attention (McCombs, 2005).

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is a very important element in political communication. This element, defined by Plato and Aristotle as the art of persuasion, forms the basis of debate and public civic participation (Soukup, 2014). According to Reisiigl (2008, p. 96) "rhetoric denotes both the *ars bene dicendi et scribendi* (that is the practical art of speaking and writing well in public spheres through the use of various communicative genres) and the theory about eloquence." Therefore, rhetoric is defined as the art of effective speaking and writing in public (Reisiigl, 2008). Political rhetoric revolves around the tactics employed to craft compelling arguments in formal public debates and everyday political disagreements. Consequently, the examination of political rhetoric delves into the core aspects of democratic politics (Condor et al., 2019). Kane & Patapan (2010, p. 372) states that "because public discussion and debate are essential in a democracy, and because leaders are obliged to rule the sovereign people by means of constant persuasion, rhetoric is absolutely central." The transformation of political rhetoric, now frequently transmitted via television, newsprint, or

electronic communication, has led to a broadening of potential audiences. The growing significance of mass and electronic media has also expanded the effective rhetorical context of formal political communications, both in terms of time and space (Condor et al., 2019).

Persuasion

Much political communication behavior focuses on persuasion: supplying information to potential voters, for example, to influence their choice or to inform their decision making (Soukup, 2014, p. 9). In political campaigns, persuasion can be associated with cognitive dissonance, social identity, framing, priming, and heuristics. Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort arising from inconsistencies between actions and beliefs, prompting individuals to adjust attitudes to align with their actions. For instance, a voter participating in a campaign event may increase support for the candidate to justify their involvement (Blackwell et al., 2018). Social identity involves the sense of group belonging, leading individuals to favor their own group. Voters identifying with a political party are more likely to support and view positively candidates from that party (Gimpel, 2003). Framing entails presenting a message to emphasize specific aspects or interpretations of an issue. For instance, a candidate may frame a policy proposal as a public benefit or a cost for the opponent (Druckman, 2001). Priming involves activating considerations or associations in memory to influence judgment or decision. Candidates may prime voters to think about the economy or security before seeking support (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Heuristics are mental shortcuts used to simplify complex situations. Voters may rely on trusted endorsements, candidate appearances, or party labels when making voting choices (Popkin, 1991). The results of a study by Catellani & Coveilli (2013, p. 480) showed that “upward, controllable, and additive counterfactuals are more frequent than downward, uncontrollable, and subtractive counterfactuals, respectively... When politicians talk about goals other than themselves.” While they more often used upward controllable counterfactuals, they more frequently used downward controllable and upward uncontrollable counterfactuals when talking about themselves.” Perloff (2013, p. 259) states that “the academic study of political persuasion is a multifaceted arena that operates on different levels of analysis, involves complex questions of causation and presents distinctive methodological challenges. In addition, political persuasion calls on storied historical narratives, blurs the lines between persuasion and communication, and raises knotty normative concerns.”

Framing

An important concept in studies examining media coverage of politics, especially during election campaigns, is the framing of politics as a strategic game. This framing broadly emphasizes issues such as identifying winners and losers, evaluating the performance of politicians and parties, and

examining campaign strategies and tactics (Aalberg et al., 2012). Framing refers to the ways in which politicians or the news media present issues, that is, to the frame of reference in which they present ideas. For example, one could present the need for mass transit construction in the frame of safer and more efficient travel or in the frame of higher transportation taxes. Voter support may well depend on how an individual frames the issue (Soukup, 2014, p. 9). Regarding framing, according to the model presented by Reese (2007, p. 148) ‘‘bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional. If the most interesting happens at the edge of disciplines . . . then framing certainly has the potential to bring disciplinary perspectives together in interesting ways.’’ According to ‘‘A diachronic approach to framing’’ developed by Matthes and Schemer (2012, p. 319), ‘‘framing effects are diachronic in nature; that is, framing effects at some given point in time can be diminished or reversed at a later point in time.’’ and according to them ‘‘that the longevity of framing effects depends on how certain people are when they form their initial opinions.’’ The strength of people’s opinions helps to explain the impact of framing. (Soukup, 2014, p. 9-10).

Priming

Within the realm of politics, priming functions as the mechanism through which media or other information sources mold the criteria individuals use to assess political actors and issues. This process aligns with psychological theory, suggesting that individuals typically rely on information readily accessible or prominent in their memory when forming judgments or decisions. By accentuating or diminishing specific facets of a political scenario, the media or other sources possess the capacity to evoke or suppress particular associations or considerations in individuals' minds, thereby influencing their opinions or behaviors (McCombs, 2004). Priming in politics is a multifaceted phenomenon explored across diverse contexts, including elections, public opinion, foreign policy, and social movements. Scholars, for instance, have delved into how media coverage of issues like the economy, crime, terrorism, or healthcare can prime voters to use these issues as benchmarks for evaluating candidates or parties, consequently impacting election outcomes (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Miller & Krosnick, 2000). The framing of events such as wars, protests, or scandals in the media has been scrutinized for its ability to prime the public to adopt specific attitudes or emotions like support, anger, fear, or sympathy, thereby influencing public opinion or policy preferences (Druckman, 2001; Brader, 2006; Redlawsk et al., 2010). Moreover, investigations into how personal characteristics of political actors, such as appearance, personality, or ideology, can prime the audience to perceive them in specific ways and impact credibility, likability, or persuasiveness have been conducted (Popkin, 1994; Todorov et al., 2005; Matthes & Schemer, 2012). Priming in politics is a nuanced and dynamic

phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including source, message, channel, audience, and context characteristics. Priming effects are not uniformly consistent across different groups or situations, varying with audience prior knowledge, motivation, or involvement, message strength, valence, or consistency, source credibility, diversity, or competition, exposure type, frequency, or duration, and the social, cultural, or historical context. Priming effects can interact with other media effects like agenda setting, framing, or persuasion, leading to cumulative or conditional outcomes. Moreover, priming effects may diminish or reverse over time due to counter-priming, fading, or learning processes (McCombs, 2004; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Lecheler & de Vreese, 2013).

1.2. Definition and Historical Evolution of Public Relations

Wilcox & Cameron (2006, p. 4) states that “one of the early definitions that gained wide acceptance was formulated by the newsletter PR News: “Public Relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of an action to earn public understanding and patience.” According to Cutlip et al. (2006, p. 6) “the definition of public relations positions the practice of public relations as a management function, meaning that management in all organizations must attend to public relations. It also identifies building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationship between organizations and publics as the moral and ethical basis of the profession.” Regarding the history of public relations Cutlip et al., (2006, p. 88) states that “communicating to influence viewpoints and actions can be traced from the earliest civilizations. Archaeologists found a farm bulletin in Iraq that told farmers of 1800 B.C. how to sow their crops, how to irrigate, how to deal with field mice and how to harvest their crops. Rudimentary elements of public relations also appear in descriptions of the king’s spies in ancient India. Besides espionage, the spies' duties included keeping the king in touch with public opinion, champiogning the king in public, and spreading rumors favorable to the government.” The discipline of Public Relations (PR) materialized as a discrete professional domain during the latter part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, primarily within the United States and Europe. This emergence was concomitant with the socio-economic transformations brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Visionary figures in the field of PR, including but not limited to Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays, Arthur Page, and Doris Fleischman, played instrumental roles in formulating the foundational principles and methodologies of PR. Their objectives centered on facilitating effective and ethical communication between organizations and their respective publics. The diffusion of PR extended beyond its initial epicenters, permeating regions and nations such as Latin

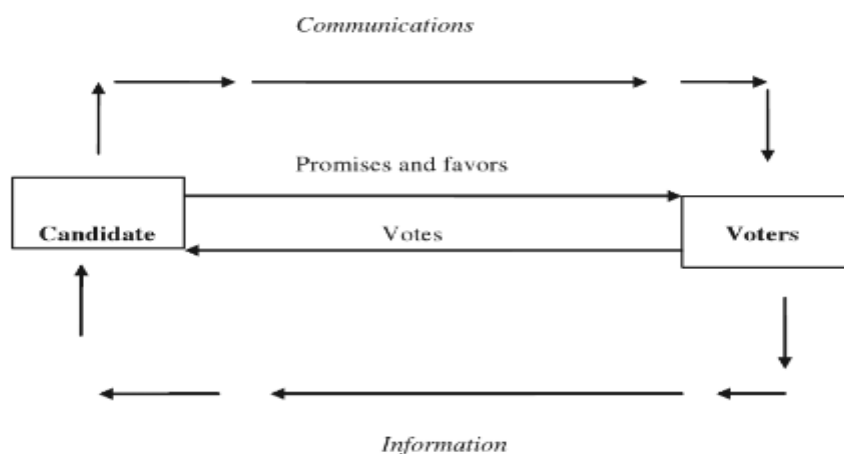
America, Asia, Africa, and Australia. In these locales, PR practitioners adeptly tailored their approaches to align with the idiosyncrasies of local contexts and cultural nuances. Concurrently, the field underwent transformative adaptations in response to advancements in communication technologies and media platforms. The advent of radio, television, internet, and social media engendered novel prospects and challenges for PR professionals. The trajectory of PR was marked by its resilience amidst various critiques and controversies, notably allegations of manipulation, deception, and elitism. Such scrutiny prompted the PR discipline to embrace heightened ethical standards and a commitment to social responsibility (Lamme & Russell, 2010; Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009). Cutlip et al, (2006, p. 91-92) states “ the history of public relations makes sense only when viewed in the context of crises of power conflicts and change. It is not mere coincidence that in the past, business interests took public relations most seriously when their positions of power were challenged or threatened. Nor is it a coincidence that labor's programs intensified when waning public support led to regulatory legislation when trade agreements led to well-paid union jobs being lost to countries with cheap labor. Similarly, the most intense developments in public relations within government came in periods of crisis: World War I, the Great Depression and New Deal, World War II, the uneasy Cold War years with the Soviet Union, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War.” In the latter part of the 20th century, the operationalization of public relations solidified its standing as an integral element in the economic, political, and social tapestry of the United States. The economic boom following World War II fueled significant growth in various facets of public relations. Corporations responded by establishing dedicated public relations departments or enhancing existing ones. Simultaneously, governmental bodies experienced a noticeable increase in staffing levels, mirroring the expansion seen in nonprofit organizations, including educational institutions and health and welfare agencies. A pivotal moment during this period was the widespread adoption of television as a dominant national medium in the early 1950s. This shift presented a new challenge, demanding heightened proficiency in public relations. Consequently, this evolving landscape gave rise to the widespread establishment of consultancy firms specializing in public relations, marking their presence across the nation (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006).

1.2.1. Functions and Role of Public Relations in Political Campaigns

Public relations is a strategic communication process with the overall aim of establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its various audiences (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Strömbäck & Kiouisis (2011, p. 1) states that “traces of political public relations can be found as early as 64 BCE, when Quintus Tullius Cicero offered some advice to his brother, Marcus Tullius Cicero, who was running for election for Consul in Rome. Quintus states

that there are two paths to success: the support of your friends and the favor of the people.” According to Zipfel (2008, p. 677) “Political public relations refers to the strategic communication activities of actors participating in the political process that aim at informative and persuasive goals in order to realize single interests.” Within the realm of political campaigns, public relations takes on the responsibility of coordinating communication management between political entities including candidates, parties, or governments and the diverse audience comprising voters, supporters, donors, as well as the various pertinent publics essential for achieving political objectives. This includes interaction with media, opponents, and regulatory bodies (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009). Baines (2011, p. 116) states that “if political public relations involves creating advantageous connections and preserving reputations with important audiences for political objectives then election campaign public relations concerns securing electoral support by affecting public opinion and voting behaviour, partly by outlining one’s own parties’ policies and leadership team and partly by damaging the credibility of the opponents’ policy platform and leadership aspirations.” Political parties and candidates aim to represent the views and opinions of voters and citizens, both in the quest for election and during governance. The electoral process involves exchanging promises regarding policies and future performance in government for votes. In turn, parties, through the communication of their programs, policies, and concepts, seek information from the electorate regarding their preferences on these matters (Baines, 2011). This communication process is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The political communication cycle with voters.



Source: Kotler (1982), in Baines (2011, p. 116)

The multiple functions and role of PR in political campaigns can be understood through different lenses, such as the news management function, the relationship management function and the image management function. The news management function involves the strategic use of PR to shape both the media and the public agenda by generating, selecting and framing news stories that favour political actors. It also involves taking responsive action to address or avoid negative news (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006). Conversely, the relationship management function involves using public relations to develop and maintain positive and trustworthy relationships with key audiences associated with the political actor. This is achieved through participation, information dissemination, persuasive communication and responding to the needs, expectations and feedback of the relevant public (Ledingham, 2003). The image management function concerns the strategic use of public relations to create and maintain a positive and consistent image of the political actor. This involves highlighting strengths, values and achievements while reducing or countering weaknesses, inconsistencies or failures associated with the political actor (Cutlip et al., 2006). The impact and significance of public relations in political campaigns are fundamental in determining the success or failure of political actors. Public relations exerts a wide influence range, including shaping public opinion, directing voting behavior, manipulating media coverage, and impacting policy outcomes. The outcomes of public relations efforts within political campaigns have the ability to go beyond the current political scenery, with the potential to generate favourable or unfavourable effects for the wider public and society. The essential nature of ethical and professional execution of public relations practices alongside a prudent and reliable evaluation conducted by both public relations professionals and the public cannot be overstated when it comes to navigating the complex dynamics present in political communication (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

2. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

In this chapter, the impact of social media platforms on political communication, the use of Twitter, a social media platform, in terms of political communication and the digital transformation in the field of political communication and public relations will be examined.

2.1. Evolution of Social Media in Political Communication

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defines social media are defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” In recent years, social media has been noted to influence public discourse and communication in society, especially in political contexts. Moreover, microblogging services such as Twitter and social networking sites such as Facebook are thought to have the ability to increase political participation. Twitter is a convenient platform for users to publicly disseminate not only general information but also political views among their networks. Simultaneously, political institutions such as politicians, political parties and political foundations began to use Facebook pages or groups to communicate directly with citizens and encourage greater political debate (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2012). Harvey (2013, p. xxxiii) states that “social media of many types are exploding across the political landscape, with unforeseen and, to some extent, still unknown eventual effects. Their impact on the political process has eclipsed even that of the Internet, if one measures in terms of the sheer volume of messaging they carry, and they have achieved this prominence in a much shorter time than the 30 years it took the Internet itself to rise to its current status as a taken-for-granted in mainstream politics.” In addition, the ability of social media to enable individual politicians to tailor their campaign messages and engage with the public on a more personal level is another aspect of its role in political communication. Social media inherently serves as personalised media, allowing users to personalise their profiles, express their identities, and connect with others who share similar views (Metz et al., 2020). According to Harvey (2013, p. 10) “Social media can have subtle effects with regard to interpersonal social networks. For example social media can provide an indicator of the numbers of others who support or participate in a movement and which, from the individual perspective, may affect the tipping point or threshold for influencing one's participation, social media can provide reference points for self-other comparisons that are utilized in the formation of collective identities. Indeed, social media can make people's social networks more visible.” Enli & Skogerbø (2013) systematically examined the utilization of Facebook and Twitter by the Norwegian Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, throughout his electoral campaign in 2011. Their empirical investigation elucidated

Stoltenberg's intentional and strategic use of social media platforms to project an orchestrated image characterized by authenticity, accessibility, and competence, thereby effectively engaging both the public and the media. Significantly, their findings posit that the impact of social media transcends the mere personalization of political communication, extending to actively contribute to the democratization of the political discourse. This contribution is notably manifested through an augmentation of transparency and accountability within the sphere of political leadership (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013).

A further dimension of political communication on social media is its function of promoting political participation and civic engagement in the citizenry. Social media offers a broad base of information, opinions, and perspectives available for access by citizens, as well as alternatives to voice their opinions, partake in online communities, and unite towards collective action. For instance, Boulianne (2015) performed a meta-analysis of 36 studies investigating the correlation between the use of social media and different types of political or civic involvement and discovered a positive relationship in 82% of the factors analysed. Nevertheless, the writer cautioned that only half of these relationships were statistically significant, and the direction and mechanisms of the causal relationship remained unclear (Boulianne, 2015).

In conclusion, social media has a substantial impact on political communication as it presents untested opportunities and challenges for political players and citizens. Social media has the potential to amplify the immediacy, customisation, and involvement of political communication. Nevertheless, it also poses hazards such as the spread of disinformation, polarisation, and manipulation. Therefore, comprehending the function and impacts of social media in political communication, and appraising the origins and substance of information circulating on these platforms, are crucial.

2.2. The Impact of Twitter on Political Communication

Gökçe et al., (2014, p. 674) states that ‘ with more than 200 million registered members sending an average of 140 million tweets (or very short text messages) per day, Twitter has established itself as a formidable social news network. User tweets range from useless to profound with an average of only 140 characters or 11 words. The posts include much white noise but also a treasure trove of “live” opinion data that can be scraped and mined free of charge and without contacting the users. Although most of the tweets are generated by a small percentage of Twitter users, these opinion leaders are also opinion shapers because many users are drawing their news information primarily from these non-media tweeters.’ According to Ausserhofer and Maireder (2012, p. 292) ‘Twitter is

one consequence of the web's unique characteristics. The speed, the public nature of communication and the manifold possibilities to link messages to users (@-mentions), external content (hyperlinks) and topics (hashtags) have attracted many different actors." Buccoliero et al., (2020, p. 93) states that "the image of Twitter's uses in political campaigns diverges somewhat from the popular account of Twitter as a tool for leveling political discourse by enabling resource-strapped actors to compete with traditional parties and as a frivolous tool for clicktivists. Instead, we see Twitter becoming increasingly incorporated in campaign repertoires of traditional parties and candidates in an attempt to broadcast their message or to influence the coverage of campaigns by traditional media." For instance, the power of social media's influence in the 2016 US presidential elections eliminated the influence of traditional media on public opinion. Candidates post on Twitter to express their positions, criticize each other, retweet views they approve of, and encourage people to vote. In this regard, Twitter became the most important communication channel for both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US presidential elections. The more candidates used Twitter to share their thoughts, the more people retweeted them, spreading their messages, and the more journalists mentioned the tweets in their election coverage, creating a virtuous cycle that drew more and more attention to the micro-blogging platform (Buccoliero et al., 2020). Twitter has significantly impacted political communication by facilitating public discourse and the exchange of ideas. It serves as a platform introducing alternative perspectives, which enhances the quality and diversity of public discourse. Additionally, Twitter enables interpersonal exchanges of ideas that further enhance its capacity as a communication tool for politics. Vaccari and colleagues (2015) carried out research by surveying Twitter users in five countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom) to obtain data on their political opinions and conduct during the 2014 elections of the European Parliament. The research shows that Twitter users are more likely to come across tweets expressing different political opinions and to have discussions with people from various countries and backgrounds. Based on these results, the authors argue that Twitter has the potential to create a transnational public forum where citizens can engage in European politics that goes beyond national borders (Vaccari et al., 2015). Twitter's significant impact on political communication stems from the fact that it gives ordinary citizens more power and influence. Twitter allows citizens to express their opinions, share personal experiences, and engage in complex discussions. This can be seen as a feature that can challenge the dominance of mainstream media. Bruns & Burgess (2015) conducted an analysis of how Twitter users in Australia use the hashtag #auspol to engage in discussions about Australian politics, revealing that a diverse and active group of users frequently question the official narratives and agendas presented by politicians and journalists through this hashtag. They put it. The authors argued that by doing this, Twitter users create an alternative space for public debate where they can engage in different forms

of political communication and participation (Bruns & Burgess, 2015). According to Duncombe (2019, p.410) ‘‘statements on Twitter have the capacity to both represent emotions and also provoke strong emotional reactions from other users, leading to large-scale debates that become integrated into offline political outcomes. The role of social media in facilitating emotional expressions such as anger, disgust, sympathy, or empathy arguably raises questions as to the shifting power dynamics between states and their publics and what this change in communication means for state responses to political crises. The power of Twitter derives particularly from this expansion of a platform on which political contestation and negotiation can take place.’’ The utilization of Twitter has the potential to reshape the relational dynamics among states and their domestic as well as foreign audiences, enabling non-state entities to wield influence and flourish within the realm of international relations. Social media, with a particular emphasis on Twitter, has the capability to expand and reinforce entrenched political perspectives, challenging conventional assumptions about politics framed in official state-centric language and reshaping the landscape of participation (Duncombe, 2019).

Overall, Twitter's significant influence in the field of political communication presents a variety of opportunities and challenges for both political figures and citizens. While Twitter serves as a platform for public debate and shaping opinions, it increases the participation of ordinary citizens in politics and creates new expectations and challenges for political campaigns and persuasion. However, it appears that Twitter also brings risks such as misinformation, polarization and manipulation. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics and effects of Twitter on political communication.

2.3. Social Media Strategies in Contemporary Political Campaigns

In recent times, there's a growing acknowledgment of the substantial impact that social media has on public discourse and communication within society. Notably, the role of social media in the political arena has witnessed a surge, with microblogging services like Twitter and social networking sites such as Facebook being recognized for their potential to enhance political engagement. The remarkable expansion of social media, particularly platforms like Twitter and Facebook, has led to an increased integration of these platforms in political contexts, embraced by both citizens and political entities like politicians and parties. From the standpoint of political institutions, active participation in political communication through social media, especially during election campaigns, has become increasingly crucial (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2012). Dimitrova & Mathess (2018, p. 333) states that ‘‘with their tremendous growth, social media have become an indispensable part of modern political campaigning, both in the United States and internationally.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Reddit have changed how political campaigns are run; how politicians and the public access and share political information; and the way we learn about politics, form opinions and attitudes, and ultimately engage in or disengage from the political process.” According to Kumar & Natarajan (2016, p. 2) ‘‘social media has the significant impact on the elections relating to number of people involved and the speed of communication. For example, in 2008, Barack Obama, the U.S. president used the social media successfully for his campaign since he understood the social media and leveraged it and it was the initial campaign where social media was pervasive. Politicians, tries to create an interesting posts and make the followers engaged which is similar to the strategy followed by a brand or media company.’’ One facet inherent in contemporary political campaigns' social media strategies involves the strategic selection of platforms and channels. Distinct social media platforms exhibit divergent characteristics, including user demographics, content formats, and algorithms, which significantly influence their appropriateness and efficacy in the realm of political communication. For instance, Twitter stands out as a prominent medium for disseminating breaking news, live events, and engaging in debates, while Facebook dominates in the spheres of social networking, fundraising, and advertising. Consequently, political entities must meticulously discern and opt for platforms and channels that align most effectively with their overarching goals, messages, and target audiences, necessitating a corresponding adaptation of content (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). A pertinent illustration is provided by Enli and Skogerbø's (2013) examination of the utilization of various social media platforms by Norwegian political parties and candidates during the 2020 parliamentary election. Their findings reveal a purposeful differentiation in platform usage, wherein Twitter was employed for agenda-setting, Facebook for mobilization efforts, and YouTube for image-building endeavors. According to Ross & Rivers (2017) another dimension of contemporary social media strategies within political campaigns involves the origination and dissemination of content. Content, serving as the nucleus of social media communication, functions as a conduit for articulating the values, visions, policies, personalities, emotions, and humor of political actors. Diverse in nature, content manifests in various formats such as text, images, videos, podcasts, and memes, with its provenance spanning from original compositions to curated materials from external sources. The formulation of effective content necessitates the meticulous consideration of pertinent factors, including but not limited to relevance, timeliness, consistency, authenticity, and interactivity. To illustrate, a study by Ross & Rivers (2017) scrutinized the utilization and impact of political memes during the 2016 US presidential election, revealing dualistic effects encompassing the augmentation of humor and satire within political discourse, while simultaneously fortifying stereotypes and prejudices associated with political candidates. The revolutionary potential of social media platforms lies in their ability

to establish horizontal communication spaces within political campaigns that are traditionally hierarchical, garnering praise for this transformative aspect (Jensen, 2017).

Contemporary political campaigns are markedly influenced by the substantial impact of social media, presenting both novel opportunities and challenges in the realm of political communication. The strategic deployment of social media entails judicious decisions regarding platform and channel selection, the formulation and dissemination of content, as well as interactive engagement and feedback mechanisms with followers and the wider public.

3. THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION ON VOTER BEHAVIOR AND CREATING A POLITICAL IMAGE

In this chapter, the effect of political communication on voter behavior will be examined and the importance of political candidate branding and image management in political processes will be discussed. Additionally, the effect of public relations and communication on voter persuasion will be investigated.

3.1. The Influence of Political Communication on Voter Behavior

Political communication can be broadly defined as the process of creating, transmitting and interpreting messages about issues concerning politics and society (McNair, 2018). The media system establishes a space known as the ‘‘earned’’ or ‘‘free media’’ environment, wherein political messages are crafted by media organizations. As a significant majority of citizens derive their political information from the news media, the attributes of media systems hold sway over various facets of political communication, thereby shaping the overall quality of political discourse. In essence, these systems impact the substance and reach of both campaign and non-campaign messages, along with the volume of political information presented to the public (Baek, 2009). Political communication can affect voter behavior in many ways. Informing voters about parties, party campaigns and party policies in connection with elections is among the activities can be carried out with Political communication. Political communication can be effective in helping voters make logical and consistent choices about their preferences and opinions by providing fact-based and current information (Delli Carpini, 1999). It can also influence voters to support or oppose a particular political candidate, political party, ideology or strategy. Political communication can influence voters' ideas and opinions about politicians and political policies by using rhetorical strategies and framing techniques (Benoit et al., 2007). Political communication can also affect voters' interest and participation rate in political elections. Political communication can encourage voters' interest in political elections by motivating voters in line with their ideologies and interacting with voters at the right points, and with this situation, political parties aim to increase their votes by convincing voters (Boulianne, 2015).

Political communication has always had a dynamic structure depending on the periods in which it existed. Following recent years, developments and updates in technology and digital media have added a different dimension to the effect of political communication on voter behavior. One of the highlights of modern political communication is the significant impact of social media platforms on voters and society. Social media is at a very important point in terms of society's active participation

in politics and expression of opinion. Social media creates the political agenda by enabling the rapid dissemination of political events and thus can quickly influence voter opinions (Chadwick & Stromer-Galley, 2016).

Unfounded news spread through social media and digital media can negatively affect voters' opinions. Voters who accept the information they obtain as correct without measuring its reliability may make wrong decisions, which may indirectly disrupt the democratic process of elections (Pennycook & Rand, 2019). At the same time, it can cause voters to polarize to the extent of partisanship in line with their ethnic identity and ideology. Political communication can highlight ideological differences between political ideologies, causing voters to be prejudiced against opposing candidates and parties, and in some cases even to feel hatred towards opposing views. (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). Extreme polarization and an environment of hatred between opposing views can negatively affect voters' approaches to politics and political elections. Through vulgar and derogatory messages, distortions of information by the media, or an overly intense political agenda, political communication can reduce voters' participation in politics and political elections and cause voters to become alienated from political processes (Valentino et al., 2001). Political advertising is a crucial strategy to influence voter behaviour. The rising use of data analysis and political advertising to identify target audiences has complicated political procedures. This has also enabled politicians to tailor their messages during political campaigns based on the groups identified as their target audience. The impact of political advertising on voters' opinions and election results is significant (Kreiss & McGregor, 2019). The relationship between selective exposure and political communication brings interrelated issues into focus. Selective exposure can have an impact on the quality and substance of political communication and agenda setting that individuals receive. For instance, individuals may opt to watch news channels or follow social media accounts that align with their political beliefs, engage solely with politicians or parties that match their ideology, or participate in groups and communities where fellow members share the same political views. This circumstance could result in a biased and inaccurate understanding of the political agenda and occurrences, and a heightened attachment to pre-existing ideologies (Stroud, 2011).

Moreover, every political election stimulates excitement amongst society and voters. Political enthusiasts from different demographics often get involved in their respective parties, carrying out their political convictions and beliefs. Such an environment is ideal for political communication to transpire. In this context, political parties strive to win back trust from their traditional supporter base while also attempting to convert potential voters with different political beliefs to align with their ideology.

3.2. Political Candidate Branding and Image Management

In the age of television-dominated politics, there is an increasing focus on the images projected by political candidates and the potential influence these images might wield on electoral results (Rosenberg et al., 1991). Visuals play a fundamental role in the process of political communication, with news creators conscientiously shaping not only their verbal expressions but also the visual messages conveyed through the construction of image bites. The significance of visual images in political affairs is expected to amplify as the prominence of television persists and gains parity on emerging audio-visual platforms like the Internet and video streaming (Schill, 2012). “Visual symbols have long been a central component of political communication, and their importance has increased as the visual medium of television has become the dominant source of political information. Politicians understand the significance of visuals and work equally hard to construct effective image bites as they do powerful sound bites. In short, visual images play a central role in constructing political images.” (Schill, 2012, p. 118). One crucial aspect in politics is the influence of politicians' attitudes and stance on society and voters. Numerous studies suggest that political leaders wield a significant impact on society and voters due to their charismatic image and stance. House & Howell (1992) discovered that charismatic leaders tend to attract and be more effective in times of crisis, instability, and adverse conditions, when their followers demand a clear vision and strategies. Political candidate branding is the process of developing and communicating a remarkable identity and image for political candidates by combining various marketing and communication tools such as logos, slogans, colors, symbols and rhetoric (Guzmán & Sierra, 2009). According to Rosenberg et al., (1991, p. 346) “throughout the modern democracies, there is concern regarding the increasing influence wielded by professional image brokers and the growing dominance of image over substance. These developments are seen as threats to the democratic process. The image brokers' influence is seen to be a new obstacle to the open dialogue that should exist between leaders and citizens. The dominance of image over substance raises questions regarding the adequacy of the grounds upon which voters make their choices. The concern here is that image manipulation both re-directs the voters' attention away from issues to candidates and at the same time prevents the voters from seeing the candidates as they truly are.” Visuals play a crucial role in bolstering verbal arguments by offering evidence, providing heuristic cues for cognitive elaboration, and serving as arguments through association, connotation, and juxtaposition. Those responsible for crafting images seek to regulate various elements within the visual frame, including a politician's attire, facial expression, lighting, setting, and backdrop. Media events are deliberately organized to limit photographers and videographers to specific camera angles predetermined by the campaign (Schill, 2012).

Therefore, it is crucial that political candidates utilise effective branding and image management strategies, as it has a substantial impact on their perception amongst society. Candidates and leaders devote resources towards refining their public persona and messaging, in order to resonate with a diverse range of audiences. The presentation and magnetic persona of political candidates hold great significance in acquiring the votes of diverse segments of society whilst preserving their own ideology. The concept of image management is crucial for political aspirants and leaders who consistently feature in print, digital and social media.

3.3. The Effect of PR and Communication in Voter Persuasion

Public relations and communication strategies are directed towards molding the political perspectives of voters within the process of voter persuasion. Employing techniques such as framing, priming, agenda setting, social proof, testimonials, and endorsements, these methods seek to shape voters' opinions and attitudes towards political candidates and their strategies. The endeavor involves influencing voters by framing messages positively or negatively, emphasizing the merits or drawbacks of a particular ideology. Conversely, a plausible approach involves establishing a connection with the voter's existing ideology and impacting their political opinions through the crafting of an objective message that steers clear of subjective evaluations (Popkin, 1991). According to Mutz et al., (1996, p. 1) ‘‘ politics, as its core, is about persuasion. It hinges not just on whether citizens at any one moment in time tend to favor one side of an issue over another, but on the numbers of them that can be brought, when push comes to shove, from one side to the other or, indeed, induced to leave the sidelines in order to take a side. Politics is about turning minorities of today into majorities of tomorrow, and the risk as well as the strength of democratically contested politics lies precisely in its openness to change.’’ Pfau & Wan (2006, p. 89) define persuasion as ‘‘the use of communication to shape, change and/or strengthen perception, emotion (feelings), cognition (thinking) and/or behaviour and emphasise that persuasion plays a crucial role in many public relations activities and in dealing with external public. Many of the core functions of public relations, such as community relations, media relations, crisis communication, and others, manifest an implicit, if not explicit, goal of cultivating or maintaining a positive organizational image.’’ Tajfel & Turner (1979) investigated how public relations and communication can influence voter persuasion through their social identity theory. According to this theory, people have a tendency to categorize themselves and others into various social groups based on different criteria such as ethnicity, gender, religion, or political views. The theory suggests that individuals assert their self-esteem and identity through their membership in these social groups and tend to prefer their own groups and members over others. Another aspect highlighted by social identity theory is that individuals tend to conform to the rules and expectations of their own groups and adopt the attitudes

and behaviors of the group as their own thoughts. In the political context, leveraging public relations and communication strategies can impact voter persuasion by addressing the social identity of voters and the segments to which they belong.

One of the theoretical frameworks elucidating the mechanisms through which public relations and communication exert influence on voter persuasion is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), as posited by Petty & Cacioppo (1986). The ELM delineates two distinct routes of persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route entails meticulous and reflective processing of the message content, whereas the peripheral route involves superficial and heuristic processing of message cues, such as source attractiveness, credibility, or emotional appeals. The ELM postulates that the chosen route of persuasion is contingent upon the audience's motivation and cognitive capacity to process the given message. In instances where the audience is highly motivated and possesses the cognitive ability to engage in thoughtful message processing, they are more inclined to adopt the central route. This route involves being swayed by the strength and quality of the arguments presented. Conversely, when the audience lacks motivation or cognitive resources to thoroughly process the message, the peripheral route is more likely to be employed. In this scenario, individuals are swayed by peripheral cues such as source attractiveness, credibility, or emotional appeals. Additionally, the ELM asserts that the central route tends to induce more enduring and resistant attitude changes, while the peripheral route typically results in more transient and susceptible attitude changes. Consequently, the impact of public relations and communication on voter persuasion hinges on the strategic deployment of techniques aligned with either the central or peripheral route of persuasion. This choice is contingent upon audience characteristics and the contextual attributes of the message. For instance, in the case of an audience demonstrating a keen interest and knowledge in political issues, PR and communication may employ factual and logical arguments, alongside evidence and statistics, to effect persuasion. Conversely, for an audience less engaged and informed about political matters, strategies such as emotional appeals, testimonials, and endorsements may be employed to sway opinions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Public relations and communications can significantly influence voter persuasion through various strategies and techniques to encourage support for specific candidates, parties or ideologies. Achieving this persuasion can take place centrally or peripherally, through contextualizing, framing and priming the political agenda alongside voters' social and group identities.

4. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH “THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS: ANALYSIS OF 2023 TURKEY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ON TWITTER” METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Methodology and Research Design

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this research, the qualitative case study approach was deemed appropriate as the best option in terms of its suitability to the research problem and research questions. Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical research used to examine a phenomenon in its real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon under investigation and its context are not clearly stated. According to Yin (2003) to answer “how” and “why” questions, case study design should be taken into account. Therefore, a case study is appropriate for researching the political public relations and communication strategies employed by candidates during the 2023 Turkish Presidential Elections on Twitter. This multifaceted phenomenon necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the language, images, and symbols utilized by candidates to communicate with and affect their audiences. The case study draws on multiple sources of evidence and can draw on previous theoretical propositions to guide the collection and data analysis (Yin, 2003). This can be further supported by Creswell (2003), who describes three approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed; each differs in its bias towards knowledge claims, strategies used, and data collection methods. Therefore, case study research is defined as research in which the researcher “investigates a program, event, activity, process in depth” and “collects detailed information using various data collection procedures” (Stake, 1995, Creswell, 2003). The type of this case study is planned to be exploratory. According to Yin (2003), exploratory case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.

Data Collection

The analysis of posts shared on Twitter by presidential candidates during the 2023 Turkish presidential election campaigns will be conducted to examine communication and public relations strategies. Since the platform was renamed to X in July 2023, and the time frame of our research was prior to this change, we will refer to the platform as Twitter. The reason why Twitter was chosen for the analysis of the posts shared by the presidential candidates is its suitability for political communication and its being a popular social media platform in Turkey. According to the information provided by Anadolu Agency (2021), as a result of the information compiled from the data in the online statistics portal Statista, as of January 2021, the country that uses Twitter the most in the world is the United States with 69.3 million. Turkey ranks 7th on the list with 13.6 million

Twitter users. A qualitative case study and content analysis will be carried out on the candidates' Twitter posts as part of our research. For the purpose of content analysis, the two candidates with the highest number of votes in the first round of the presidential election were selected. According to official results released by the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (2023), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan obtained 49.52% of valid votes and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu obtained 44.88% of valid votes in the presidential election held on 14 May 2023, which made them the two candidates who received the highest number of votes among the four candidates who participated in the election. For the purpose of content analysis of Twitter posts, an examination was conducted on the posts shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu.

For the content analysis of Twitter posts, the period between 28 February and 28 May 2023, which covers the three-month period before 28 May 2023, which is the completion date of the elections, was taken into account. Twitter's advanced search tool was used to categorize the posts historically. The posts between the specified period were examined and the posts were evaluated according to three separate categories: "Content Type, Topic and Tone". In the "Content Type" category, posts are classified as "Informative, Persuasive and Expressive"; in the "Topic" category, posts are classified as "social issues, policies and political discourse"; in the "Tone" category, posts were classified as "positive, neutral, negative", and a detailed content analysis of twelve Twitter posts determined according to these categories and classifications was conducted. Categorization and classification were carried out manually.

Ethical issues were taken into account throughout the research and necessary steps were followed. Firstly, only publicly available posts on Twitter were used in the study for academic analysis. The posts of any user whose account is private have not been used. Personal political opinions were not stated in the study, only the Twitter posts of the candidates were evaluated in terms of political communication and public relations strategies. The research is presented with a commitment to academic discourse, avoiding endorsement of any political ideology or candidate. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of political communication and public relations strategies in the specified context.

Research problem. The 2023 Turkish Presidential elections were anticipated to be a vital and debated election in the political history of the nation. Candidates and political groups implemented numerous public relations and communication tactics to sway voters and society in their favour and secure their votes. The purpose of this research is to explore how presidential candidates utilise public relations and communication on Twitter during political campaigns, as well as the specific public relations and communication strategies employed by presidential candidates in their posts.

The research questions are:

- How did presidential candidates use public relations and communication strategies to influence voters and society in order to gain their support?
- What communication and public relations strategies did the presidential candidates use in their Twitter posts during the election campaigns?
- How did the political ideologies of the presidential candidates affect the communication and public relations strategies they used?
- What are the differences between the presidential candidates in terms of the communication and public relations strategies they use?

Research objective. To analyze the communication and public relations strategies used by the presidential candidates in their Twitter posts in the political campaigns carried out within the scope of the 2023 Presidential election and to reveal the characteristics of communication in the political context and conduct a comparative analysis of the candidates in terms of communication and public relations strategies based on their posts on Twitter.

Methodology and process. The aim of the qualitative case study approach is to analyze the content of communication and public relations strategies used by presidential candidates in their Twitter posts by focusing on the election campaigns within the scope of the 2023 Presidential elections. The research is based on a theoretical framework that draws on relevant concepts and theories from political communication, public relations and democracy studies. The theoretical framework not only guides data collection and analysis, but also helps interpret and explain findings. To overcome the limitations of this research, to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the presidential candidates' Twitter posts were collected from their official, public accounts, verified by Twitter, and archived for future reference. During the collection of the posts of the presidential candidates, the posts of any users whose account is private were not used. In the research, qualitative content analysis and case study methods are based on a theoretical framework derived from scientific literature.

Assigned tasks:

- 1) Apply a theoretical framework that draws on relevant concepts and theories from political communication, public relations, and democracy studies to guide data collection and analysis.
- 2) Identify key features of the political communication environment, such as the role of the social media to deliver political messages during political campaigns.

- 3) Conducting content analysis of communication and public relations strategies carried out by candidates during election campaigns by collecting data from their posts on Twitter.
- 4) Comparative analysis of the candidates in terms of communication and public relations strategies after content analysis of their posts on Twitter.

Table 1. Categories of Twitter Posts

Content Type	Topic	Tone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative • Persuasive • Expressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social issues • Policies • Political discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Neutral • Negative

Source: Created by the author

4.2. Qualitative Data Collection and Content Analysis

4.2.1. 2023 Turkey Presidential Election

The Republic of Turkey is governed by the Presidential Government System and in this system, the importance of the President in the management of the country is quite great. According to the information obtained from the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the duties and powers of the President include publishing laws, appointing and dismissing vice presidents and ministers, executive power, submitting laws regarding constitutional amendments to a referendum if deemed necessary, and issuing presidential decrees on matters related to executive power. Therefore, the powers of the President are very important in the Presidential government system. For this reason, the Presidential election is important for society and voters. With the election held on 10 August 2014, voters cast their votes to elect the President for the first time in the Republic of Turkey. According to the presidential election results held in 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected as the 12th president of the Republic of Turkey (BBC, 2014). Following the presidential elections held on June 24, 2018, in 2014, the current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was re-elected as president (YSK, 2018). With the statement made on March 10, 2023, it was announced that the Presidential elections would be held on May 14, 2023, and if any candidate does not reach the sufficient number of votes as of the first round results, the second round of the election will be held on May 28, 2023 (NTV, 2023).

With the statement he made on June 9, 2022, current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that he was running for president again. With the candidacy of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a total of four candidates were eligible to participate in the presidential elections. Other presidential candidates are Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Chairman of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), Muharrem İnce, Chairman of the Homeland Party (MP), and Sinan Oğan, the common candidate of the ATA alliance (YSK, 2023). With the statement he made on May 11, 2023, Muharrem İnce announced that he withdrew from his presidential candidacy.

Surveys conducted before the 2023 Presidential election predicted that the candidates who would receive the highest votes in the first round of the election would be Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Considering the results of the surveys, it was estimated that both presidential candidates would receive similar votes. According to the survey results conducted by ORC Araştırma (2023), it was estimated that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would receive 42.4% of the votes and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu would receive 49.3% of the votes in the first round of the presidential election. In addition, different results were observed in the predictions announced by different survey companies. For instance, according to the survey conducted by AREDA Araştırma (2023), it was estimated that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would reach 51.1% of the votes in the first round of the election and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu would reach 42.0% of the votes.

According to the official results announced by the Supreme Election Board, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 49.52%, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 44.88%, Muharrem İnce received 0.43%, Sinan Oğan received 5.17% of the valid votes in the first round of the presidential election held on 14 May 2023. Since none of the candidates received more than 50% of the votes, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu competed for the presidency again on 28 May 2023. According to the official results announced by the Supreme Election Board, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 52.18% of the valid votes and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 47.82% of the valid votes in the election held on 28 May 2023 and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected as the President of the Republic of Turkey.

4.2.2. Twitter Usage of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (@RTErdogan) joined Twitter in August 2009. While Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was following 120 users on his Twitter profile on December 7, 2023, he is followed by 21.2 million users. According to Boomsocial (2023), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the Twitter user with the most followers in Turkey in terms of the number of current followers. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter profile includes the phrase “President of Turkey and AK Party Chairman”. It is seen that

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan mainly posts about official state visits and meetings, foreign policy and domestic policy on his Twitter profile. The content analysis of the posts shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his election campaign for the 2023 Turkish Presidential elections was based on the three-month period before May 28, 2023, the completion date of the elections. Therefore, the posts shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan between 28 February and 28 May 2023 were examined. In order to clearly observe the political communication and public relations strategies in the posts shared within the specified period, posts made for the 2023 elections and containing criticism, project promotion, vision statement, political views and political messages were evaluated. Google Translate (<https://translate.google.com/>) and DeepL Translator (<https://www.deepl.com/translator>) will be used to translate written posts in Turkish into English.

According to the observation made between 28 February and 28 May 2023, it is seen that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan actively uses Twitter. In addition to his posts consisting only of text, it has been observed that he frequently shares posts containing pictures, videos and live broadcasts. Visual content posts include elements such as press releases after official meetings, congratulatory messages, project announcements made in line with the election, political messages given within the scope of the election campaign, and live broadcasts from rallies and opening ceremonies.

4.2.3. Content Analysis of Twitter Posts of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

For the content analysis of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter posts, the period between 28 February and 28 May 2023, which covers the three-month period before 28 May 2023, which is the completion date of the elections, was taken into account. Twitter's advanced search tool was used to categorize the posts historically. The posts between the specified period were examined and the posts were evaluated according to three separate categories: "Content Type, Topic and Tone". In the "Content Type" category, posts are classified as "Informative, Persuasive and Expressive"; in the "Topic" category, posts are classified as "social issues, policies and political discourse"; in the "Tone" category, posts were classified as "positive, neutral, negative", and a detailed content analysis of twelve Twitter posts determined according to these categories and classifications was conducted. Categorization and classification were carried out manually.

Table 2. Categorizing Twitter Posts of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Posts/Categories	Content Type	Topic	Tone
Post 1	Informative	Policies	Positive
Post 2	Persuasive	Social Issues	Negative
Post 3	Expressive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 4	Expressive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 5	Persuasive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 6	Expressive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 7	Expressive	Social Issues	Negative
Post 8	Persuasive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 9	Expressive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 10	Expressive	Policies	Neutral
Post 11	Persuasive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 12	Persuasive	Policies	Positive

Source: Created by the author

Post 1) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on April 5, 2023. The post reached 35 thousand likes and 5.3 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes an image sharing information about completed projects for employees and retirees and the following statements;

“ When we came to government, we had people whose pension was 66 lira, that is, 50 dollars at the exchange rate of that day. With the last regulation, we increased the minimum pension to 7 thousand 500 lira, that is, approximately 400 dollars. We will always be there for our people, both while working and in retirement.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

The post highlights the significant improvements made during the Erdoğan government's rule on the minimum pension amount, highlighting the positive economic improvements the government has demonstrated during its time in power. With this strategy, the achievements of the government are framed. With the statement “We will always be there for our people, both while working and retired”, the post attempts to establish a personal bond with the society and positions Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a leader who cares about the welfare of the citizens. The post follows a comparative strategy by comparing the government's initial pension amount when it took office with the new amount updated after the last adjustment. This strategy highlights the positive projects implemented by the government during its tenure. The expressions used in the post share the compared pension with reference to the exchange rate and reinforce the increase in the pension in economic terms by referring to the exchange rate. Tailoring the message to specific groups, in this case employees and retirees, is a communication strategy to create a target audience. It aims to find a response among the members of this segment of society and to emphasize the projects implemented for them. The statement “We will always be with our people” emphasizes the sense of commitment and

consistency. This emphasis is a strategy designed to reinforce the trustworthy image of the government and the idea that it is committed to the commitments made regarding the welfare of citizens. The post appears to use clear and understandable language when sharing updates on retirement changes to ensure it is easily understood by various audiences. Overall, the post uses a combination of positive wording, personal connection, comparative framing and targeted communication to describe a positive image of the projects implemented by the government and its commitment to the well-being of employees and retirees.

Post 2) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 10, 2023. The post reached 33 thousand likes and 7.3 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“Thank God, we have already brought the ‘real spring’ to Turkey in 2002, after years of crisis, instability and underdevelopment. We have strengthened this climate with the bold steps we have taken in the economy, democracy, fight against terrorism, rights and freedoms in the last 21 years. We raised the standards of our democracy by clearing the debris left by the tutelaries. We shelved the denial policies that do not value our people's faith, language and culture, never to be brought to the agenda again. (...) While we were fighting all these struggles, we found Mr. Kemal and the CHP mentality in front of us. They tried every possible way to prevent us, they resorted to every means, including threats. Now he's talking about spring. The false spring that Mr. Kemal will bring means a dark winter for this nation. (...) Our nation knows very well that those who promise it a ‘spring’ are actually talking about midwinter. I believe that my nation will not fall into such a trap on May 14.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

In the post, there is a discernible portrayal of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a successful, grateful, and self-assured leader, while concurrently characterizing his political party as a robust, loyal, and service-oriented coalition. Emphasis is placed on the upcoming elections as pivotal for the nation, employing language designed to resonate with religious and nationalist sentiments within society. The post initiates by expressing gratitude to God for enabling Erdoğan and his party to usher in a transformative period for Turkey in 2002, setting a thematic tone for subsequent content. A predominant strategy evident in the post involves framing the accomplishments and advancements realized by Erdoğan and his party over the past 21 years, particularly in the realms of the economy, democracy, counter-terrorism efforts, and the promotion of rights and freedoms. This strategic emphasis serves to substantiate the historical performance of Erdoğan and his party, cultivating a perception of strength and competence. The post draws a clear distinction between Erdoğan, his party, and the opposition. Criticism is directed at the opposition for impeding progress and

development, establishing a contrast by asserting that the discourse surrounding the “spring” propagated by the opposition actually constitutes a dark winter for the nation. This strategic approach is perceived as an effort to undermine the credibility of the opposition. The post further employs harsh and critical language against the opposition, accusing them of employing various strategies to obstruct the ruling party's progress. This tactic is likely aimed at fortifying support within Erdoğan's core constituency. Simultaneously, the post engages with the national identity of the populace, highlighting the preservation of faith, language, and culture. This emotional strategy seeks to resonate with voters on a personal level. The post strategically references the impending May 14 date to underscore the significance of the upcoming elections, creating a sense of urgency in society and potentially mobilizing Erdoğan's supporters around this specific date. A notable rhetorical tool employed is the repetition of the term “fake spring” to accentuate the notion that the promises made by the opposition are unrealistic. The repetition serves as a rhetorical device intensifying the emphasis on this particular point. Furthermore, Erdoğan underscores his trust in the nation, expressing confidence that the people will not succumb to what he perceives as traps set by the opposition. However, the post lacks detailed exposition of future policies and plans, choosing instead to focus on past successes and perceived shortcomings. In summation, the discourse exhibits the utilization of various common political communication strategies, including positive framing, the accentuation of success, a comparative narrative with the opposition, and an appeal to national identity.

Post 3) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 12, 2023. The post reached 54 thousand likes and 11.5 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“Our love and struggle are for our beloved nation. We do not fight with anyone on our own behalf, and we do not recognize anyone when it comes to our nation. We consider it our duty to run with all our lives for our nation, which we love. We only develop projects, produce works, engage in heart politics and the politics of winning hearts. No matter what trap is set in front of us, we will not give up serving our country. We do not refrain from expanding our country and cities, that is, our bread, with investments. No matter what attacks we face, we will not cast a shadow on the will of the nation and our democracy. If necessary, we will protect our independence and future at the cost of our lives, as on the night of July 15. Because we exist for this nation of which we are honored to be a member and servant. We exist to serve 85 million people with love, without any discrimination. For this purpose, we have faced many betrayals, overcome many difficulties, and struggled for existence and non-existence. In the last 21 years, we have established the infrastructure of the Turkish Century in every field and completed the preparations. Hopefully, we will start the

construction of the Türkiye Century on May 14. We will achieve this, as we have for 21 years, with your unwavering support and sincere prayers. We will protect our brotherhood despite the merchants of discord and those who try to sow discord among us. WE WILL BE ONE. WE WILL BE STRONG. WE WILL BE ALIVE. WE WILL BE BROTHERS. TOGETHER WE WILL BE TURKEY!” (Erdoğan, 2023)

It was observed that strategies such as positioning, persuasion and framing were mainly used in the post. The post draws on a variety of political communication and public relations strategies aimed at shaping voter opinion and solidifying support for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The main theme of the post is nationalist feelings. The expressions used in the post position Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a leader devoted to his nation. With such messages, it is aimed to arouse nationalist and patriotic feelings in the voters. Expressions such as ‘we will be united’, ‘we will be strong’, ‘together we will be Turkey’ emphasize national unity, solidarity and inclusiveness. These statements seem to point to a common identity and highlight Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a unifying leader. The tweet underlines a positive vision for the future, especially by associating the ‘‘Turkey Century’’ vision with the election date of May 14. In the post, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who emphasizes projects, service and development, uses the framing strategy while underlining his commitment to the nation and pointing out the achievements achieved through the projects carried out in the last 21 years. At the same time, by citing past achievements, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is positioned as a leader who attaches importance to development and progress. Another element that stands out in the post is the narrative used. Emphasizing the difficulties faced in the past period is a strategy to strengthen Erdoğan's image and positions Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a strong leader in front of the voters. Expressions such as ‘with your endless support and sincere prayers’ aim to establish a direct bond with society and voters. Emphasizing key phrases such as ‘we will be united’ and ‘we will be strong’ contributes to strengthening the meaning of the message given. At the same time, this rhetorical strategy increases the memorability of the message given in the post. In general terms, this post aims to strategically position Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a visionary and determined leader by using a combination of nationalist statements, a call for unity, a positive vision, an emphasis on service and development, resilience, connection with the target audience, and repetition.

Post 4) The post shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 13, 2023 on Twitter, which received 10.3 million views and 89 thousand likes (on December 7, 2023);

‘‘My dear nation! We have been in active politics since our youth, we are in your presence. We have always defended democracy and national will in our 40 years of political life, 21 of which were in power. No matter what injustices we have been exposed to since 1994; We observed justice and

acted fairly. We embraced all 85 million people and did not marginalize anyone. We have not interfered with the lifestyle or way of life of any of our citizens. We have expanded the rights and freedoms of all segments of our society. Before us, there were headscarf and dress code bans in this country; we removed it. Coefficient injustice was being applied to our high schools; We ended it. People could not practice their beliefs freely and comfortably; we changed it. Terrorist organizations were not allowing our citizens to breathe; We crushed their heads. Our democracy was moving slowly and with difficulty; We strengthened it. The state looked down on its citizens; We established a new understanding. Foreign countries were constantly adjusting and guiding us; We said stop. Of course, we encountered many obstacles, pressure, threats, bullying, conspiracies and smear campaigns in this struggle. They tried to hinder our moves towards democracy, and they made an attempt on our lives through coup attempts. But by standing firm, we have made our country freer, more prosperous, more peaceful and economically stronger than it was 21 years ago. Since 2002, we have only been doing service politics, work politics and brotherhood politics. Hopefully, we will continue to work with love for all of Türkiye after May 14.” (Erdoğan, 2023).

It can be seen that various political communication and public relations strategies were used in this shared post. “My dear nation!” The address made in the form of emphasizing that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has established a personal connection with the nation. Mentioning his 40-year political career, 21 of which were in power, emphasizes his experience and leadership qualities in politics and state administration. In line with the expressions used in the post, it can be seen that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has strategically positioned himself as a defender of democracy and national will. The narrative used in the post conveys to the society the experience of resistance against difficulties such as various injustices, threats, and coup attempts experienced in the past. With this narrative, it can be seen that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is positioned as a democratic and determined leader. It gives the impression that listing past political, policy and management achievements as examples is used to remind society of their positive effects and to create an effective management image. The removal of headscarf bans and the fight against terrorism, which the society has experienced in the past years, show that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan positions himself as a leader devoted to social progress. However, emphasizing past political achievements is a framing strategy that is necessary for the country and nation and is consistent with the values of democracy, justice and national will. The phrase “we embraced all 85 million people” used in the post is an example of inclusive language that is important for political communication and encourages a sense of unity and solidarity. The use of a negative term about foreign countries appeals to nationalist feelings and highlights Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as an independent leader in foreign policy. At the end of the post, there is a commitment to continue working with love for the country. This positive vision for the

future appears to be a communication and public relations strategy used to ensure confidence in a political leader's future plans. It was observed that the post strategically combined personal connection, a narrative drawing on political experience with politically inclusive language and a positive outlook to influence public perception before the election.

Post 5) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 16, 2023. The post reached 118 thousand likes and 11.5 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“My dear friends and companions, As the People's Alliance, we passed the first test of the most critical elections of our country. We fought hard without giving in to provocations, ignoring pressures, not giving in to frustration, not giving up in the face of difficulties. I thank each and every one of you for your labor, efforts and sacrifices. I praise my God a thousand times for giving me companions like you. Now it is time to crown the success we achieved on May 14 with an even greater victory... The second round of elections will be held on May 28, one day after the 63rd anniversary of the May 27 coup. We are an alliance that puts the national will and the love of serving the country and the nation at the center of its politics. We can only repay our debt of gratitude to our nation, which has stood by us until now and defied tanks when necessary for this cause, by working harder and running harder. Turkey expects us to serve, to perform, our nation expects us to meet its goals. Our earthquake victims expect us to heal their wounds as soon as possible. On May 28th, we have already started working for the elections with the color of the ballot. Inshallah, we will make the best and most productive use of the coming days. God willing, we will make May 28 the herald of Turkey's century. I have confidence in you.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

The main emotion in this post by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the feeling of gratitude to his supporters within the People's Alliance for their hard work, efforts and sacrifices in light of the results obtained in the first round of the critical elections. With this feeling, it appreciates the contributions and support of its audience and aims to create a sense of unity and loyalty. The post also includes expressions regarding religious feelings in order to reinforce the feeling of gratitude. Associating May 28, the date of the second round of elections, with the 63rd anniversary of the May 27 coup frames Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a leader defending democracy, while at the same time associating the message given with nationalist feelings. The fact that the People's Alliance successfully passed the first test of critical elections despite provocations, pressures and difficulties, which is emphasized in the post, creates a narrative of struggle, and with this narrative, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his alliance are positioned as leaders and alliances that are determined and committed to their goals. Another political communications strategy featured in the post is a mobilization

strategy that attempts to translate the success of voters and supporters on May 14 into a bigger victory in the runoff elections on May 28. With this mobilization strategy, voters are motivated to continue participating in the political process. The post emphasizes the determination of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his alliance to put the national will and the love of service to the homeland and nation at the center of their political ideology. With this framing strategy, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the alliance that supports him are positioned as dedicated to the service of the nation and especially to its goals in meeting the needs of earthquake victims. Ending the post with a statement expressing confidence in the electorate is intended to build trust and confidence in the leader's vision and ability to achieve the alliance's goals. In summary, it is observed that the holistic message given in the post includes a sense of gratitude, religious and nationalist calls, emphasis on resilience, mobilization, creating a historical narrative, being project-oriented and vision.

Post 6) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 17, 2023. The post reached 88 thousand likes and 12.8 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“The CHP has been subjected to the biggest pickpocketing in Turkish political history, or as they like to call it, the biggest “siphoning” in history, through its election partners. Kılıçdaroğlu, who was taken into a “carp spiral” by his friends at the table, has been badly hit as far as we can see. It is up to the voters of that party to ask the CHP chairman and the CHP headquarters to account for this, it is none of our business. As we always say, Turkey's biggest problem is that it does not have a visionary, programmatic, project-oriented opposition based on competing for good. We have changed everything in our country, but unfortunately we could not change the opposition. We believe that these elections will hopefully lead to this change that everyone has been waiting for years.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

In this post, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan uses a multifaceted political communication and public relations strategy to influence voter perception and highlight certain narratives. The post uses a negative framing strategy by criticizing the CHP (Republican People's Party) for experiencing the largest pickpocketing or "siphoning" in Turkish political history through its electoral partners. With this strategy, it is aimed to create a negative perspective towards the CHP among the voters and to raise questions about the integrity of the opposition wing. The post also includes a personal tone, claiming that CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has been dragged into a “carp spiral” by his close political circle. With this strategy, criticism is personalized. Regarding the issue, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan appears to have called on CHP voters to question their chairman and party headquarters regarding allegations of pickpocketing or siphoning. With this strategy, it is aimed to instill a sense

of responsibility in the opposition segment. A comparison strategy is implemented that compares Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's past achievements and vision by emphasizing the opposition's alleged lack of vision, program and project-oriented approach. This is a strategy of presenting itself in a positive light, emphasizing the achievements of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party, while highlighting the shortcomings that the opposition is thought to have. In the post, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan makes a reference to the opposition by emphasizing that the elections will bring about the change that people have been waiting for years. The expression used underlines Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's confidence that he will win the election, and implies that the long-awaited change in the opposition will occur after his victory. The emphasis in the post on "the failure to change the opposition despite everything being achieved" stands out as an expression used for this purpose. The post highlights a multiple political and public communication strategy that strategically uses a combination of negative framing, personal criticism, calls for accountability, positive self-presentation, and comparison.

Post 7) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 18, 2023. The post reached 79 thousand likes and 8.9 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ The calculations at the coalition table are a bit complicated, the air is a bit smoky, but at least they have secured the support of the separatist organization. In order to cover this up, the CHP leader immediately started to lower the level of politics and polarize our people. In a single day, the most primitive, noble and disgraceful form of fascism took the place of the theatrical ‘halalization’. Just yesterday they were promising "free houses" to earthquake victims, today they are shamelessly kicking out the same people. And when they are caught red-handed, they immediately try to save themselves by pulling the story in other directions. However, no cover is enough to cover this minaret. There is no politics by sparring with the nation, insulting the nation, threatening the nation. Politics is about serving the country and the nation, about bringing works, about winning hearts. Until today, we have only sought the will of Allah, the support of our nation and the blessings of our people. God willing, we will continue on our way with the same sensitivity and sincerity.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

In the post, it was observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan appealed to the base of his own party by strengthening the trust of his audience in himself and his party and positioning them against the opposition. It also appears that the language and expressions used in the post aim to discredit the opposition and make them appear unreliable and disconnected from the public. The post uses predominantly harsh and negative emotional language to evoke a strong reaction from the target

audience. The use of expressions such as “primitive”, “disgraceful”, “shameless” coincides with this purpose. An emotional message comes to the fore when earthquake victims are mentioned in the post. By portraying the activities of the opposition as “shamelessly throwing out” the earthquake victims, there is empathy towards the earthquake victims and harsh criticism against the opposition. Including religious expressions in the post is a very effective type of strategic communication in terms of influencing conservative voters who adhere to their religious beliefs. The combination of the opposition's “free house” promise and the “shameless deportation” of earthquake victims in the post stands out as a comparison and contrast strategy against the opposition. With this statement, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, comparing the generosity and reliability of himself and his party with the shortcomings he thinks the opposition has, frames his own positive aspects. The use of the term “Fascist” in the post is particularly strategic since it makes a reference to totalitarian regimes. This strategy implies that the opposition bloc is unreliable and stands out as an effective strategy to discredit the opposition. By comparing the competencies of his party and himself with the flaws he sees in the opposition, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan effectively positions himself and his party as the most suitable option for the voters. The harsh critical and emotional language used in the post, including religious values, creating contrast, positioning and framing stand out as effective strategies in persuading the target audience.

Post 8) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 22, 2023. The post reached 77 thousand likes and 18.8 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

"I would like to request all my brothers and sisters who will go to the polls on May 28 to ask themselves these questions sincerely. Can those who promised free houses before the election and then tried to kick our earthquake victims out of their guest houses be respected? Can this nation benefit from a person who has done no good for the country in either his bureaucratic or political life? Can we trust someone who admitted with his own words that he worked with FETO members during the December 17-25 coup attempt? Can those who promised to release the instigators of the October 6-8 events from prison be expected to fight the separatist organization? Can the political morality of those who see all means as legitimate, including blackmail, threats, pressure and tape conspiracy, to liquidate their opponents be trusted? Someone who calls black today what he said was white yesterday, who denies today what he said yesterday, and who has a reputation as a “trickster”, of course cannot be trusted, and the future of our children cannot be entrusted. Our nation actually declared its will by giving the majority of the Parliament to the People's Alliance with 323 deputies on May 14. More than 27 million of our citizens showed their favor to us in the

Presidency with 49.5% of the votes. "Hopefully, we will complete May 28 with a record number of votes, with the will and support of our beloved nation." (Erdoğan, 2023)

In terms of content, the post stands out as a persuasion strategy, which is a strategy to change and influence the opinions and attitudes of the society based on a political issue or event by using various communication strategies supported by argument or evidence. The text employs various techniques such as comparison, criticism, repetition, and questioning to advocate for the People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the upcoming 2023 Turkish general elections. The use of terms such as "can", "trust", and "entrust" reinforces the notion that the People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are the sole dependable and capable option for leading Turkey. The date of the election, 28th May, was highlighted in the text to mobilise voters and demonstrate action. Additionally, the language utilised in the text appears to appeal to voters' emotions and values, including nationalism, faith, conservatism and loyalty. The text employed rhetorical questions to elicit positive or negative emotions towards the message and central theme. For example, it sought to create a common sentiment with voters by asking, "Can this nation benefit from an individual who does not contribute to the country in their bureaucratic or political life?" Besides, the text attempts to highlight distinctions between the People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan compared to their opponents, emphasizing their advantages and provoking a sense of comparison among voters. The text compares the achievements and objectives of the People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with the inadequacies and limitations of their opponents, and the advantages of voting for the People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan against the risks of voting for their opposition.

Post 9) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 25, 2023. The post reached 71 thousand likes and 9.4 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

" So far, no one has sat down with the CHP Chairman and left without getting more than they wanted. Everyone who came saying "Maybe we could do something" left with a large amount of parliamentary seats, vice-presidential positions, and the promise of three or five ministries each. Everyone who came to the door of the CHP with a blank bill in their hand, took the signature from the CHP Chairman and wrote the number on it himself. CHP Chairman has made unprecedented inconsistencies in history in the last 4 months just to protect his seat. We know what is the problem of those who embrace lies to cover their own inconsistencies and lack of principles. Whatever you do; You will not be able to make people forget your cooperation with terrorist organizations. Whatever you do; You will not be able to make anyone forget that you marketed your party's

deputies for your personal gain and promised positions and positions to anyone you met. Whatever you do; You will not be able to forget that you have made the interests of this country a matter of bargaining in the international arena. Our nation will hold you accountable for these at the ballot box on May 28." (Erdoğan, 2023)

The expressions used in the post stand out as a harsh criticism of the reputation of CHP Chairman and rival presidential candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. The post uses predominantly negative framing. Harsh criticism is directed at the rival candidate with allegations such as unprecedented inconsistencies towards the rival candidate and the rival alliance, cooperation with terrorist organizations and compromising the country's interests. Specific allegations made in the post, such as criticism of rival party MPs and participation in international negotiations, are statements intended to strengthen the negative portrayal. The repetition of phrases used in the post, such as "whatever you do" is part of the use of rhetoric and plays a role in reinforcing the negative points made in the post. The repeated use of such expressions can be used strategically to ensure that the intended message is effective. The post claims that the nation will hold the CHP Chairman responsible in the elections to be held on May 28. Specifying the date in such expressions adds a sense of urgency to the message given, and it can be thought that they aim to influence the decisions of undecided voters before the election. The narrative used in the post is supported by national sentiments and the CHP Chairman's alleged actions are framed as actions against the interests of the country. Supporting the narrative with national feelings and making references to issues such as national security show that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is positioned as a defender of national security in the post. It can be seen that the general emotion and tone used in the post contains heavy criticism and is a negative emotion in terms of the emotion it conveys.

Post 10) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 26, 2023. The post reached 46 thousand likes and 6.3 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes an image sharing information about the projects completed during the election campaign and the following statements;

" Just what we do during the election period is enough to reveal the difference in vision and horizon between us and the other candidate." (Erdoğan, 2023)

The first message that stands out in the post is the emphasis on project-based success. With this strategy, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan showcases projects such as roads, defence industry and urban transformation completed during the election period and positions these projects as the result of his leadership and vision. In addition, the statement "what we did only during the election period" emphasizes that these projects are only a part of the general vision of Erdoğan and his party and that

there are more projects to be implemented in the future. Erdoğan uses the contrast framing strategy to compare his own party and himself with the rival candidate and party and to highlight the differences between them. The choice of “we” and “other candidate” is used to create a clear distinction between the opposing candidate and himself. Additionally, when talking about the projects he and his party lead, positive expressions such as “vision” and “horizon” are used to position Erdoğan and his party as forward-thinking and visionary. Along with the project-based visionary idea that forms the main idea of the post, Erdoğan creates an image as a strong, competent and successful leader who can produce results and fulfill promises. It uses the visuals of the projects completed during the election period to present its own image and to appeal to voters' values and needs such as development, progress and welfare. Additionally, the expression “difference in vision” is used to emphasize that Erdoğan's image is superior and more competent than the image of the other candidate.

Post 11) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 27, 2023. The post reached 59 thousand likes and 8.5 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

"I call out to every member of my nation: It Cannot Be Done Without You! Tomorrow, let's all go to the polls for the Great Türkiye Victory. Let us reflect the will manifested in the Parliament on May 14 to the Presidency, this time much more strongly. Let's start the Türkiye Century with our votes." (Erdoğan, 2023)

The content of the post primarily utilises the mobilisation strategy, presented as the main agenda. The objective of the post is to influence voters to back Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the second round of the presidential election, depicting him as the ideal preference for Turkey's future progress. The post employs nationalistic rhetoric via phrases like “My Nation,” “Great Türkiye Victory,” “The will manifested in the Parliament,” and “Türkiye Century.” These phrases create a sense of collective identity among voters. Furthermore, the post highlights the return of Erdoğan's political party to power in the parliamentary elections held during the first round. It emphasizes the need to secure this success in the upcoming second round and mobilize both current and potential supporters of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The post's overall tone is confident and optimistic. The post features exclamation marks, capital letters, and imperative sentences as a means of emphasizing critical points and conveying enthusiasm. Rhetorical expressions such as “It cannot be done without you” are used to increase the persuasive impact of the message. The post prominently outlines a strategy focused on encouraging voter mobilization, notably through the rallying cry

“Let's start the Türkiye Century with our votes.” The objective is to encourage voters to participate actively.

In summary, the predominant approach in the post is to mobilise voters to maintain the advantageous results obtained in the first round of the election. This mobilisation strategy serves a twofold purpose of persuasion and motivation, utilising both the assertive tone employed throughout the post and strategic language devices.

Post 12) The post was shared by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on May 27, 2023. The post reached 54 thousand likes and 6.8 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“You cannot be a nationalist by punching the table, being heroic, or denying today what you said yesterday. Nationalism can be achieved through work, service, and courageous defence of the rights of Turkey and the Turkish nation. (...)Nationalism is making your own weapon; by producing your own ship, warplane, tank, car, it is possible by making your own decisions. (...) This is what we did as the People's Alliance, we achieved this shoulder to shoulder. We proudly represented our noble nation, whose history is full of glorious victories, everywhere. (...) Now we are taking this one step further, we are presenting ourselves to our nation with a new offer. The name of our proposal is Türkiye Century. We want to make the 100th anniversary of our Republic the starting point of the Türkiye Century. Hopefully, we will build a great and strong Türkiye on the solid foundations we have established in 21 years. Together, we will turn the May 28 election into the turning point of this new breakthrough.” (Erdoğan, 2023)

The post utilizes a political communication strategy known as framing. With the framing strategy, it is aimed to influence voter opinion by prioritizing a political issue over other issues. Using specific words, metaphors, images or symbols to convey a specific message is also an example of a framing strategy. In the post, it is seen that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan compares himself, his party and his alliance with his opponents, and implies that his opponents are fake nationalists, incompetent and inconsistent. In the post, it is observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan compares himself, his party and his alliance with his opponents, implying that his opponents are fake nationalists, incompetent and inconsistent. In the post, by using the expressions such as “You cannot be a nationalist by punching the table, being heroic, or denying today what you said yesterday.” and “Nationalism can be achieved through work, service, and courageous defence of the rights of Turkey and the Turkish nation.” the opposition's wrong attitude in the past is criticized and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emphasizes that he and his party are making the right moves by referencing his and his party's strategy and political views. Therefore, it appears that the post aims to highlight the differences and

advantages of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his alliance compared to their rivals, and to create a sense of comparison and evaluation in voters and society.

The post uses emotional language and appeals to society's values and ideas such as nationalism, pride and loyalty. The post also uses rhetorical devices such as repetition and exclamation to elicit emotions consistent with the message and main idea, and to create a sense of connection with the community. “We proudly represented our beloved nation, whose history is full of glorious victories, everywhere.” and “Together, we will turn the May 28 elections into the turning point of this new breakthrough.” statements can be shown as examples of this situation. The post uses metaphors and symbols to convey its vision and inspire the community. The statements of “*The name of our proposal is Türkiye Century. We want to make the 100th anniversary of our Republic the starting point of the Türkiye Century*” and “*Hopefully, we will build a great and strong Türkiye on the solid foundations we have established in 21 years.*” can be thought as the expressions are used to guide the society and create a sense of purpose by emphasizing the stability factor.

4.2.4. Twitter Usage of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (@kilicdaroglu) joined Twitter in June 2010. While Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was following 4 users on his Twitter profile on December 8, 2023, he is followed by 10.7 million users. According to Boomsocial (2023), Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is the Twitter user with the fifth most followers in Turkey in terms of the number of current followers. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter profile includes the phrase "7th Chairman of the Republican People's Party". It is seen that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu mainly posts about country agenda, domestic and foreign policy and criticisms against the government on his Twitter profile. The content analysis of the posts shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on Twitter during the election campaign for the 2023 Turkish Presidential elections was based on the three-month period before May 28, 2023, the completion date of the elections. Therefore, the posts shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu between 28 February and 28 May 2023 were examined. In order to clearly observe the political communication and public relations strategies in the posts shared within the specified period, posts made for the 2023 elections and containing criticism, project promotion, vision statement, political views and political messages were evaluated. Google Translate (<https://translate.google.com/>) and DeepL Translator (<https://www.deepl.com/translator>) will be used to translate written posts in Turkish into English.

According to the observation made between 28 February and 28 May 2023, it is seen that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu actively uses Twitter. In addition to his posts consisting only of text, it has been observed that he frequently shares posts containing pictures, videos and live broadcasts. Visual content posts include elements such as press releases, congratulatory messages, project

announcements made in line with the election, political messages given within the scope of the election campaign, and live broadcasts from rallies.

4.2.5. Content Analysis of Twitter Posts of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu

For the content analysis of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’s Twitter posts, the period between 28 February and 28 May 2023, which covers the three-month period before 28 May 2023, which is the completion date of the elections, was taken into account. Twitter's advanced search tool was used to categorize the posts historically. The posts between the specified period were examined and the posts were evaluated according to three separate categories: “Content Type, Topic and Tone”. In the “Content Type” category, posts are classified as “Informative, Persuasive and Expressive”; in the “Topic” category, posts are classified as “social issues, policies and political discourse”; in the “Tone” category, posts were classified as “positive, neutral, negative”, and a detailed content analysis of twelve Twitter posts determined according to these categories and classifications was conducted. Categorization and classification were carried out manually.

Table 3. Categorizing Twitter Posts of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu

Posts/Categories	Content Type	Topic	Tone
Post 1	Persuasive	Social Issues	Negative
Post 2	Informative	Policies	Neutral
Post 3	Expressive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 4	Expressive	Social Issues	Neutral
Post 5	Expressive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 6	Expressive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 7	Expressive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 8	Persuasive	Political Discourse	Negative
Post 9	Persuasive	Political Discourse	Positive
Post 10	Expressive	Social Issues	Negative
Post 11	Persuasive	Policies	Positive
Post 12	Persuasive	Social Issues	Negative

Source: Created by the author

Post 1) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on March 12, 2023. The post reached 129 thousand likes and 8.3 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ I want to address conservative young women. We have been purified from everything oppressive, we have become democratized. They attracted the most oppressive ones to their side. They made the

one who declared war on the law on preventing violence against women an alliance partner. We will not allow your gains and freedoms to be destroyed.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

In the post, Kılıçdaroğlu deliberately directs his message towards a particular demographic, specifically conservative young women, employing a strategic approach to enhance the message's efficacy within this targeted group. This strategy is designed to tailor the communication for maximum impact within a specific audience segment. The messaging within the communication frames the existing political landscape in the context of democratization and freedom. Kılıçdaroğlu strategically positions his political party as a proponent of progressive values, asserting its freedom from oppressive elements and its commitment to democratization. The communication establishes a stark contrast between Kılıçdaroğlu's party and the opposition by characterizing the rival alliance as aligned with oppressive elements. Specific reference is made to a partner within the rival alliance who opposes legislation preventing violence against women. By this reference, the message is aiming to create a distinct differentiation and present Kılıçdaroğlu's party as a supporter of women's rights. The post explicitly pledges to safeguard the gains and freedoms of the conservative young women to whom Kılıçdaroğlu is addressing. The deliberate use of phrases such as “we will not allow this” and “your gains and freedoms” strategically appeals to the emotions of protection and solidarity within the targeted audience. Kılıçdaroğlu strategically employs a narrative portraying his party as a formidable force against oppression and a guardian of democratic values. Collectively, the communication employs a nuanced strategy involving framing, contrast, emotional appeal, and narrative construction to effectively convey a tailored political message to conservative young women, aligning them with the values advocated by Kılıçdaroğlu's party.

Post 2) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on March 14, 2023. The first tweet of the post consisting of 5 tweets reached 133 thousand likes and 11.6 million views as of December 9, 2023. The post, consisting of 5 tweets, includes the following statements;

“ I have reached the zero point of the border. I came to tell my nation that I remain determined on an issue. My presidency has two important goals: The first is to reunite Syrians with their homeland. The second is to send those who came illegally via Iran back to Iran. We have to give our streets and neighborhoods back to their owners. However, we have to do this sensitively, in a way that does not leave a stain such as racism on our Noble Nation. We are working on this. I will present a large and international project to our nation. The program we are working on involves both solving the refugee issue and creating an important political leadership role for Turkey in the Mediterranean region in this process. Our nation should be patient, we will inform you very soon. My second concern is to stop any illegal entry. In our opinion, the issue is very simple: Border

security is national security. Border security is the most fundamental and necessary responsibility of a sovereign nation. Those who cannot protect their borders cannot be sovereign. In summary, we will say goodbye to our Syrian guests in 2 years. I will close the border to all kinds of illegal crossings in the first week of my presidency.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

Kılıçdaroğlu uses clear and concise language regarding his message in his post. Expressions used in the post, such as “giving streets and neighborhoods to their owners” and protecting “border security”, appeal to the nationalism of the society. Kılıçdaroğlu frames the problems he identifies in terms of national security and emphasizes that his projects are important for the interests and security of society. With his message, Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes that the issues of Syrians reuniting with their homeland and preventing illegal entry are issues that need to be handled sensitively. By staying away from all forms of racism and committing to handle problems carefully, Kılıçdaroğlu creates the image of a humane and responsible leader. The use of the term “project” in the post positions Kılıçdaroğlu as a visionary and problem-solving leader. The commitment to say goodbye to Syrian guests within “2 years” and the commitment to close the border to illegal crossings in the first week of Kılıçdaroğlu's possible presidency give the impression that the projects he presented by addressing the targets on a certain timeline are planned and well-worked projects. Kılıçdaroğlu's emphasis on an international project and Turkey's role in the Mediterranean positions Kılıçdaroğlu as a leader who understands the importance of global dynamics and Turkey's role on the international stage.

Post 3) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on March 24, 2023. The post consisting reached 107 thousand likes and 4.3 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ The picture is getting clearer every day. We have formed an alliance of reconciliation, of closing open wounds, of reasonableness, of competing with the world. The alliance against us has chosen to expand on women's rights to be usurped. The only thing I can say is that they do not know women, especially young women.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

It was observed that the main element of this shared post is the opposing approaches to alliance building, reconciliation and women's rights. As an example of positive framing, the post used language that evoked positive thoughts in voters, such as “compromise alliance,” “healing open wounds,” and “reasonableness.” On the other hand, with the comparative framing strategy, a sharp contrast is drawn between the Nation Alliance, of which Kılıçdaroğlu is a candidate, and the People's Alliance. In the post, Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes that he focuses on the goal of global competition within the framework of the projects created by his own alliance, while the People's

Alliance is criticized for being insufficient regarding women's rights. This creates a contrast, framing the Nation Alliance as progressive, open-minded and modern, and the rival alliance as the opposite. On the other hand, the post also appeals to emotions. The phrase "healing open wounds" gives voters the impression that lessons have been learned from past mistakes and encourages empathy. While the post focuses on the ideological contrasts of two separate alliances, the solidarity within the alliance is emphasized by creating an identity within the alliance. On the other hand, the post appears to target those who value compromise and global competition, primarily women's rights defenders. Highlighting young women in the post sets an example for the target audience. Clear, concrete and simple language was used in the post. With the post, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu summarizes the goals of the alliance he is a member of and harshly criticizes the rival alliance regarding women's rights. The brevity and clarity of the message allows for rapid interaction and potential virality. It can be seen that the post uses a narrative creation strategy to influence public perception. It has been observed that emphasizing that the nation's alliance represents progress, logic and global competitiveness, and depicting the opposing alliance as insufficient on women's rights was effective in creating the narrative. In summary, this post employs a range of rhetorical and communication tactics to communicate the principles of the alliance to the public, accentuate the alliance's positive attributes, and draw a distinction with the opposing alliance.

Post 4) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 1, 2023. The post reached 258 thousand likes and 25.8 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements, after a photo of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stepping on the prayer rug emerged;

“ I'm sorry, I'm so sorry I couldn't see the prayer rug. I don't want to hurt anyone in the world, especially my nation. I hereby leave those who commit abuse and the propaganda apparatus they use to the conscience of our nation.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

The communication strategy evident in the post is prominently characterized by crisis management. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu employs strategic language to convey his response to an incident involving a prayer rug. Commencing with a direct apology, the phrase ‘‘I'm sorry, I'm so sorry I couldn't see the prayer rug’’ is utilized to convey genuine humility and remorse. In acknowledging the societal sensitivity surrounding the issue, Kılıçdaroğlu expresses regret for an unintended mistake. The statement ‘‘I don't want to harm anyone in the world, especially my nation,’’ employed by Kılıçdaroğlu, unequivocally rejects the criticism campaign directed towards him. Furthermore, Kılıçdaroğlu subtly implies that his action was intentional and suggests that certain entities exploit these allegations as part of a propaganda strategy. The recurring statement ‘‘I leave it to the conscience of our nation’’ implies that Kılıçdaroğlu considers his error inadvertent and entrusts the

society's impartiality to validate his sincerity. This entreaty to society's conscience employs rhetorical tactics to defer judgments to the public. Kılıçdaroğlu's overarching strategy positions him as a transparent and accountable leader, insinuating that society is cognizant of the factual basis of the accusations. The post, functions as a crisis management tactic aimed at mitigating or obviating potential harm from negative accusations. This comprehensive communication strategy employs elements such as apologies, denials, distancing from the subject, and appeals to conscience, designed to shape the narrative, provide reassurance to the public, and safeguard Kılıçdaroğlu's reputation against any adverse repercussions arising from the incident.

Post 5) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 11, 2023. The post reached 110 thousand likes and 6.7 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ First, cripple all the young people with interviews and then, just a few days before the election, promise to remove the disgrace you have made with my projects. Erdoğan, you can only talk about my projects from now on, I will correct these disgraces you have signed.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

It was observed that Kılıçdaroğlu started his post with a critical language. The statement "First cripple all the young people with interviews..." is rhetorical and aims to draw attention to the criticized points. The use of the word “disabled” shows that the message is intended to have an impact on young people who suffer from the issues criticized and adds emotionality to the idea presented. This rhetorical strategy used can create a feeling of dissatisfaction in voters. In the post, the subject of the interview is framed by suggesting that job interviews with young people are a disadvantage for young people as a result of the government's approach. Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes that these activities of the government are a problem that needs to be corrected and positions himself as a strong leader who can overcome and correct these problems. This framing technique used emphasizes that Kılıçdaroğlu is the most suitable leader for solving the problems in question. In his post, Kılıçdaroğlu strategically uses the phrase “my projects” to emphasize that he has solutions to the problems he identified and claims that the ruling party is implementing Kılıçdaroğlu's projects. Thus, it shifts its goal from criticizing the current administration to presenting itself as an alternative that produces reliable and strong solutions. It can be thought that this project-based communication strategy aims to show Kılıçdaroğlu as a reliable, competent leader with a concrete plan. Kılıçdaroğlu's use of the phrase “Erdoğan, from now on, you can only talk about my projects...” in his post directly addressing President Erdoğan instills the idea of challenging Erdoğan's authority and shows Kılıçdaroğlu as absolute power. This post shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is a criticism of President Erdoğan's policies, focusing on the young segment

suffering from interviews. In this context, it is seen that rhetoric, framing and project-based communication strategies are used simultaneously in sharing. The post aims to attract voters' attention, influence voters' opinion, frame the narrative, and position Kılıçdaroğlu as a credible and competent candidate.

Post 6) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 15, 2023. The post reached 151 thousand likes and 9.6 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ We are ready with everything we have to elevate Turkey. Our vision is the Champions League with economists, honest bureaucrats, hard-working people, lots of clean investment money. Erdoğan now writes this in the declaration and then launches a launch event. Run Erdoğan, run, you have none of these.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

This communication comprises content that centers on Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's conceptualization of Turkey's progression, contrasting this vision with perceived shortcomings of the incumbent government. Kılıçdaroğlu employs rhetorical strategies to critique the initiatives of the Erdoğan administration, emphasizing a forward-looking vision for Turkey's development. The phrase “we are ready to do everything we can to elevate Turkey,” featured in the post, underscores a commitment to national advancement. This strategic communication approach aims to instill trust and garner support by projecting a modern and project-oriented image. Within the post, the analogy drawn to the “Champions League,” encompassing economists, honest bureaucrats, industrious individuals, and substantial clean investment funds, seeks to cultivate an image of a prosperous and well-governed Turkey across various domains. This communicative strategy is evidently geared towards aligning with voters' aspirations and evoking sentiments of national pride. Kılıçdaroğlu critiques Erdoğan's purported approach by suggesting that Erdoğan drew inspiration from Kılıçdaroğlu's projects, positioning Erdoğan's vision as trailing behind his own. The use of imperative language, exemplified by the phrase “run, run,” imparts rhetorical weight to the post, wherein Kılıçdaroğlu appears to question Erdoğan's project competency. Listing attributes such as economist, honest bureaucrat, hard-working person, and clean investment money indicates Kılıçdaroğlu's intent to fortify and substantiate his envisioned future for Turkey. Statements derived from credible experts in their respective fields contribute positively to the reliability of Kılıçdaroğlu's message, reinforcing his emphasis on visionary leadership. Moreover, this suggests that the promised projects are not merely conceptual but possess a detailed implementation plan. In summation, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's expressions in this post reflect a strategic amalgamation of visionary leadership communication, metaphorical language, criticism, and vision presentation. In

the realm of political communication and public relations strategies, this post signifies Kılıçdaroğlu's aim to articulate a robust and compelling vision for Turkey's future while concurrently critiquing Erdoğan's approach to project development.

Post 7) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 20, 2023. The first tweet of the post consisting of 2 tweets reached 152 thousand likes and 7.4 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post, consisting of 2 tweets, includes the following statements;

“ Erdoğan is panicking. It's good if it's in the public interest. We are people who have been raised with state manners. Those who govern the state don't make promises, they make commitments. Because the state's money is the people's money. We fulfil the commitments made on behalf of the state, for the benefit of the people, on the basis of continuity. Let them make a lot of commitments for the benefit of our people, who are forgotten during Covid, fires, economic crisis, earthquake, but remembered during elections, so that it means the promise of the state and Mr Kemal will gladly do it.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

The first statement in the post, “Erdoğan panicked a lot,” positions Kılıçdaroğlu as a calm and confident leader towards Erdoğan. The statement “If it is for the benefit of the people, it is good” emphasizes that Kılıçdaroğlu supports the projects produced for the welfare of the nation, regardless of which political party they are produced. It appears that this emphasis is a framing strategy, distancing Kılıçdaroğlu from partisan politics and highlighting him as a politician who prioritizes public welfare. Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes the quality of the education he received by stating that he is one of the “people educated with state education” and aims to instill a sense of confidence in the voters with this statement. In his post, Kılıçdaroğlu criticizes the government based on the promises made and emphasizes that the right approach for the society is not to promise but to commit. With this criticism, Kılıçdaroğlu implies that Erdoğan follows a strategy of election-oriented projects, while he also implies that he has projects that are far from political ambitions and look after the welfare of the society. Kılıçdaroğlu both pursues a negative framing strategy and directly empathizes with the society by emphasizing that the ruling party and Erdoğan are inadequate in managing situations such as Covid, fire, economic crisis and earthquake. In his post, Kılıçdaroğlu calls for more commitment to the public good, implying that Kılıçdaroğlu will fulfill the promises made by the government, and with this implication, emphasizes his self-confidence that he will win the elections. The phrase “Mr. Kemal will do this with pleasure” underlines Kılıçdaroğlu's sense of loyalty to the commitments he made. In summary, it seems that Kılıçdaroğlu used a framing strategy in this post, emphasizing commitment-oriented leadership and criticizing election-oriented

promises. The dominant strategy used is to position Kılıçdaroğlu as a determined leader who is committed to keeping his promises and ensuring social welfare.

Post 8) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 27, 2023. The first tweet of the post consisting of 2 tweets reached 119 thousand likes and 10.8 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post, consisting of 2 tweets, includes the following statements;

‘Dear young people, there is a threshold ahead of us as a country and I told you that we need you to cross this threshold together. With a single vote, you will pull this country out of these debates. You will retire the politicians who speak with the codes of the Middle East quagmire. Don't waste your vote. Let's see when the Hagia Sophia Mosque propaganda will start. Everything is advertising for them. They have no sacredness, no commons, only propaganda. What have they done to our common values? A clean forehead belongs to those who don't steal and who don't starve their people. Period!’ (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

In the post, the identified target demographic is the youth, as discerned from the direct address by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. The deliberate engagement with young individuals reflects an acute awareness of their pivotal role in the impending election, constituting a strategic approach to galvanize this demographic due to their influential sway in the electoral process. The strategic discourse employs inclusive language such as “we” and “together” to underscore a collective responsibility and foster a sense of unity. Kılıçdaroğlu frames the impending elections as a critical threshold necessitating collective surmounting, aligning himself with the electorate in pursuit of a common objective. The post further endeavors to mobilize undecided voters by accentuating the potency of a singular vote, concurrently serving a motivational purpose to stimulate heightened political involvement. By claiming that some politicians who support the rival alliance speak with the codes of the Middle East swamp, Kılıçdaroğlu creates a contrast between the current political environment of the rival alliance and the desired political environment change. This contrast also stands out as a framing in which Kılıçdaroğlu positions his party as an alternative to the current political environment. The reference to the Hagia Sophia Mosque propaganda, which is predicted to happen, predicts a move by the rival government that can appeal to the conservative segment, and the criticism made after the prediction claims that there is no sanctity and real values in the actions of the rival alliance. This alleged point aims to raise doubts about the sincerity of the rival alliance. Emphasizing the concept of common values, Kılıçdaroğlu reproaches the rival alliance for purportedly disregarding these shared principles. This strategic maneuver seeks to underscore societal values and position Kılıçdaroğlu and his alliance as supporter of these principles. The assertion, “a clean forehead belongs to those who do not steal and do not starve their people,” introduces a moral reference,

asserting that the governing party should prioritize honesty and the populace's welfare. The usage of the phrase ‘‘Period!’’ serves to reinforce and accentuate the preceding messages, aiming to imprint a lasting impression on the electorate.

Post 9) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 27, 2023. The post reached 174 thousand likes and 15 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

‘‘ Despite all the pressure, all the bans, all the blackouts, we can achieve this if you want. If you really want, we can get out of this dark hole together. Regardless of his opinion or lifestyle; I call out to all our people. This is the final exit. Those who love their country should come to the ballot box!’’ (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

The initial approach used in the post is the mobilisation strategy, urging the community to unite and act. The statement ‘‘We can accomplish this if you desire’’ aims to inspire society and promote a shared sense of responsibility and action. The expression ‘‘From all the pressures, all the bans, all the cuts’’ in the post draws attention to a rhetorical strategy that highlights the challenges and hurdles encountered by Kılıçdaroğlu's political campaign. This political campaign strategy portrays voting and political environment as a challenging but worthwhile endeavour. The use of inclusive language such as ‘‘I appeal to all our people’’ is intended to make the message more appealing. Kılıçdaroğlu's appeal to individuals from diverse ideology and lifestyles highlights the inclusive and unifying message. The statement ‘‘Those who love their country should come to the polls’’ connects voting with patriotism and emphasizes the voter's responsibility. Kılıçdaroğlu positions voting as a patriotic duty and encourages democratic participation. The phrase ‘‘This is the last exit’’ reinforces the urgency of the message and emphasizes the crucial nature of the forthcoming elections. The election is presented as a turning point for Turkey, enhancing the sense of urgency. Kılıçdaroğlu typically employs techniques in his message to foster feelings of togetherness, perseverance, nationalism, and urgency within the public, to encourage voters to engage in the democratic process, even in the face of adversity he purports to confront during his political campaign.

Post 10) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on April 29, 2023. The first tweet of the post consisting of 4 tweets reached 132 thousand likes and 6.4 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post, consisting of 4 tweets, includes the following statements;

‘‘ Let's put an end to this dirty language. Our people see what they are trying to achieve with unimaginable dirty tricks and accusations. We are going to elections, not war. Many governments changed, but we continued on our way. I know the dirtiest things to do in the last 10 days. And I say

to them: A little common sense! Let our people go to the polls in peace, with a smile, and return home with peace of mind. We are sick and tired of your reckless polarization of neighborhoods and households. We really want to spend this remaining time in an election atmosphere. Now stop disturbing the peace of our country. You called the election a coup. You compared the Battle of Uhud against your own people. You compared our people to invaders. Where will you stop? I will continue to fulfill my responsibility and call for common sense. Because the devil comes to the aid of those who have lost their common sense. Restrain what's inside you, otherwise this hatred will swallow you first and then all of us.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

In this post, Kılıçdaroğlu initiates by censuring the purported “dirty language” employed by the opposing alliance throughout the election campaign, strategically positioning both himself and his party as proponents of a more refined discourse while critiquing the rival alliance's strategies. By using the phrase “Our nation sees what they are trying to achieve”, Kılıçdaroğlu implies that the society is aware of the negative strategies carried out by the rival alliance, and with this strategy he appeals to the logic of the society. Within his message, Kılıçdaroğlu underscores that the nation is embarking on an electoral process, not a conflict, underscoring the imperative for a tranquil and democratic election while portraying himself as a leader advocating peace and democracy. This framing aligns with an intention to resonate with voters' yearning for stability and governance marked by tranquility. The statement, “many governments changed, but we continued on our way,” accentuates the historical continuity of the party under his leadership, positing that political activities should not disrupt societal peace, emphasizing the transient nature of elections in contrast to the enduring permanence of social unity. The recurrent emphasis for “common sense” serves as a rhetorical device positioning Kılıçdaroğlu as a leader endowed with rationality and urging the opposing alliance to exercise prudence. Expressions like “let our nation go to the polls in peace and with a smiling face,” coupled with the utilization of humane language, foster a connection with voters and cultivate a positive image. Kılıçdaroğlu critiques the rival alliance for “recklessly polarizing neighborhoods and households,” positioning his party as a mitigating force against divisive tendencies, advocating for social unity and solidarity. Referencing the opposing alliance's language as harsh and hateful, alluding to specific accusations leveled against him, Kılıçdaroğlu underscores public dissatisfaction with such dialogues. The phrase, “because the devil comes to the aid of those who have lost their common sense,” introduces a moral dimension to the desired message, framing the call for common sense as a virtuous undertaking. The post culminates with a cautionary warning about the potential repercussions of motivated hatred, intending to instill a sense of prudence and responsibility within the public, based on the language employed by the opposing alliance.

Post 11) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on May 5, 2023. The first tweet of the post consisting of 3 tweets reached 71 thousand likes and 5 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post, consisting of 3 tweets, includes the following statements;

“ Erdoğan announced a charity increase in Rize, the homeland of tea, as if giving good news to the base price of tea. With this increase, the base price of fresh tea became 11.30 TL. Doesn't he know the costs? Of course he knows. The cost of 1 kg of fresh tea leaves is 11.32 TL. They ignore the analyzes of the chambers of agriculture, ignore the sweat of the producers, listen only to what the tea barons say and look after their interests. The producer is forced to sell his product at a loss, let alone put money aside for next year. We will fix it, my dear people, we will fix it. I promise you! As soon as we take office on May 15, the price of tea will be at least 15 TL, including the welfare share. I will not and will not allow the tea producers of this country to be crushed by the high cost of living. I will not go back on my word.” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

The focus of the post is the economic problem of tea production. The content of the post underlines the injustice regarding the base price of tea and draws attention to the economic difficulties faced by producers engaged in tea production. In this context, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu strategically positions himself as the defender of this perceived economic injustice. The main theme highlighted in the post revolves around criticism of President Erdoğan's statement regarding the base price of tea. Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes with carefully chosen expressions that the increase announced in the base price of tea is symbolic and does not adequately meet the financial needs of tea producers. To prove his argument quantitatively, Kılıçdaroğlu presents his proposed solution by providing specific figures regarding the base price of tea and the associated production costs. This approach has been deliberately adapted to interact with the economic knowledge of tea producer voters. By including economic data in his statement, Kılıçdaroğlu strategically positions himself as a leader who knows the intricacies of the issue. Throughout the post, Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes his awareness of the economic difficulties faced by tea producers and aims for public support with the promise of a solution he offers. As conveyed in the post, the commitment to increase tea prices serves to develop the perception of competent leadership in the eyes of the public. Specifying the date of his inauguration and stating that he will work on solving the problem as soon as he takes office emphasizes that Kılıçdaroğlu is confident in winning the election and stands behind his promises. The constantly repeated phrase “I will not allow it” underlines Kılıçdaroğlu's unwavering commitment to his promises and contributes to the creation of a sense of assurance regarding the solution of the issue at hand.

Post 12) The post was shared by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on May 6, 2023. The post reached 148 thousand likes and 9.4 million views as of December 8, 2023. The post includes the following statements;

“ Mafias, militants, (.), gangs of 5, (...) have come together and are threatening Turkey. You will bury them in the dustbin of history in the first round, young man, and then Mr. Kemal will send them all to where they belong. Promise to you!” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023)

The first point that draws attention in the post is the rhetoric and the tone of the language used. Expressions such as “mafia”, “militant”, “gangs of 5” carry negative connotations and underline a perceived threat to the country. Such rhetorical choices appear to be a preference for a mobilization strategy, as they portray a serious threat to the country. The expression “bury them in the dustbin of history” is a metaphor that firmly implies that the negative elements mentioned must be defeated once and for all. The phrase “threatening Turkey” is an expression of nationalist sentiments and draws attention to the existence of a common enemy that endangers the unity of the country. The term “young man” used in the post also directly addresses the younger generations, emphasizes Kılıçdaroğlu's deep-rooted bond with young people, and positions Kılıçdaroğlu as a reliable, patriotic leader. Kılıçdaroğlu strengthens the strong leader image he aims to create by highlighting his personal determination to combat the threat he has identified. The phrase “Mr. Kemal will send them all to where they belong” is a phrase chosen to strengthen the leadership image created. Promises made against possible threats aim to establish a relationship of trust between the voters and Kılıçdaroğlu. In summary, the post serves as a political PR function that aims to shape voters' views and present Kılıçdaroğlu as a determined leader who can face potential challenges. Kılıçdaroğlu's clear expressions and his use of nationalist feelings strengthen this image.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Content Analysis Results of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Twitter Posts

In line with the content analysis of the post, it has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used various political communication and public relations strategies during the 2023 Presidential elections, to consolidate the support of his own supporters, to convince the voters who are undecided and support the rival alliance, and to mobilize the voters who support him. In the analyzed posts, while the content of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's posts is generally expressive and persuasive, the topic his posts focus on stands out as political discourse. The reason for this situation stands out as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's criticisms of the rival alliance and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. As a result of the analysis, it was observed that the main strategy used by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his posts was the mobilization strategy aimed at increasing the political participation of voters who support him and his alliance. It seems that the mobilization strategy is supported by different strategies such as persuasion, framing, positioning, emotional appeal and image building. It has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's state management experience plays a major role in the basic tone he uses in his posts. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who served as prime minister between 2003 and 2014 and as president between 2014 and 2023, frequently refers to his state administration experience in his posts. Therefore, while Erdoğan's posts give less space to future projects, the focus is on the projects carried out, thresholds crossed, and achievements during his time in the senior state administration, and the posts shared by referencing these past projects and achievements mainly focus on mobilization, framing and positioning strategies has been used. It is seen that the successes achieved in the past periods are framed positively, and in the same direction, the opposition alliance is framed negatively, Erdoğan and his party are positioned as vision and project-oriented by referring to past successes, and a mobilization strategy is implemented on their supporters. In line with the language used by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his posts and the messages he gave, it has been observed that the long-term rule of him and his party has brought a loyal and stable audience to Erdoğan and his party, and the existence of this loyal and stable audience is also reflected in the political communication strategies that Erdoğan uses. Therefore, while Erdoğan implements a mobilization strategy for his own audience in his posts, he uses strategies such as framing, positioning and persuasion when appealing to undecided and rival alliance-supporting voters. It has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan frequently includes religious expressions in his posts, and that these expressions are related to Erdoğan's own ideology and are also used to appeal to conservative voters. It has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan frequently includes religious expressions in his posts, and that these expressions are related to

Erdoğan's own ideology and are also used to appeal to conservative voters. According to Calfano (2021), ‘‘though not all people are religious believers, religion has played important historical roles in developing political systems, parties, and policies—affecting believers and nonbelievers alike.’’ In addition to religious expressions, Erdoğan's It is seen that nationalist expressions are frequently used in his posts. It has been observed that the target audience of the message given in the nationalist expressions used, as in the case of religious elements, is the conservative and nationalist segment. It has been observed that the persuasion strategy used by Erdoğan in his posts mainly includes various communication techniques such as comparison and criticism and is used to influence the political views of voters. It has been observed that the comparison technique was applied by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, especially against the rival presidential candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the main opposition party CHP and the rival alliance, the Nation Alliance. As O'Keefe (2002) notes, comparison is a common persuasion technique that involves 'presenting two or more alternatives and indicating (explicitly or implicitly) that one is preferable to the others'. Therefore, the comparison strategy implemented by Erdoğan coincides with the definition. It seems that the main comparison element put forward by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan focuses on the projects carried out in the past and the idea of nationalism. Comparisons made on the basis of nationalism claim that some parties supporting the rival alliance have connections with terrorist organizations, and the comparisons are supported by harsh criticism. The criticism technique used by Erdoğan was used to damage the reputation of the rival candidate and the opposition bloc, to frame the opposition bloc as false nationalist and to position it as inconsistent. It is seen that the repetition technique is used in order to reinforce the message given in the posts and to emphasize the main idea of the post in a consistent manner. Erdoğan frequently utilised rhetorical elements in his posts in order to persuade his target audience. Especially for the voters who have not yet made a final decision about the candidate they will support, he presented the important projects and policies they have implemented and realised in the past period as a reference, and at the same time, by creating an emotional narrative, by framing the rival candidate and the alliance negatively in terms of terrorism, instability, inexperience, etc., the nationalist and conservative feelings of the undecided voters were appealed to, and Erdoğan and his party were positioned as the right candidate for the future of the country. It is seen that the Turkey Century is often framed in the posts shared by Erdoğan. The fact that 2023 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey and that presidential elections will be held in 2023 has ensured that the Turkey Century vision is frequently included in Erdoğan's messages. On the other hand, showing vision provides support for strategies such as persuasion, framing and positioning that Erdoğan uses. Another strategy observed in shared posts is that Erdoğan often uses contrasting elements together in his posts. Associating the election date with the date of a coup that took place in the past years creates a contrast between the concepts of

democracy and coup and positions Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a democratic leader. In conclusion, the examination of tweets revealed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his political party implemented a confluence of political communication and public relations strategies aimed at the persuasion and mobilization of voters during the 2023 presidential elections. These strategic maneuvers were deployed to elucidate the accomplishments and successes attributed to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his party, drawing sharp distinctions with their competitors. The overarching objectives encompassed the cultivation and perpetuation of a favorable and appealing public image, the discrediting and undermining of their adversaries, the strategic elicitation of emotional responses and alignment with voter values, and the communication of an optimistic vision for the future.

5.2. Content Analysis Results of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Twitter Posts

The content analysis of the posts revealed that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu utilised various political communication and public relations strategies during the election campaign for the 2023 presidential elections. It has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan frequently uses visual content in his Twitter posts. In the analyzed posts, while the content of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's posts is generally expressive and persuasive, the topic his posts focus on stands out as political discourse. The reason for this situation stands out as Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's criticisms of the rival alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It is seen that these visual contents generally consist of politically themed photographs, information about completed projects, television interviews and live broadcasts of rallies. The main elements emphasised in Kılıçdaroğlu's posts were peace and democracy, economic development, economic justice, common sense, national unity and solidarity, morality, youth participation in politics, negative framing, positive framing, emotional appeal, identity creation, narrative creation, and competent leadership. In his posts, Kılıçdaroğlu often positions himself as a democratic, prudent, constructive leader who cares about national peace. The emphasis on peace and democracy used by Kılıçdaroğlu was used to underline that the nation was entering an election process, not a conflict, and to position himself as a leader defending peace and democracy. Since Kılıçdaroğlu has not held positions such as prime minister or president before and has been the chairman of the main opposition party in Turkey for 13 years, it seems that the focus of his posts is not on past achievements and policies, but on future projects and criticism of the government. The fact that he has no experience in state administration shows that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu directs his focus to the projects he creates. Kılıçdaroğlu positions himself as a visionary and reliable leader who frequently solves problems by offering solutions and projects to all kinds of problems that have resonated in society. In this regard, framing stands out as the strategy that Kılıçdaroğlu frequently uses in his posts. While the positive self-framing strategy was frequently used through the visions

and projects presented, negative framing was frequently used at every point where the government was criticized. Kılıçdaroğlu, who supports his criticisms of the government with counter projects, often positions himself as a visionary and project-oriented leader. On the other hand, it has been observed that Kılıçdaroğlu carries out effective political communication regarding crisis management. It has been observed that Kılıçdaroğlu, who was criticized by the government and conservative voters after an incident involving religious motifs, stated that the situation he was in had developed unintentionally, without denying the situation and at the same time apologizing, was effective in taking the crisis under control. It is seen that Kılıçdaroğlu developed oratory strategies especially for young voters and female voters living in the country during his political campaign. Within the framework of the findings obtained from the posts, the reason why Kılıçdaroğlu appealed especially to young voters and female voters is due to the high population of these two segments of voters and the claim that these two segments of voters are experiencing some difficulties within the framework of the policies carried out by the government, and these two segments are positioned within this framework. Framing the language used by the government as polarizing during the election campaign, Kılıçdaroğlu often positions himself as a prudent leader. In this regard, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu often positions the upcoming elections as a threshold for the future of the country and frequently benefits from the mobilization strategy by associating the overcoming of this threshold with the victory of his own alliance. Within the scope of the mobilization strategy, it has been observed that the audience that Kılıçdaroğlu frequently addresses are voters who support his own party and alliance, undecided voters and voters who are uncomfortable with the policies implemented despite supporting the rival alliance. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who often emphasizes his democracy and freedom in his posts, also creates a bond with conservative voters by frequently making use of religious expressions. In addition, Kılıçdaroğlu responded to the claims of the rival alliance that Kılıçdaroğlu was supported by some groups that support terrorism, by displaying a nationalist stance. It has been observed that Kılıçdaroğlu often creates contrasts in the language he uses in his posts. The main element in which opposition is used is through criticism of the policies implemented by the rival alliance and the projects presented by Kılıçdaroğlu. In addition, he uses the contrast between Kılıçdaroğlu's claim of authoritarian rule and a democratic lifestyle as a reference in his arguments. In addition, it has been observed that the contrastive framing strategy is used to create a contrast between the current political environment created by the rival alliance and the change in the political environment that is claimed to be desired by the society. According to Entman (1993), oppositional framing is ‘‘a type of framing that involves presenting and comparing two opposing sides or perspectives on an issue and stating (explicitly or implicitly) that one is preferred over the other. With the opposition framing strategy, Kılıçdaroğlu adapts his party to the current political environment.’’ It positions itself as an alternative and implies that the rival alliance

is inadequate on various issues such as women's rights, economy and domestic policies. Persuasion strategy stands out as another strategy that Kılıçdaroğlu uses through reference. At the point where he presents his projects to the society, he supports the projects he presents to the society with reference to his expertise, stating that he will often work with experts in their field and will assign important tasks to experts in their field. Kılıçdaroğlu's frequent association of his promises with the election date and his emphasis that the projects will be implemented immediately after the election is won are an indication of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's self-confidence that he will win the election, and at the same time, it creates support for the projects he presents with this self-confidence. In summary, it has been observed that the general language used by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in his posts emphasizes a project-oriented approach. The basis of the project-oriented communication used by Kılıçdaroğlu is that Kılıçdaroğlu is the head of the main opposition party, has not been in the state administration, and therefore poses a challenge for the elections not by referring to past successes, but by offering solutions to the problems he thinks the society is suffering from. Kılıçdaroğlu often positions himself as a competent leader by presenting projects to all the problems he identifies. In the persuasion strategy that Kılıçdaroğlu generally uses, he uses positive framing for himself and his alliance, while he often uses negative framing with a critical language for the rival alliance. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who frequently addresses democratization, liberation, economic prosperity and national security issues in his posts, also implements his political communication and public relations strategies within this framework.

5.3. Comparison of Strategies and Overall Results

As a result of the analysis, it was observed that both candidates used various communication and public relations strategies in their posts. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu have created communication strategies in order to persuade and mobilize voters in general. It has been observed that the target audience of both candidates is voters who support themselves and their alliance and undecided voters. Both candidates positioned themselves positively and tried to persuade the voters by framing the points on which the rival candidate and the alliance were criticized. Both candidates acted in line with their ideologies in the communication strategies they used. It has been observed that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan uses a nationalist language in connection with his ideology and appeals to conservative voters by frequently including religious expressions in his messages. Erdoğan has a large number of voters who support him since he has been in government for 20 years, first as prime minister and then as president, and also as chairman of the Justice and Development Party. Therefore, having such a voter base also affects the political communication language Erdoğan uses. Erdoğan mainly used the mobilization strategy when addressing the electorate that supported him, and he used negative framing strategies effectively

when he addressed the undecided voters and the voters who supported the rival alliance. In his communication with the electorate that supports him, Erdoğan gives a message of stability by focusing mainly on past successes, projects and policies produced, and positions himself as a successful, experienced leader who is competent to solve current problems by referring to completed projects rather than talking about future projects. Instead of focusing on future projects one by one, Erdoğan appeals to the voters with his Turkey Century vision. With this vision created due to the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 2023, Erdoğan reveals his political vision for the future of Turkey. In addition, it is seen that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sometimes draws similarities between the election date and the dates of the coups that took place in the past. Establishing such a similarity emphasizes the message of stability that Erdoğan gives to the voters and positions himself as a very important political leader for democracy. It seems that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan aims to have an impact on the voters by frequently criticizing the rival alliance and rival candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Erdoğan, who includes in his posts the allegations that the supporters of the terrorist organization support Kılıçdaroğlu, especially the rival alliance and the rival candidate, aims to mobilize his own voters and convince the undecided voters by creating a nationalist and conservative narrative.

In Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's posts, it is seen that Kılıçdaroğlu mainly focuses on the elements of democratization, libertarianism, economic development and human rights. In addition to these elements, nationalist and conservative discourses were also observed in the political communication put forward by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's nationalist and conservative discourses can be considered as a strategy to persuade voters who are undecided in terms of political views. The fact that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has not been in government before and that he has been the head of the main opposition party for 13 years has been effective in the political communication language that Kılıçdaroğlu uses. In his posts, he constantly promoted the projects he produced instead of past successes. It has been observed that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu frequently uses visual content in his Twitter posts. The visual content it uses consists of politically themed photographs and informational and project promotional videos regarding the election campaign. It seems that the political communication techniques that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu mainly uses are mobilization, framing and positioning. It seems that the mobilization strategy is aimed at voters who support Kılıçdaroğlu and the Nation Alliance of which Kılıçdaroğlu is a candidate. It is seen that Kılıçdaroğlu mainly determined young voters as the target audience within the scope of his mobilization strategy. It has been observed that Kılıçdaroğlu, who attaches importance to the young voter population, frequently encourages young voters to vote and motivates them to increase their political participation. It seems that the political communication strategies used by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu are based on criticism of the government. While he frames Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his policies negatively

with his criticisms, he frames the policies put forward by himself and his alliance in a positive way. Based on the general tone used in Kılıçdaroğlu's messages, it is seen that he positions himself as a problem-solving, visionary, project-oriented leader. It is seen that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who positions the main tone of his posts in a democratic and libertarian framework, criticizes Erdoğan and his alliance for polarization and at the same time implements a positioning strategy close to his own ideology by calling for common sense and peace.

Following the completed election campaigns, in the elections held on May 14, 2023, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 49.52% of the valid votes and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 44.88% of the valid votes. In the second round of elections held on May 28, 2023, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 52.18% of the valid votes and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 47.82% of the valid votes, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan won the 2023 Presidential elections and was elected as the President of the Republic of Turkey (YSK, 2023).

Table 4. Comparison of presidential candidates's overall communication

Communication / Candidate	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu
Overall Tone	Expressive, Persuasive, Focused on past achievements	Expressive, Persuasive, Focused on future projects
Main Strategy	Mobilization, Framing	Framing, Positioning
Key Elements	Nationalism, Conservative expressions, Turkey Century vision	Democratization, Libertarianism, Economic development
Predominant Political Communication Strategy	Reference to achievements, Positive framing for own, Negative framing for opponent	Positioning, Self-promotion based on projects, negative framing for government policies
Target Audience	Loyal and stable own supporters, Undecided voters	Own supporters, Undecided voters, Voters uncomfortable with government policies
Election Result	Won the election	Lost the election

Source: Created by the author

5.4. General Discussion of Results

This research aims to analyze the political communication and public relations strategies implemented by presidential candidates Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on Twitter during the 2023 Turkish Presidential Election campaign. In the research, case study and qualitative content analysis methods were applied to examine the posts shared by the presidential candidates on their official Twitter accounts within the specified time period. The research shows that both candidates effectively implemented various political communication and public relations strategies, mainly consisting of mobilization, framing, positioning, persuasion, emotional appeal and image building, in order to support their ideologies and messages. It also revealed that candidates use different strategies to appeal to their own supporters, undecided voters, and rival alliance supporters.

The results uncovered in this research are consistent with existing literature and empirical studies on political communication and public relations on Twitter. Previous research demonstrates the importance of Twitter as a platform for political candidates and leaders to spread their messages, engage with voters, and shape public opinion in line with their ideology (Chadwick, 2017). Previous research has also identified key political communication and public relations strategies used by political actors on Twitter, such as mobilization, framing, positioning, persuasion, emotional appeal, and image building (O'Keefe 2002; Entman 1993). Additionally, the role and impact of political ideologies such as conservatism, nationalism, democracy, and liberalism on the political communication and public relations strategies of political actors on Twitter have also been examined (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022).

The findings of this research also contribute to the literature and empirical studies on political communication and public relations on Twitter by providing a specific and in-depth analysis of the Turkish context. The research offers a detailed perspective on the political communication and public relations strategies used by presidential candidates in the 2023 Turkey Presidential Election campaign, which is a critical and contentious election on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey. The research also analyzes the candidates' similarities and differences in terms of political communication and public relations strategies. In order to conduct content analysis of the posts shared by presidential candidates, a theoretical framework based on scientific literature analysis that can be adapted to other contexts and cases is also developed.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to research, examine and comprehend the political communication and public relations strategies used by the determined presidential candidates during the 2023 Presidential election campaigns in Turkey, especially in the posts they shared in the dynamic environment of Twitter. Within the specified time period, the posts made by the presidential candidates on Twitter were examined, a certain number of posts were selected in terms of the message they contained, the emotions they conveyed and the strategy they targeted, and a detailed content analysis of these posts was performed. As a result of the research, the following results were obtained.

1. The research analyzed how presidential candidates strategically used public relations and communication strategies to influence voters and the public during the election campaign. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis reveal that both Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu effectively implemented various political communication and public relations strategies consisting of mobilization, framing, positioning, persuasion, emotional appeal and image creation. Both candidates adapt their political communication and public relations strategies according to the target audience they have determined. While addressing their own voter base, candidates turn to strategies that encourage political participation, when addressing voters who are undecided and support the rival candidate, they try to influence the political opinion of the voters by using persuasion and framing strategies.
2. The research analyzed how presidential candidates strategically used public relations and communication strategies to influence voters and society during the election campaign. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis reveal that both Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu effectively implemented various political communication and public relations strategies consisting of mobilization, framing, positioning, persuasion, emotional appeal and image building. While both candidates effectively implemented the emotional appeal and mobilization strategy to consolidate support from their existing bases, they frequently used framing, persuasion, image building and positioning strategies to influence undecided voters and voters who supported the rival candidate.
3. The research examined the impact of presidential candidates' political ideologies on their political communication and public relations strategies. The content analysis showed that the political ideologies of both candidates shape the emphatic tone of the messages they give.

By placing the general tone of his message in a conservative line in his posts, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan frequently used nationalist and religious expressions and benefited from mobilization and positive and negative framing strategies aimed at conservative voters. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, on the other hand, placed the general tone of the message he gave in his posts on a democratic and libertarian line and occasionally made nationalist and conservative discourses and targeted a wider audience with framing, positioning and image management strategies.

4. In the research, the differences between the presidential candidates in terms of political communication and public relations strategies were examined. Both candidates implemented strategies to avoid losing the support of their supporting voters and to influence undecided voters. By using a negative framing towards the opposition and the rival presidential candidate, Erdoğan emphasizes stability, past projects and policies, and nationalism, and reveals the general vision he has developed with the slogan of the Turkey Century. On the contrary, Kılıçdaroğlu positions himself as a democratic, libertarian and visionary leader who criticizes the government's policies by using positive and negative framing strategies and offers projects to address the problems he identifies.
5. In order to achieve the research objectives, existing scientific literature on political communication and public relations was examined and after this examination, a theoretical framework was created in accordance with the research objectives. The theoretical framework created, contributed to the definition of the political communication and public relations strategies implemented by presidential candidates on Twitter, to understand how these strategies are used, and to examine their effects on the political messages intended to be given.
6. The results of the study indicate that Twitter, characterised by its real-time, transparent and interactive framework, is emerging as a dynamic milieu for political figures to disseminate their messages, engage with the electorate and shape public opinion in line with their respective ideologies. The widespread use of the platform allows presidential candidates to react quickly to the evolving political landscape and formulate timely and relevant strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of empirical research following recommendations can be formulated:

1. Future research could expand the scope and depth of analysis by including different social media platforms, political candidates and leaders, and elections in examining political communication and public relations strategies. This will allow for a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of political communication and public relations strategies and their results in different environments and scenarios.
2. Following the chosen methodological approach could create a theoretically comprehensive basis for further research on the implementation of communication and public relations strategies for political purposes via social media. Future researchers could adopt the research methodology chosen for the needs of a particular situation analysis.

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SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

The spread of social media platforms has provided a new environment for the implementation of political communication and public relations strategies. Political communication and public relations strategies carried out during political election campaigns are not limited to rally squares and television programs, but also moved to a new platform through social media. In terms of political communication social media platforms' importance is high as they provide fast communication, allow a clear communication language and are open to interaction between users. Due to its features among social media platforms, Twitter also stands out in political communication. Since the days when Twitter's use became widespread, this social media platform has been used by many political leaders for political communication purposes. Although political communication strategies have been carried out many times through social media platforms, in Turkey specifically, there are just a few existing studies on the framework in which the political communication and public relations strategies implemented by political leaders on social media are shaped. The aim of our study is to define, examine, and understand the political communication and public relations strategies implemented by the presidential candidates on the Twitter platform during the 2023 Turkish Presidential election, which we implemented for the research.

Our study has the following research objectives: 1) to offer a comprehensive perspective on the concept of political communication and public relations and its utilization on social media platforms by conducting a theoretical analysis of scientific literature; 2) to analyze existing theoretical models and empirical studies on political communication and public relations on Twitter, focusing on issues relevant to Turkey; 3) to conduct a content analysis of the posts shared by presidential candidates on Twitter during the 2023 Turkish Presidential election campaigns, in terms of political communication and public relations, through a theoretical framework based on scientific literature analysis.; 4) to describe the communication strategies of presidential candidates on Twitter, the public image they aim to create and the communication performance they exhibit, also to evaluate the relationship between these strategies and the political agenda and voter persuasion through qualitative content analysis and case studies.

A qualitative research strategy was chosen and together with content analysis, a case study was conducted. To achieve the research objectives, the period of three months until May 28, 2023, which is the completion date of the Turkish Presidential elections, was taken into consideration. Twitter posts made by presidential candidates over the specified period were examined, and posts categorized in terms of political communication and public relations were taken into content analysis. This study scrutinized the configurational aspects of political communication and the

implementation of public relations strategies by presidential candidates throughout the 2023 Turkish Presidential election campaigns, with a particular emphasis on Twitter posts. The study is grounded in a systematic and scholarly theoretical examination encompassing the definition and historical evolution of political communication and public relations. Key focal points include their roles in political elections, the utilization of social media within political campaigns, and the impact of communication and public relations on voter persuasion. The study specifically centered on the role of social media, particularly Twitter, in political communication, underscoring its influence on the dynamics of political campaigns. This evaluative framework provided the foundation for a meticulous content analysis of social media strategies adopted by presidential candidates, offering nuanced insights into the fluid nature of political communication. By examining the interaction between public relations, communication, and voter persuasion, the study probed the strategies within political communication aimed at influencing voters' decision-making processes. The study executed a content analysis of Twitter posts by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the respective presidential candidates, during the specific period of the 2023 Turkish Presidential Election campaign. The analysis discerned overarching political communication and public relations strategies employed. Guided by formulated research questions, the study systematically analyzed how presidential candidates deployed communication and public relations strategies to impact voters and societal opinion. An examination of the influence of political ideologies on the selected communication strategies facilitated the identification of both commonalities and distinctions in the approaches of the candidates. Synthesizing the outcomes derived from the content analysis within the context of the theoretical framework yielded targeted findings. This study significantly contributes to the comprehension of political communication and public relations strategies by presenting a thorough analysis of their application in a pivotal political election for Turkey. Beyond shedding light on the employed political communication strategies in the 2023 Turkey Presidential election, the study extends to offer insights into the intricate dynamics and correlations between political communication, public relations, and social media within the contemporary political environment.

Keywords:

Political communication, public relations, communication strategies, election, Turkey, Twitter

SUMMARY IN LITHUANIAN

Socialinės žiniasklaidos platformų paplitimas sudaro naujas sąlygas politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių strategijoms įgyvendinti. Politinės komunikacijos ir ryšių su visuomene strategijos, vykdomos politinių rinkimų kampanijų metu, neapsiriboja tik mitingų aikštėmis ir televizijos programomis, bet persikelia ir į naują platformą – socialinę žiniasklaidą. Politinės komunikacijos aspektu socialinės žiniasklaidos platformos reikšmė yra didelė, kadangi jos užtikrina greitą komunikaciją, leidžia vartoti aiškią bendravimo kalbą ir yra atviros naudotojų tarpusavio sąveikai. Tarp socialinės žiniasklaidos platformų dėl savo ypatybių politinėje komunikacijoje išsiskiria ir „Twitter“. Nuo tų dienų, kai „Twitter“ naudojimas tapo plačiai paplitęs, daugelis politinių lyderių šią socialinės žiniasklaidos platformą naudoja politinės komunikacijos tikslais. Nors politinės komunikacijos strategijos buvo vykdomos daug kartų per socialinės žiniasklaidos platformas, konkrečiai Turkijoje yra tik keletas tyrimų apie sistemą, kurioje formuojamos politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių strategijos, kurias politiniai lyderiai įgyvendina socialiniuose tinkluose. Mūsų tyrimo tikslas – apibrėžti, išnagrinėti ir suprasti politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių strategijas, kurias kandidatai į prezidentus įgyvendino „Twitter“ platformoje per 2023 m. Turkijos prezidento rinkimus.

Mūsų tyrime keliami šie tyrimo tikslai: 1) atlikus mokslinės literatūros teorinę analizę, pateikti išsamų požiūrį į politinės komunikacijos ir ryšių su visuomene sampratą bei jos panaudojimą socialinės žiniasklaidos platformose; 2) išanalizuoti esamus teorinius modelius ir empirinius tyrimus apie politinę komunikaciją ir ryšius su visuomene socialiniame tinkle „Twitter“, sutelkiant dėmesį į Turkijai aktualius klausimus; 3) atlikti kandidatų į prezidentus per 2023 m. Turkijos prezidento rinkimų kampanijas socialiniame tinkle „Twitter“ pasidalytų pranešimų turinio analizę politinės komunikacijos ir ryšių su visuomene aspektais, pasitelkiant mokslinės literatūros analize pagrįstą teorinę sistemą; 4) aprašyti kandidatų į prezidentus komunikacijos strategijas socialiniame tinkle „Twitter“, viešąjį įvaizdį, kurį jie siekia sukurti, ir jų komunikacijos rezultatus, taip pat įvertinti šių strategijų ryšį su politine darbotvarke ir rinkėjų įtikinėjimu, pasitelkiant kokybinę turinio analizę ir atvejo studijas.

Darbe pasirinkta kokybinio tyrimo strategija ir kartu su turinio analize atliktas atvejo tyrimas. Siekiant įgyvendinti tyrimo tikslus, buvo atsižvelgta į trijų mėnesių laikotarpį iki rinkimų į Turkijos prezidentus pabaigos, t. y. iki 2023 m. gegužės 28 d. Darbe nagrinėjami per nurodytą laikotarpį paskelbti kandidatų į prezidentus „Twitter“ įrašai, o turinio analizei paimti įrašai, suskirstyti į kategorijas politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių aspektais. Šiame tyrime išsamiai išnagrinėti politinės komunikacijos konfigūraciniai aspektai ir kandidatų į prezidentus viešųjų ryšių strategijų

įgyvendinimas per 2023 m. Turkijos prezidento rinkimų kampanijas, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant „Twitter“ įrašams. Tyrimas pagrįstas sisteminiu ir moksliniu teoriniu tyrimu, apimančiu politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių apibrėžtį ir istorinę raidą. Pagrindiniai aspektai – jų vaidmuo politiniuose rinkimuose, socialinės žiniasklaidos naudojimas politinėse kampanijose ir komunikacijos bei viešųjų ryšių poveikis rinkėjų įtikinėjimui. Tyrime itin daug dėmesio skirta socialinės žiniasklaidos, ypač „Twitter“, vaidmeniui politinėje komunikacijoje, pabrėžiant jo įtaką politinių kampanijų dinamikai. Ši vertinimo sistema tapo kandidatų į prezidentus socialinių tinklų strategijų turinio analizės pagrindu ir leido išsamiai išanalizuoti kintantį politinės komunikacijos pobūdį. Nagrinėjant ryšių su visuomene, komunikacijos ir rinkėjų įtikinėjimo sąveiką, tyrime buvo tiriamos politinės komunikacijos strategijos, kuriomis siekiama paveikti rinkėjų sprendimų priėmimo procesus. Tyrime atlikta kandidatų į prezidentus Recepto Tayyipo Erdogano ir Kemalio Kılıçdaroğlu „Twitter“ įrašų turinio analizė konkrečiu 2023 m. Turkijos prezidento rinkimų kampanijos laikotarpiu. Analizė atskleidė taikomas bendrąsias politinės komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių strategijas. Vadovaujantis suformuluotais tyrimo klausimais, tyrime sistemingai analizuota, kaip kandidatai į prezidentus taikė komunikacijos ir viešųjų ryšių strategijas, siekdami paveikti rinkėjus ir visuomenės nuomonę. Politinių ideologijų įtakos pasirinktoms komunikacijos strategijoms tyrimas padėjo nustatyti kandidatų požiūrių bendrumus ir skirtumus. Apibendrinus turinio analizės rezultatus teorinės sistemos kontekste, gautos tikslingos išvados. Šis tyrimas reikšmingai prisideda prie politinės komunikacijos ir ryšių su visuomene strategijų supratimo, nes pateikia išsamią jų taikymo Turkijai svarbiuose politiniuose rinkimuose analizę. Tyrimas ne tik atskleidžia 2023 m. Turkijos prezidento rinkimuose taikytas politinės komunikacijos strategijas, bet ir leidžia suprasti sudėtingą politinės komunikacijos, ryšių su visuomene ir socialinės žiniasklaidos dinamiką ir sąsajas šiuolaikinėje politinėje aplinkoje.

Raktiniai žodžiai:

Politinė komunikacija, viešieji ryšiai, komunikacijos strategijos, rinkimai, Turkija, Twitter

APPENDIX 1. Analyzed Twitter Posts in Turkish Original Versions

Twitter Posts of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Post 1) Hükûmete geldiğimizde emekli maaşı 66 lira, yani o günkü kurla 50 dolar olan insanlarımız vardı. En düşük emekli maaşını son düzenlemeyle 7 bin 500 liraya, yani yaklaşık 400 dolara yükselttik. Çalışırken de emeklilik döneminde de insanımızın hep yanında olacağız. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 2) Yıllar süren kriz, istikrarsızlık ve geri kalmışlığın ardından 2002'de Türkiye'ye "hakiki baharı" hamdolsun biz zaten getirdik. Son 21 yıldır ekonomide, demokraside, terörle mücadelede, hak ve özgürlüklerde attığımız cesur adımlarla da bu iklimi güçlendirdik. Vesayetçilerin bıraktığı enkazı temizleyerek demokrasimizin standartlarını yükselttik. İnsanımızın inancına, diline, kültürüne değer vermeyen inkâr politikalarını bir daha gündeme gelmemek üzere rafa kaldırdık. TRT Kürdi'den seçmeli Kürtçe derslerine ve üniversitelerde Kürt dili bölümlerinin açılmasına kadar, bizden önce konuşulması dahi mümkün olmayan nice hayali gerçeğe dönüştürdük. Tüm bu mücadeleleri verirken karşımızda Bay Bay Kemal'i ve CHP zihniyetini bulduk. Bizi engellemek için her türlü yolu denediler, tehdit dâhil her yola başvurdular. Şimdi çıkmış bahardan bahsediyor. Bay Bay Kemal'in getireceği yalancı bahar, bu millet için kara kış demektir. Bay Bay Kemal getirirse sadece Kandil'e ve Pensilvanya'ya bahar getirir. Suriye ve Irak'ın kuzeyindeki terör yuvalarına bahar getirir. Hapisten çıkma hayali kuran bebek katillerine, Gezi olaylarının organizatörlerine, 6-8 Ekim olaylarının faillerine bahar getirir. 15 Temmuz gecesi milletimizin tepesine bomba yağdıran FETÖ'cü hainlere bahar getirir. Milletimiz; kendisine "yalancı bahar" vadedenlerin aslında zemheriden bahsettiğini de çok iyi bilir. Milletimin 14 Mayıs'ta böyle bir tuzağa düşmeyeceğine inanıyorum. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 3) Bizim sevgimiz de mücadelemiz de aziz milletimiz içindir. Biz kendi adımıza kimseyle kavga etmeyiz, milletimiz söz konusu olduğunda da kimseyi tanımayız. Canımızı dişimize takarak, sevdalısı olduğumuz milletimiz için koşturmayı görev biliriz. Sadece proje geliştirir, eser üretir, gönül siyaseti, gönülleri kazanma siyaseti yaparız. Önümüze hangi tuzak kurulursa kurulsun, ülkemize hizmet etmekten vazgeçmeyiz. Yatırımlarla ülkemizi ve şehirlerimizi, yani ekmeğimizi büyütmekten geri durmayız. Hangi saldırılarla karşılaşırsak karşılaşalım, milletin iradesine ve demokrasimize gölge düşürmeyiz. Gerektiğinde 15 Temmuz gecesi olduğu gibi, hayatımız pahasına

istiklâl ve istikbalimize sahip çıkarız. Çünkü biz, mensubu ve hizmetkârı olmaktan şeref duyduğumuz bu millet için varız. Hiçbir ayırım yapmadan, 85 milyona aşkla hizmet etmek için varız. Bu uğurda şimdiye kadar nice ihaneti göğüsledik, nice badireler aştık, nice varlık yokluk mücadelesi verdik. Son 21 yılda her alanda Türkiye Yüzyılı'nın altyapısını kurduk, hazırlıklarını tamamladık. İnşallah 14 Mayıs'la birlikte Türkiye Yüzyılı'nın inşasına başlayacağız. Bunu da 21 yıldır olduğu gibi yine sizlerin sarsılmaz desteği ve samimi dualarıyla başaracağız. Fitne tacirlerine, aramıza nifak tohumları ekmeye çalışanlara inat kardeşliğimize sahip çıkacağız. BİR OLACAĞIZ. İRİ OLACAĞIZ. DİRİ OLACAĞIZ. KARDEŞ OLACAĞIZ. HEP BİRLİKTE TÜRKİYE OLACAĞIZ! (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 4) Aziz milletim, Gençlik yıllarımızdan beri aktif siyasetin içindeyiz, sizlerin huzurundayız. 21 yılı iktidarda olmak üzere 40 yıllık siyasi hayatımızda daima demokrasiyi ve millî iradeyi savunduk. 1994'ten beri hangi haksızlıklara maruz kalırsak kalalım; adaleti gözettik, hakkaniyetle davrandık. 85 milyonun tamamını bağrımıza bastık, hiç kimseyi ötekileştirmedik. Hiçbir vatandaşımızın hayat tarzına, yaşam biçimine karışmadık. Toplumumuzun tüm kesimlerinin hak ve özgürlük alanlarını genişlettik. Bizden önce bu ülkede başörtüsü, kılık kıyafet yasakları vardı; kaldırdık. Liselerimize katsayı adaletsizliği uygulanıyordu; sonlandırdık. İnsanlar inançlarını özgürce, rahatça yaşayamıyorlardı; değiştirdik. Terör örgütleri vatandaşlarımıza nefes aldirmiyordu; başlarını ezdik. Demokrasimiz ağır aksak, zor yürüyordu; güçlendirdik. Devlet vatandaşına tepeden bakıyordu; yeni bir anlayış ikame ettik. Yabancı ülkeler sürekli bize ayar veriyor, yön çiziyordu; dur dedik. Elbette bu mücadelede pek çok engelle, baskıyla, tehditle, zorbalıkla, kumpasla, karalama kampanyasıyla karşılaştık. Demokrasi hamlelerimizin önü kesilmek istendi, darbe girişimleriyle hayatımıza kastedildi. Ama biz diklenmeden dik durarak, ülkemizi 21 yıl öncesine göre daha özgür, daha müreffeh, daha huzurlu, ekonomik olarak daha güçlü bir konuma getirdik. 2002'den bu yana sadece hizmet siyaseti, eser siyaseti ve kardeşlik siyaseti yapıyoruz. İnşallah 14 Mayıs'tan sonra da tüm Türkiye için aşkla çalışmaya devam edeceğiz. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 5) Kıymetli yol ve dava arkadaşlarım, Ülkemizin en kritik seçimlerinin ilk sınavını Cumhuriyet İttifakı olarak hamdolsun alınımızın akıyla verdik. Kışkırtmalara gelmeden, baskılara aldirmadan, yılgınlığa kapılmadan, zorluklar karşısında pes etmeden canla başla mücadele ettik. Her birinize emekleriniz, gayretleriniz, fedakârlıklarınız için teşekkür ediyorum. Rabbime bana sizler gibi yol arkadaşları verdiği için binlerce kez hamdediyorum. Şimdi 14 Mayıs'ta elde ettiğimiz başarıyı daha büyük bir zaferle taçlandırma vakti... Seçimlerin ikinci turu 27 Mayıs darbesinin 63'üncü yıl dönümünden bir gün sonra, 28 Mayıs tarihinde yapılacak. Bizler siyasetinin merkezine millî iradeyi, ülkeye ve millete hizmet aşkını koymuş bir ittifakız. Şimdiye kadar bizlere sahip çıkmış, gerektiğinde bu uğurda tanklara meydan okumuş milletimize şükran borcumuzu ancak daha fazla

çalışarak, daha fazla koşturarak ödeyebiliriz. Türkiye bizden hizmet bekliyor, icraat bekliyor, milletimiz bizden kendisini hedefleriyle buluşturmamızı bekliyor. Depremzede kardeşlerimiz bizden bir an önce yaralarının sarılmasını bekliyor. 28 Mayıs seçimi için çalışmaya sandığın renginin belli olmasıyla birlikte zaten başladık. İnşallah önümüzdeki günleri de en güzel, en verimli şekilde değerlendireceğiz. Allah'ın izniyle 28 Mayıs'ı Türkiye Yüzyılı'nın müjdecisi haline getireceğiz. Sizlere güveniyorum. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 6) CHP, seçime beraber girdiği ortakları üzerinden Türk siyasi tarihinin en büyük yankesiciliğine veya onların çok sevdiği bir ifadeyle tarihin en büyük “hortumlanmasına” maruz kalmıştır. Bizzat masadaki arkadaşları tarafından “sazan sarmalına” alınan Kılıçdaroğlu, gördüğümüz kadarıyla fena halde çarpılmıştır. Bunun hesabını CHP Genel Başkanı'ndan ve CHP Genel Merkezi'nden sormak da o partinin seçmenlerine düşer, bizi ilgilendirmez. Her zaman söylediğimiz gibi, Türkiye'nin en büyük problemi vizyoner, programcı, projeci, hayırda yarışmayı esas alan bir muhalefete sahip olmamasıdır. Ülkemizde her şeyi değiştirdik ancak muhalefeti maalesef değiştiremedik. Bu seçimlerin, inşallah, yıllardır herkesin beklediği bu değişime de vesile olacağına inanıyoruz. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 7) Koalisyon masasında hesaplar biraz karışık, hava biraz dumanlı ama olsun; en azından bölücü örgütün desteğini sağlama aldılar. Bunu örtmek için de CHP Genel Başkanı hemen çıkıp siyasette seviyeyi daha da düşürmeye, insanlarımızı kutuplaştırmaya başladı. “Helalleşme” tiyatrosunun yerini bir günde faşizmin en ilkel, en nobran, en rezil hali aldı. Daha düne kadar depremedelerimize “bedava ev” vadediyorlardı, bugün aynı insanları utanmadan kapı dışarı ediyorlar. Suçüstü yakalanınca da hemen işi başka taraflara çekip kendilerini kurtarmaya çalışıyorlar. Halbuki hiçbir kılıf bu minareyi örtmeye yetmez. Milletle inatlaşarak, millete hakaret ederek, milleti tehdit ederek siyaset yapılmaz. Siyaset, ülkeye ve millete hizmet etmekle olur, eser kazandırmakla olur, gönül kazanmakla olur. Biz bugüne kadar sadece Allah'ın rızasını, milletimizin desteğini, insanımızın hayır duasını gözettik. İnşallah bundan sonra da aynı hassasiyetle, aynı samimiyetle yolumuza devam edeceğiz. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RTErdogan], 2023)

Post 8) 28 Mayıs'ta sandığa giderek tercihte bulunacak tüm kardeşlerimden, şu soruları kendilerine samimiyetle sormalarını istirham ediyorum. Seçimden önce bedava ev vadedip sonrasında depremedelerimizi misafir oldukları yerlerden atmaya kalkanlara itibar edilir mi? Ne bürokratik ne de siyasi hayatında ülkeye hiçbir hayrı dokunmayan bir şahıstan bu millete fayda gelir mi? 17-25 Aralık darbe girişiminde FETÖ'cülerle iş tuttuğunu bizzat kendi ağzıyla itiraf eden birine güven olur mu? Meydanlarda 6-8 Ekim olaylarının azmettiricilerini cezaevinden salma sözü verenlerin bölücü örgütle mücadele etmesi beklenebilir mi? Rakiplerini tasfiye etmek için şantaj, tehdit, baskı,

kaset kumpası dâhil her yolu meşru görenlerin siyasi ahlakına güvenilir mi? Dün ak dediğine bugün kara diyen, dün söylediğini bugün inkâr eden, adı “çarkçıya” çıkmış birine elbette güvenilmez, evlatlarımızın geleceği emanet edilmez. Milletimiz, 14 Mayıs'ta Meclis çoğunluğunu 323 milletvekiliyle Cumhur İttifakı'na vererek aslında iradesini beyan etti. Cumhurbaşkanlığında da %49,5 oy oranıyla 27 milyonu aşkın vatandaşımız şahsımıza teveccüh gösterdi. İnşallah 28 Mayıs'ı aziz milletimizin irade ve desteğiyle, rekor bir oy alarak tamamlayacağız. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RT Erdogan], 2023)

Post 9) Şimdiye kadar CHP Genel Başkanı'yla masaya oturup da istediğinden daha fazlasını almadan kalkan hiç kimse olmadı. “Belki bize de bir şey düşer” diye gelen herkes cebinde mebzul miktarda milletvekilliğiyle, cumhurbaşkanı yardımcılığıyla, üçer beşer bakanlık sözüyle çıktı. Elinde boş senetle CHP'nin kapısına dayanan herkes CHP Genel Başkanı'ndan imzayı kopardı, üzerine rakamı da bizzat kendisi yazdı. CHP Genel Başkanı sırf koltuğunu korumak için son 4 ay içinde tarihte eşi benzeri görülmemiş tutarsızlıklara imza attı. Kendi tutarsızlıklarını ve ilkesizliklerini örtmek için yalana sarılanların derdinin ne olduğunu biliyoruz. Ne yaparsanız yapın; terör örgütleriyle iş birliğinizi unutturamayacaksınız. Ne yaparsanız yapın; şahsi ikbaliniz için partinizin milletvekilliklerini pazara çıkardığınızı, önünüze gelene makam ve mevki sözü verdiğinizi unutturamayacaksınız. Ne yaparsanız yapın; bu ülkenin çıkarlarını uluslararası arenada pazarlık meselesi haline getirdiğinizi unutturamayacaksınız. Milletimiz, 28 Mayıs'ta bunların hesabını sizden sandıkta soracak. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RT Erdogan], 2023)

Post 10) Sadece seçim döneminde yaptıklarımız bile bizimle diğer aday arasındaki vizyon ve ufuk farkını ortaya koymaya yeter. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RT Erdogan], 2023)

Post 11) Milletimin her bir ferdine sesleniyorum: Sensiz Olmaz! Yarın, Büyük Türkiye Zaferi için hep beraber sandığa gidelim. 14 Mayıs'ta Meclis'te tecelli eden iradeyi bu kez çok daha güçlü bir şekilde Cumhurbaşkanlığına yansıtalım. Oylarımızla Türkiye Yüzyılı'nı başlatalım. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@ RT Erdogan], 2023)

Post 12) Masa yumruklamakla, hamasetle, dün söylediğini bugün inkâr etmekle milliyetçi olunmaz. Milliyetçilik eserle olur, hizmetle olur, Türkiye'nin ve Türk milletinin hakkını cesaretle savunmakla olur. Milliyetçilik ay yıldızlı al bayrağa uzanan kirli elleri kırmakla, Azerbaycan'la sırt sırta verip 30 yıl sonra Karabağ'ı özgürleştirmekle olur. Milliyetçilik Türk Devletleri Teşkilatını kurup asırlık hayalleri gerçeğe dönüştürmekle olur. Milliyetçilik kendi silahını yapmakla; kendi gemini, savaş uçağını, tankını, arabayı üretmekle; kendi kararlarını kendin almakla olur. Milliyetçilik terör örgütlerinin başını yurt içinde ve dışında ezmekle olur. Biz Cumhur İttifakı olarak işte bunu yaptık, omuz omuza bunu başardık. Tarihi şanlı zaferlerle dolu necip milletimizi her yerde gururla temsil

ettik. Ne hak yedik ne de küresel güçlere hakkımızı yedirdik. Şimdi bunu bir adım daha yukarı taşıyoruz, milletimizin huzuruna yeni bir teklifle çıkıyoruz. Teklifimizin adı Türkiye Yüzyılı'dır. Cumhuriyetimizin 100'üncü yılını Türkiye Yüzyılı'nın da başlangıç noktası haline getirmek istiyoruz. 21 yılda kurduğumuz sağlam temeller üzerine inşallah büyük ve güçlü Türkiye'yi inşa edeceğiz. 28 Mayıs seçimini hep birlikte bu yeni atılımın miladı haline dönüştüreceğiz. (Erdoğan, R. T. [@RTErdogan], 2023)

Twitter Posts of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu

Post 1) Muhafazakâr genç kadınlara seslenmek istiyorum. Biz baskıcı olan her şeyden arındık, demokratikleştik. Onlar en baskıcı olanı yanlarına çektiler. Kadına şiddetin önlenmesi kanununa savaş açanı ittifak ortağı yaptılar. Kazanım ve özgürlüklerinizin yok edilmesine izin vermeyeceğiz. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 2) Sınırın sıfır noktasına geldim. Bir konuda kararlığımın devam ettiğini milletime söylemek için geldim. Cumhurbaşkanlığımın 2 önemli hedefi var: Birincisi Suriyelileri vatanlarına kavuşturmak. İkincisi ise, İran üzerinden kaçak gelenleri, İran'a geri göndermek. Sokak ve mahallelerimizi sahiplerine geri vermek zorundayız. Ancak bu Necip Milletimize de ırkçılık gibi bir leke sürmeyecek biçimde, hassas bir şekilde yapmak zorundayız. Bunun üzerinde çalışıyoruz. Büyük ve uluslararası bir projeyi koyacağım milletimizin önüne. Çalıştığımız programda hem sığınmacı işini çözmek hem de bu süreçte Türkiye için Akdeniz bölgesinde önemli bir siyasal liderlik rolü oluşturmak var. Milletimiz sabretsin, çok kısa sürede bilgilendireceğiz. İkinci meselem, her türlü kaçak girişi durdurmak. Bize göre mesele çok basit: Sınırın güvenliği ulusal güvenlidir. Sınır güvenliği, egemen bir ulusun en temel ve gerekli sorumluluğudur. Sınırını koruyamayan egemen olamaz. Özetle, Suriyeli misafirlerimizle 2 senede vedalaşacağız. Sınırı ise her türlü kaçak geçişe, cumhurbaşkanlığımın ilk haftasında kapatacağım. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 3) Resim her geçen gün netleşiyor. Biz barışmanın, açık yaraları kapatmanın, makulün, dünya ile rekabetin ittifakını kurduk. Karşımızdaki ittifak gasp edilecek kadın hakları üzerinden genişlemeyi seçti. Söyleyeceğim tek şey; kadınları, bilhassa genç kadınları hiç tanıyamadıklarıdır. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 4) Üzgünüm, seccadeyi göremediğim için çok üzgünüm. Dünyada kimseyi incitmek istemem, hele milletimi asla. Buradan istismarcılık yapanları ve kullandıkları propaganda aparatlarını da milletimizin vicdanına bırakıyorum. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 5) Önce mülakatla torpille bütün gençleri sakatla, sonra seçime sayılı gün kala, benim projelerimle kendi yaptığın rezaleti kaldırma sözü ver. Erdoğan, benim projelerimi artık sadece konuşabilirsin, imza attığın bu rezaletleri ben düzeltereğim. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 6) Türkiye'yi şahlandırmaya her şeyimizle hazırız. Vizyonumuz, şampiyonlar ligi ekonomistler, dürüst bürokratlar, çalışkan insanlar, bolca temiz yatırım parasıyla. Erdoğan şimdi bunu da yazar beyannameye, sonra da bir lansman patlatır. Koş Erdoğan koş da, sende bunların hiçbiri yok. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 7) Erdoğan çok panik. İyidir, halkın yararınaysa iyidir. Biz devlet terbiyesi ile yetişmiş insanlarız. Devleti yönetenin vaadi olmaz, taahhüttü olur. Çünkü devletin parası halkın parası. Devlet adına, halkın yararına verilen taahhütleri, devamlılık esasıyla mutlaka yerine getiririz. Covid, yangınlar, ekonomik kriz, deprem sırasında unutilan ama seçim sırasında hatırlanan halkımızın yararına bolca taahütte bulunsunlar ki devletin sözü anlamına gelsin ve Bay Kemal de seve seve yapsın. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 8) Sevgili gençler, ülke olarak önümüzde bir eşik var ve bu eşiği hep birlikte aşabilmek için sana ihtiyacımız var demiştim. Tek bir oyla bu ülkeyi bu tartışmalardan çekip çıkaracaksın. Ortadoğu bataklığının kodları ile konuşan siyasetçileri emekli edeceksin. Oyunu sakın boşa harcama. Bakalım Ayasofya Camii propagandası ne zaman başlayacak. Bunlar için her şey reklam. Hiçbir kutsalları yok, müşterekler yok, sadece propaganda. Ortak değerlerimizi ne hale getirdiler? Temiz alın çalmayanın, çırpmayanın, harama el sürmeyeninin, halkını aç bırakmayanındır. Nokta! (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 9) Tüm baskılara, tüm yasaklara, tüm karartmalara rağmen, eğer sen istersen bunu başarırız. Sen gerçekten istersen eğer, bu karanlık çukurdan hep birlikte çıkarız. Görüşü, yaşam biçimi ne olursa olsun; tüm insanlarımıza sesleniyorum. Bu son çıkıştır. Vatanını seven sandığa gelsin! (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 10) Bu kirli dile son verilsin. Akla gelmeyecek pis oyunlar ve ithamlarla neye varmak istendiğini insanımız görüyor. Seçime gidiyoruz, savaşa değil. Nice iktidarlar değişti, yola hep devam ettik. Son 10 günde girişilecek en pis işleri biliyorum. Ve onlara diyorum ki: Azıcık sağduyu! Bırakın halkımız huzur içinde, gülümseyerek sandığa gitsin, içi ferah evine dönsün. Mahalleyi, haneyi pervasızca kutuplaştırmanızdan bıktık usandık. Bu kalan süreyi gerçekten bir seçim havasında geçirmek istiyoruz. Artık vatanımızın huzurunu bozmaktan vazgeçin. Seçime darbe dediniz. Kendi halkınıza karşı Uhud Savaşı benzetmesi yaptınız. İşgalciye benzettiniz be

halkımızı. Nerede duracaksınız? Ben üzerime düşen sorumluluğu yerine getirmeye ve sağduyu çağrısı yapmaya devam edeceğim. Çünkü sağduyusunu kaybetmiş olanın yardımına şeytan koşarmış. İçinizdekini dizginleyin, yoksa bu nefret başta sizi sonra hepimizi yutacak. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 11) Erdoğan, çayın anavatanı Rize’de, çayın taban fiyatına müjde verir gibi sadaka zammı açıkladı. Bu zamla yaş çay taban fiyatı 11,30 TL oldu. Maliyetleri bilmiyor mu? Biliyor elbette. 1 kg yaş çay yaprağının maliyeti 11,32 TL’yi buluyor. Ziraat odalarının analizlerini görmezden geliyor, üreticinin alın terini yok sayıyor, sadece çay baronlarının dediklerine kulak veriyor, onların çıkarlarını gözetiyorlar. Üretici bırakın gelecek yıl için kenara para koymayı, ürününü zararına satmaya zorlanıyor. Düzelteceğiz sevgili halkım, düzelterek. Bay Kemal sözü veriyorum! 15 Mayıs’ta göreve gelir gelmez, çay fiyatı refah payıyla beraber en az 15 TL olacak. Ben bu ülkenin çay üreticisini hayat pahalılığı altında ezdirmem, ezdirmeyeceğim. Sözümünden de dönmeyeceğim. (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)

Post 12) Mafyalar, militanlar, SADAT’çılar, 5’li çeteler, domuz bağcılar bir araya geldi, Türkiye’yi tehdit ediyor. Bunları ilk turda tarihin çöplüğüne gömeceksin genç, sonra da Bay Kemal hepsini ait oldukları yere gönderecek. Sana söz! (Kılıçdaroğlu, K. [@kilicdarogluk], 2023)