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THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN TURKEY

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AUTHOR DECLERATIONS

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is the final copy of the thesis including final revisions as accepted by my examiners. The data in this thesis were not used in any other scientific study. Other studies which were used in the thesis had been referred accordance with scientific norms.

ABSTRACT

İsmail Hamdi KÖSEOĞLU

May 2011

THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN TURKEY

This thesis investigates relationships between the internet and the public sphere in Turkey. Research on the thesis focuses of the new social media environments. The main argument of the thesis is that the new social media in Turkey are effective in shaping public opinion as well as leading to action which based on public opinion.

The thesis consists of five parts. (1) The Introduction helps the reader understand the basic discussions and arguments of the thesis. (2) The Literature Review clarifying the basic terms and concepts about the subject. (3) The Methodology explains to the reader the method used for research. (4) The Case Studies investigate the effect of the new social media in the public sphere in Turkey. (5) The Conclusion makes the final argument and suggests further research topics about the subject.

Key Words:

Public sphere, public opinion, new media, social media, internet, social networks

KISA ÖZET

İsmail Hamdi KÖSEOĞLU

Mayıs 2011

TÜRKİYE’DE YENİ SOSYAL MEDYA VE KAMUSAL ALAN

Bu tez Türkiye’de internet ve kamusal alan arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek için yazılmıştır. Tezin araştırdığı temel konu yeni sosyal medya ortamlarıdır. Tezin ana argümanı Türkiye’de yeni sosyal medyanın kamuoyunu ve kamuoyuna bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan hareketleri şekillendiren önemli bir kamusal alan olduğudur.

Tez beş parçadan oluşmaktadır. (1) Giriş okuyucunun tezdeki temel argüman ve tartışmaları anlaması için; (2) Literatür Taraması tezde kullanılan temel kavram ve terminolojiyi açıklamak için; (3) Metodoloji okuyucuya tezde kullanılan araştırma metodunu açıklamak için; (4) Vaka İncelemeleri yeni sosyal medyanın kamusal alandaki etkisini incelemek için; (5) Sonuç araştırma sonucunda son argümanın açıklanması ve ileride araştırma yapılabilecek konuları belirtmek için yazıldı.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Kamusal alan, kamuoyu yeni medya, sosyal medya, internet, sosyal ağlar.

LIST OF CONTENT

APPROVAL PAGE.....	iii
AUTHOR DECLARATION.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
KISA ÖZET.....	vi
LIST OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
2.1 Public Sphere.....	5
2.1.1 Conceptualization.....	5
2.1.2 Critiques and Counterpublic Discussions.....	7
2.1.3 Public Sphere Discussions in Turkey.....	11
2.1.4 Conclusion.....	13
2.2 New Social Media.....	14
2.2.1 Citizen Journalism.....	14
2.2.2 New Media.....	16
2.2.3 Social Media.....	18
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	20
3.1 Variables.....	20
3.2 Case Study as a Research Method.....	20
3.3 Methods in Similar Researches.....	22
3.4 Methodology.....	24
3.4.1 Method for the First Query.....	25
3.4.2 Method for the Other Queries.....	25

3.4.2.1 Ekşi Sözlük.....	25
3.4.2.2 Twitter.....	26
3.4.2.3 Content Analysis as a Research Method.....	27
3.4.2.4 Method of the Content Analysis.....	28
3.5 Example of the Method.....	28
CHAPTER IV: CASE STUDIES.....	31
4.1 Sibel Arna Case.....	31
4.1.1 Background.....	31
4.1.2 Popularity of the Topic.....	31
4.1.3 Content Analysis.....	32
4.1.4. Aftermath and Results.....	37
4.2 The Cat Killing Case.....	38
4.2.1 Background.....	38
4.2.2 Popularity of the Topic.....	38
4.2.3 Content Analysis.....	40
4.2.4 Aftermath and Results.....	47
4.3 The Case of Medical Test Subject Soldiers.....	47
4.3.1 Background.....	47
4.3.2 Popularity of the Topic.....	48
4.3.3 Content Analysis.....	49
4.3.4 Aftermath and Results.....	52
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	53
REFERENCES.....	55

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Exemplary data analysis for Ekşi Sözlük.....	30
Table 2: Exemplary data analysis for Twitter.....	30
Table 3: Data analysis of Ekşi Sözlük for the case of Sibel Arna.....	36
Table 4: Data analysis of Twitter for the case of Sibel Arna.....	37
Table 5: Data analysis of Ekşi Sözlük for the cat killing case (First discussion).....	43
Table 6: Data analysis of Ekşi Sözlük for the cat killing case (Second discussion)...	46
Table 7: Data analysis of Ekşi Sözlük for the case of medical subject soldiers.....	51
Table 8: Data analysis of Twitter for the case of medical subject soldiers.....	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Distinguishing Characteristics of the Public sphere.....	7
Figure 2: Google Insights statistics for the search volume of “sibel arna” in June 2010.....	29
Figure 3: Twitturk statistics about “sibel arna” in June 2010.....	32
Figure 4: Google Insights statistics for the search volume of “kedi izmir” in June 2010.....	39
Figure 5: Twitturk statistics about “kedi izmir” in June 2010.....	40
Figure 6: Google Insights statistics for the search volume of “gata” in March 2011.....	48
Figure 7: Twitturk statistics about “gata” in March 2011.....	49

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DVD	: Digital Versatile Disc
ECA	: Ethnographic Content Analysis
GATA	: Gülhane Askeri Tıp Akademisi (Gülhane Military Hospital)
IWS	: Internet World Stats
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
RSS	: Rich Site Summary
UCLA	: University of California Los Angeles

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the internet has grown to be a global phenomenon and represents a sharp divide from those organs shaping public opinion in the past. The number of internet users around the world increases dramatically each year. According to the Internet World Stats (IWS) website there are 1,966,514,816 internet users, almost one third of the world`s population, in the world in 2010 (IWS 2010a) In Turkey also the number of internet users is growing. According to IWS data, the number of internet users has grown 1650% over the last 10 years in Turkey (IWS 2010b). The 35 million internet users in Turkey equal 45% of the country's population. Although Turkey has the 12th largest country by the number of internet users of the world`s countries, it only ranks as the 65th country in the percentage of the internet users to the population. What makes Turkey interesting for scholarship on the internet is its potential to grow. The 2009 census shows that half of Turkey's population is under 29 years old and 26.4% is under 15 years old with 75% of the population living in cities or towns (TÜİK 2010; TÜİK 2011). As I estimate, even if internet service providers do not make any investment for the villages, the percentage of Turkish internet users will continue to rise because of the growth in the young urban population over the next 10 years.

Changes caused by the internet cross many different categories. Most scholars and researchers around the world focus on the internet and politics, or the economy, journalism and social relations. In this thesis I focus on the internet and social relations, specifically on an internet based public sphere in Turkish society. This topic need to be studied because of the internet's growing influence in Turkey and the importance of the internet's impact on shaping public opinion and social changes.

Scientific research on internet based media or on the public sphere has a common problem. Both terms are ambiguous and have been used by scholars with

different meanings. Since Jürgen Habermas, German philosopher and sociologist, brought up the ‘public sphere’ as an explanatory term in the social sciences, there had been a lot of discussions around it with scholars approaching the discussions from various perspectives (See part 2.1.2).

In Turkish social science literature, scholarship on the public sphere has another difficulty because of the translations of the notion of public sphere. Most often Turkish social scientists use the same term, “*kamusal alan*,” for both the public sphere and the public space (see part 2.1.3). In order to avoid the ambiguity of the term, I conceptualized about the public sphere based on the thoughts of Habermas. In this thesis, public sphere will be evaluated with its relation with shaping the public opinion rather than with the popular discussions of participation and openness of the public sphere (See part 2.1.4).

The internet as a new medium is being used by industrial media, NGO’s, various social groups and individuals. Television channels and newspapers establish proprietary websites which reflect their values and widen their audiences, allowing them to shape public opinion though internet environments as well. In addition, fora, discussion boards, email groups and interactive dictionaries form a second category of media that shape opinion in the public sphere. This second category mostly consists of user-generated websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. They are often called ‘new media’, ‘citizen journalism’ or ‘social media’. As yet there is no clear agreement on how the terms should be used in this new field of scholarship. This brings up the second problem about ambiguity. In this thesis I will use the following conceptualizations:

Citizen journalism: News production, announcement and sharing made by people who are not affiliated with journalism as an occupation. Most of the time on these sites, people record a video or take photo of a news-worthy event and share it with other people. Citizen journalism mostly occurs on user-generated websites and is generally non-commercial (See part 2.2.1).

New media: Although it is used to refer to something different now, ‘new media’ is not a recent term. It had been used to refer other media, mostly television, radio and film (Habermas 1962) and sometimes also for the press (Wirth1948). New media in this thesis are the news sites, generally user generated and not dominated by the industrial media, on the internet. Information sharing, in the internet environments, such as via email or blogs are also new media. (See part 2.2.2).

New social media: In this thesis social media are conceptualized as internet based communication environments in which people can share news and discuss the events. Those environments include fora, mail groups and interactive dictionaries. Social media provide multiple ways of interaction. Discussion separates the social media from the new media. I will focus on social media in this thesis (See part 2.2.3).

This thesis investigates whether the social media environments in Turkey have the basic characteristics of the public sphere. To show the relationship between the social media and the public sphere, I will first look into whether public opinion is shaped in the social media. Since examining every single datum in the internet is impossible, a case study approach will be the main method of this thesis (see part 3.2). To measure public opinion in the social media an ethnographic content analysis (see part 3.4.2.3) was applied to the data in the selected websites – Ekşi Sözlük a Turkish interactive dictionary (see part 3.4.2.1) and Twitter a worldwide social networking website (see part 3.4.2.2). All data were coded and analyzed. It will show the tendency of public opinion – negative or positive – about the case. Case studies will also examine whether public opinion evolved into action (see part 3.1).

Studying the data posted on websites has its own difficulties also. Data can be deleted by the person who posted them. To avoid this problem I saved the web pages on which the data are posted as soon as the selected case started to happen. Data from Ekşi Sözlük were cited by their unique id number given by the website automatically. Those data can be reached via Ekşi Sözlük’s main page by searching the id number with a ‘#’ sign before it. Data in Twitter also were cited by their unique

status number, also given by the website. Those data can be searched from Google by writing ‘#’ before the status number.

Another difficulty arises in the translation of the data from Turkish to English. The language used on the internet differs from daily language. Further, websites and the communities which frequently post data on a website produce their own jargon over the time. This is the biggest difficulty I was faced during this thesis. Especially translations from Ekşi Sözlük, a Turkish interactive dictionary (see part 3.4.2.1), were quite difficult because of the website’s own unique language. So, I decided to make the translations myself. All translations from Turkish to English in this thesis were made by me. To help the reader compare translations with the original entries and tweets one original entry and tweet for each code value were also quoted in the case studies.

Although the relations between the internet and the public sphere are a growing subject in social sciences, not enough research has done in Turkey on this field. This thesis also aims to help future researchers by finding literature and choosing appropriate and useful methods as well as providing scientific information which will allow them to compare the results they will find in their own research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Sphere

2.1.1 Conceptualization

The public sphere is an interdisciplinary term used in sociology, media studies and political theory. Catherine R. Squires (2010), a media studies professor who conducts research on the public sphere, describes the public sphere as a realm within which people discuss what is good for the public (Squires 2010). Arguably, the most well-known contemporary theorist of the public sphere is the critical social theorist Jürgen Habermas (Roberts 2010). Habermas developed his public sphere theory in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1993 [1962]) where he traces its genealogy, revealing shifting meanings and socio-historical changes of the concept (Roberts and Crossley 2004). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is the current foundation of the public sphere concept. According to Habermas, “By ‘the public sphere’ we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (1964:49). His public sphere theory became a central point for social science discussions especially after the book’s translation into English in 1989 (Squires 2010) since, “Habermas's concept of the public sphere provides a way of circumventing some confusions that have plagued progressive social movements and the political theories associated with them” (Fraser 1990:56).

In his thinking about the history of the public sphere, Habermas (1993 [1962]) categorizes three types of the public sphere: the representative publicness, the literary public sphere and the political public sphere. Representative publicness, which is even difficult to name as publicness, existed during feudal Europe. It consists of a sovereign’s political power which is shown before the public. The literary public

sphere, which also called the public sphere in the world of letters by Habermas, is the public sphere of early capitalist society. The first institutions of the literary public sphere were salons in France, coffee-houses in England and literary societies in Germany. The main topics of discussion in this public sphere were art and literature. People who joined the public sphere were following newspapers and journals. The political public sphere, also called the public sphere in the political realm, emerged within the literary public sphere. Habermas says that “the public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of letters; through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state in touch with the needs of society” (p.30). The main concern of the political public sphere is the activities and events of the state (Habermas 1964). Here the argument should be noted that members of the bourgeois learned rational-critical debate, which is the core of the public sphere, from members of noble society via their discussions about newspapers (Habermas 1993 [1962]).

Habermas argues that three criteria make these public sphere institutions common: common humanity, common concern and openness - accepting everybody without regard to the status of the person (1993 [1962]). He believes that the public sphere is open to all human beings and that “access is guaranteed to all citizens” (Habermas 1964:49). He says, “Such orders, chambers, and academies were preoccupied with the native tongue, now interpreted as the medium of communication and understanding between people in their common quality as human beings and nothing more than human beings” (Habermas 1993 [1962]:34).

Two important distinctions about the public sphere are its borders with the private sphere and with the state authority. According to Habermas people join the public sphere as private persons rather than devolving from the ruling power or the state authority (1993 [1962]), they also do not held their private or business related issues. The public sphere is the place in which people form a public body (1964).

The new sociability, together with the rational-critical discourse that grew in the salons (and coffee-houses and other places), depended on the rises of national and the territorial power states on the basis of the early capitalist commercial

economy. This process led to an idea of society separate from the ruler (or the state) and of a private realm separate from the public” (Calhoun 1996:7).

Private Realm	Public Sphere	Sphere of Public Authority
Civil Society (realm of commodity exchange and social labor)	Public sphere in the political realm	State (realm of the “police”)
Conjugal family’s internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press) (market of culture product)“Town”	Court (Courtly-noble society)

Figure 1: Distinguishing characteristics of the public sphere.

Source: Habermas (1993 [1962]:30)

Habermas (1993 [1962]) defines the public sphere as one lying between the private realm, which also contains civil society, and the sphere of public authority. The state and the public sphere should not be considered as equivalents in the Habermasian context. “Although state authority is so to speak the executor of the political public sphere, it is not a part of it” (Habermas 1964:49). Squires (2010) also notes that, for many scholars, the public sphere should be free from the state and its agents. Habermas says that civil society originated from late middle ages in towns as the realm of commodity exchange. It only really existed after state became depersonalized and commodity exchange and social labor became liberated from government. Craig Calhoun (1993), a well-known American sociologist, says that civil society and public sphere are not the same things in Habermasian context.

2.1.2 Critiques and Counterpublic Discussions

Most critiques of Habermas’s theory are based on what critics see as his idealization of public sphere institutes. “But even when his work has been strongly criticized it has remained central” (Roberts and Crossley 2004:1). His ideas on participation have been criticized from gender, class and ethnicity perspectives by a number of scholars.

Seyla Benhabib (1996), a well-known Turkish-American philosopher, differentiates between three different conceptions of the public sphere (the agonistic, legalistic and discursive) based on their approaches to political life. In Benhabib's conceptualization, the agonistic model is based on the ideas of the German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt; the legalistic model is related to the liberal tradition in European thought; and the discursive model is the Habermasian concept of public sphere. According to Benhabib, "The strength of the Habermasian model, when compared with the Arendtian and liberal conceptions, is that questions of democratic legitimacy in advanced capitalist societies are central to it" (p.74).

Myra Marx Ferree, an American sociologist who specialized in German and European studies, and her co-authors (2002) delineate four models of the public sphere: the representative liberal, participatory liberal, discursive and constructionist approaches. According to Ferree et al., the tradition of representative theory shares the premise that authority lay with the citizenry. "The public sphere, according to representative liberalism, should reflect the public's representatives. The larger and more representative the party or organization, the more voice it has earned in the media, and the more powerful it should be in shaping decisions" (p.291). The main goal of participatory liberal theory is to maximize the participation of citizens. "Participation enhances the public sphere, allowing for the emergence of something approximating a general will" (p.295). Discursive theory is based on the ideas of Habermas, who supports the idea that discussions should not be limited to central political figures when normative important questions are being answered. The discursive tradition also accepts the idea of popular inclusion as does participatory liberalist theory. However it places more emphasis on deliberation. Discursive theory assumes that "the participants are part of the same moral community, sharing basic values" (p.303). The basis of the discursive public sphere is mutual respect and dialogue. As it is seen, "The line between participatory liberal and discursive theories is not easy to draw, especially regarding who should be included in the public sphere" (p.300). Constructionist theory is the most critical among these four. This approach is mostly based on the ideas of the French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault, especially, "On the question of who should participate and when, the constructionist approach shares the strong normative value placed on popular

inclusion” (p.307). According to this tradition, “Public discourse should question the boundaries of ‘the political’ by a strong norm of popular inclusion, which in turn serves the goals of empowerment of the marginalized and recognition of differences” (p.315).

Mary P. Ryan, an American historian who has worked in the areas of women, public life and civil society, criticizes Habermas through the lens of gender discrimination. Ryan (1996) says that women were not included in the bourgeoisie public sphere during the 18th century. Ryan focused on the American case and argues that women began to participate in the public sphere after the feminist movement started during the second half of the 19th century. She argues that the Habermasian public sphere only came into play after women started to participate. “In the late twentieth century, women’s historically problematic relationship to the public has become transformed into a public asset, both a practical and theoretical boon to the utopian aspirations that Jürgen Habermas set before us twenty-five years ago” (p.286).

Nancy Fraser (1990), an American political theorist, thinks that the public sphere in the Habermasian context does not fit actually existing societies. Fraser uses the ideas of Joan Landes, Geoff Eley and Mary P. Ryan to elaborate the problems, especially the gender issue, related to the bourgeoisie public sphere. Although Fraser says that “the relationship between publicity and status is more complex than Habermas intimates” (p.60), she mainly focuses on counterpublics, public spheres different from the bourgeoisie public sphere, and the relations of those publics to each other to ground her theory about the bourgeoisie public sphere.

History records that members of subordinated social groups – women, workers, peoples of color, and gays and lesbians – have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. I propose to call these subaltern counterpublics in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs (P.67).

Fraser uses Eley's description to analysis the relation between bourgeoisie public sphere and counterpublics.

Eley draws a Gramscian moral from the story: the official bourgeois public sphere is the institutional vehicle for a major historical transformation in the nature of political domination. This is the shift from a repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one, from rule based primarily on acquiescence to superior force to rule based primarily on consent supplemented with some measure of repression. The important point is that this new mode of political domination, like the older one, secures the ability of one stratum of society to rule the rest. The official public sphere, then, was – indeed, is – the prime institutional site for the construction of the consent that defines the new, hegemonic mode of domination (P.62).

After Fraiser brought up the idea of counterpublics, scholars identified different public spheres based on group feelings (Squires 2002). Squires mentions the problem of conceptualization in these scholarships about the counterpublics. She proposes a different terminology – based on her research about the African-American counterpublic – about how counterpublics interact with each other and with the dominant public spheres as well as with the state. Her model suggests three types of the interaction for publics: enclave, counterpublic and satellite. Enclaved publics close themselves to the rest of the society in order to avoid legal problems. Counterpublics try to participate in public discussions with wider publics and express their ideas. Satellite publics are the types which stand between previous models. They do not always hide themselves or interact with wider publics. However their reason to avoid interaction is not the legal issues.

One of the most important and earliest arguments about counterpublics was written by the German philosopher Oskar Negt and author Alexander Kluge. Their book *The Public Sphere and Experience* was first published in 1972 in German and in English in 1993. Negt and Kluge (1993 [1972]) evaluate the dialectical relation between the bourgeois and proletarian public spheres. They describe the proletarian public sphere as “a public sphere that reflects interests and experiences of the overwhelming majority of the population” (p.xlv). They argue that bourgeois

lifestyle is not connected with the rest of the society. Even though, at the same time, the bourgeois claim to represent every social group in the society. So proletarians must know the necessary ways to deal with the hegemonic public sphere. At the same time, the authors know that the proletarian public sphere is influenced by the bourgeois public sphere. “All forms of the proletarian public sphere are the qualitative expression of the proletarian context of living and therefore tend—by contrast with the costume character of the rapidly changing bourgeois public spheres—to exclude more developed forms” (p.58).

2.1.3 Public Sphere Discussions in Turkey

The public sphere concept became more popular among Turkish academics after *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was translated into Turkish in 1997. Translators of the book use ‘*kamusallık*,’ which means publicity, instead of ‘*kamusal alan*,’ that means public sphere, in the title. However ‘*kamusal alan*’ is much more popular in Turkish literature now. Thomas Burger, who translated *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* into English, also mentions the same problem. Burger says *Öffentlichkeit* can be translated as ‘(the) public’, ‘publicity’ or ‘public sphere’. However this translation problem leads a more complex problem in the Turkish social sciences literature. Beside the public sphere, ‘public place’ is also translated as ‘*kamusal alan*’ into Turkish. Since same term is being used for these two different but related concepts, borders of the public sphere became more ambiguous. Meral Özbek (2004a), a Turkish sociologist who investigate the public sphere for over 20 years, says, “To approach ‘public sphere’ and ‘public place’ as equivalent concepts means that using notions which handle publicness through urban life, socialization and social spaces interchangeable with Habermasian concept which has a direct political perspective [Örneğin, ‘*kamusal mekan*’ ve ‘*kamusal alan*’ kavramlarını eşdeğer kavramlar olarak ele almak *kamusallığa kentsel yaşam, sosyallik ve sosyal mekanlar açısından yaklaşan görüşler ile doğrudan politik bir derdi olan Habermas’ın kavramını yer değiştirilebilir olarak kullanmak anlamına geliyor]*” (p.39).

Özbek (2004b) has her own conceptualization for different types of the public spheres or publics. She says there are three types of publics: Hegemonic [*egemen*],

alternative [*alternatif*] and counter [*karşıt*]. While she uses hegemonic public with the same meaning as Fraser and Squires, she developed a new category for the counterpublics. Özbek's conceptualization is more class struggle centered than that of Fraser and Squires. She says counterpublics are proletarian publics which directly rise through capital-labor conflict. Özbek uses the alternative publics to describe the counterpublics which are against the hegemonic one but not based on class struggle. In Özbek's terminology alternative publics and counterpublics support each other.

'*Kamusal alan*' in Turkish society and also in the social sciences literature is mostly associate with the headscarf issue which is one of the most popular discussion topics in Turkish politics. Discussions generally have been made about how the headscarf should be worn, where wearing a headscarf should be allowed and what state services women in headscarf can use. The headscarf issue was associated with the '*kamusal alan*' mostly after the former President of Higher Education Council Erdoğan Teziç's conceptualization of '*kamusal alan*'. Teziç said that '*kamusal alan*' is more functional than geographical. If a police asks a women to show her identity in a private place such as a park that place will turn into '*kamusal alan*' (Radikal 2004). The discussion then continued by former President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's speech in a military school. Sezer (2006) said that headscarf should be banned in '*kamusal alan*'. Obviously both Sezer and Teziç express their ideas about the public space rather than public sphere. However, as Özbek mentioned, after these discussions public sphere and public sphere became interchangeable in Turkish social science literature.

These anti-headscarf ideas, which were expressed by people who represent the state authority, also, inevitably, produced their own counter arguments. A group of social scientists published their, mostly historical, analysis on the public space and the public sphere regarding the participation of women, specifically women in headscarves (Aktaş 2001; Erkilet 2004; Kırık 2005; Kubilay 2010). These scholarships can be classified as one of the two main approaches to the public sphere in Turkey.

The second approach to the issue in Turkish social science literature is, the relation of democracy and the public sphere. A number of Turkish social scientists

have conducted scholarship about democracy and public sphere relations. Scholars who approach the public sphere from this point mostly focused on political participation and hegemony in the public sphere. This approach also produced more historical and theoretical arguments (Köker 2004; Sarıbay 2000; Kömeçoğlu 2005, Karadağ 2006).

Ömer Çaha (1996), a Turkish political scientist, wrote one of the earliest scholarships about women's status in the public sphere. Çaha focused on women's role in civil society and the participation problem. However he did not specifically concentrate on the headscarf issue as most of scholars did. Çaha, with his approach, stays between the two main traditions of public sphere discussions in Turkey, and his arguments contain the elements of both.

Aykut Çelebi (2004), a Turkish political scientist, contributed to the discussions by bringing in a new term- publicness in motion [*hareket halindeki kamusalılık*]. According to Çelebi, public in motion means an organizational form that has a common idea, practice and political goal. It creates its own spaces, gathering and discussion formats and ways to express itself to the general public. Çelebi's definition of public in motion is very similar to Squires's model of the counterpublic.

2.1.4 Conclusion

As it seen from the discussions above there are various definitions and conceptualizations about the public sphere. One of the biggest problems in dealing with this term is that it has more than one meaning which also make the term ambiguous. Habermas (1996), who brought the concept to the intellectual discussions, says

Öffentlichkeit, is meant as an analytical tool for ordering certain phenomena and placing them in a particular context as a part of categorical frame. This concept also has inevitable normative implications. Of course, and, is related (and this is the confusing part) to certain positions in normative political theory. These are connotations that link to the historical analysis with our value-laden and future-oriented enterprise of making some sort of diagnoses of our present situation,

particularly for those who are still committed to the project of radical democracy. (p.462-463)

Most conceptualizations of the public sphere focus on the problem of openness and participation. The public sphere exists in various forms such as those which are more open, limited to participate, elitist, gender-centered etc. I argue that there are two basic elements to identify the public sphere: public opinion and rational-critical debate. I believe that if there are no idea, that something close to public opinion as Habermas says, formed in a public place or event, it cannot be identified as a part of the public sphere. Public opinion, in this sense, is the essential product of the public sphere. And rational-critical debate is the method to shape the public opinion in the public sphere. The crucial questions of who joins the discussion, which instruments are available and used and what is the level of expertise are not the concerns of this thesis. In this thesis I will not use the concept as referring to any normative or ideal type meaning. Without arguing which public sphere model is the better one, I define all types of the public sphere which has two basic elements mentioned above.

2.2 New Social Media

Social media is a term mostly used to describe networks and communication tools on the internet. With this term I refer to the social interaction on internet. The most well-known examples of social media are Twitter, Facebook, blogs, fora and e-mail groups. Attention to the social media is growing in the social sciences literature especially after its wide and effective use by opposition groups for political reasons in many countries such as Iran and Egypt. Other terms such as new media and citizen journalism are also related to social media. Researchers sometimes use these terms interchangeably.

2.2.1 Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is journalist activity made by people who are not professional journalists. Citizen journalism mostly uses internet technologies to spread news. Social media and sharing platforms such as Youtube are the most popular websites for citizen journalism. Citizen journalism allows people to announce and learn an

event which is not recorded or published by traditional media institutions. The phenomenon attracted more attention during the post-election protests in Iran in January 2009 and anti-Hosni Mubarak protests in Egypt in early 2011. In addition to its usage in large scale news-worthy events, citizen journalism is also used to make public events not witnessed by many people. A good example for this type usage of the citizen journalism is, perhaps, the use of the net to make public what happened in November 2006. The campus police of University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) used taser gun several times on an Iranian-American student. The incident was recorded by a student and the video was uploaded to websites such as Youtube. The video drew wide public attention. The UCLA administration changed its policy about using taser gun a year later (Hampton 2007).

Not every video or other information produced by non-journalists and uploaded to the internet is considered news. Since a long discussion about the conceptualization and borders of the 'news' is not fully related to this thesis, here I will only mention what can be categorized as a news in the public sphere and social media discussions. Habermas (1962) values the news traffic and exchange as one of the reasons that tend to the rise of the bourgeois public sphere. In contemporary journalism, information such as lives of the celebrities are also considered as news. Without judging or ignoring people's curiosity about these types of information, news, in our context, means information that already had or might have an impact on lifestyles or to the quality of lives of the people. That can be a small scale such as a family or a large scale such as a nation. However I will only refer news to the informations that started a discussion in social media and so became an issue in the public sphere. Also, sometimes people may give reaction to an event which is not suitable to above definition. In these kind of cases not the event itself solely but its connection with the mass reaction makes it news.

Although they may seem to be alternatives to the traditional media institutes, industrial media also take advantage of citizen journalism. CNN established its own platform, I-Report, to gather photos and videos of news events from non-journalists in August 2006. (CNN 2007). Since then, more than 550 thousand reports had been published on its web page (CNN 2011). The number can be considered as a sign of the people's attention to the citizen journalism. Although what will be published on I-

Report's webpage is under the control of CNN, free websites that provides video storage service such as YouTube, Facebook and Daily Motion can be used by any person to publish news.

Citizen journalism is mostly approached by scholars from the perspectives of media and power. Researches generally focused on how citizen journalism will change traditional journalism as well as what will be the impact of citizen journalism on media-politics relations (Fenton 2010; Redden and Witschge 2010; Scotton 2010; Hassan 2004; Weldon 2008). Although both of these questions are related to our subject, citizen journalism can only have a secondary role in discussions about whether there is a new public sphere in Turkey. The subject here is not only about how to produce or circulate information but also whether any discussion is started after the information is disclosed and spread. Here, I argue that, in spite of its importance to break the traditional mass communication ways citizen journalism is not an obligation for the social media. The subject issue of the social interaction might be brought up or disclosed by the traditional media institutes. Here the source of the information does not affect to be a discussion topic in the social media.

2.2.2 New Media

New media is the most ambiguous among three terms mentioned above, having been used to refer different media, styles and relationships. The most important source of ambiguity comes from the word 'new'. Today, when we define something as new media we also, at the same time, inevitably define some related concepts as old media. However, what we think and label as old media were not always old (Pingree and Gitelman 2003). For example Habermas, in 1962, called radio, film and television as "new media", while Louis Wirth (1948), an American sociologist, classifies radio, motion picture and press as "new media". In addition to its differentiation over time, "new media" can also have different meanings in different societies and communities such as, in undeveloped societies like those in Sub-Saharan Africa and Amazon jungles as well as in intentionally self-isolated communities like the Amish people in the United States of America.

Lev Manovich (2001), a professor of visual arts and author of two books about new media, argues that new media is a very broad term which includes the internet, computer games and digital versatile disc-DVD. He says that computerization is the central meaning for all different meanings. He categorizes four features of computerization on media: Production, storage, exhibition and distribution. Manovich mostly focuses on production and storage in his book, *The Language of New Media*. However I do believe that the biggest importance of the new media is its impact through distributing information.

Martin Lister, a professor who specialized in media history and new media, and his co-authors define six different meanings for 'new media'. They include: New textual experience; new ways of representing the world; new relationships between subjects and media technologies; new relationship between embodiment, identity and community; new conceptions of the biological body's relationship to the technological media and new patterns of organization and production (Lister et al. 2009:12-13). In this formulation new relationships between individuals, media technologies and community are the most applicable to our subject. Since this thesis focuses on the contemporary situation in Turkey, new media in our definition is the internet based communication that allows new ways of participating in the production and circulation of information.

I believe that the most important problem in conceptualizing new media is determining which websites can be accepted as part of it. Apparently many websites, in nearly every language, use computer- and internet-based technologies to exhibit and distribute information. Here, in my opinion, using new technologies does not necessarily imply a new media institute. Websites which are extensions of traditional media institutes are not considered as new media in my conceptualization. New media is not an environment dominated by industrial or ideological media institutions. Rather the thesis examines on environment mostly dominated by individuals sharing information electronically. In this sense what is called "Web 2.0" or, in a better discrimination, "user generated websites" are the new media under consideration here. Tim O'Reilly (2005), who mentioned the term for the first time (Hendler and Gelbeck 2008), defines Web 2.0 as websites with contents created by the users. Wikipedia and Youtube perhaps are the best examples for this type of

website. O'Reilly also mentions that blogs, Rich Site Summary – RSS – feeds and other types of content sharing among individuals constitute Web 2.0. In addition to posting and re-posting videos on websites such as Youtube, sharing those video – or their URLs – by email, on a blog or in another website is considered new media. The same pattern happens on Twitter with retweeting personal status updates and on Facebook by sharing a link, photo or video with your friends.

2.2.3 Social Media

Social media are those media that allow participation and discussion by individuals. While, traditionally, media are an environment of one way communication, social media are an environment of multiple ways of social interaction. The term, in this sense, can be used for any type of social interaction – historical or contemporary – that brings to or generates or maintains a public debate, which makes it similar to what Habermas called the public sphere. However, in today's definition, social media refers to internet-based communication and interaction environments. Those are mostly e-mails, fora, instant messages, and comment sections of various kinds of web pages, blogs, interactive dictionaries and some web pages which are especially designed for and aimed at these interactions.

The difference between social media and new media is the key point of this conceptualization. There are, indeed, similar terms and in most occasions they coexist in the digital environment. The nuance which distinguishes them is the discussion. While new media is the environment of producing and circulating information – as mentioned above – social media is the environment in which the information is discussed by people. Based on this notion, social media can be called a public sphere.

The difference between the social media and the public sphere is based both on Habermas's and on further descriptions of the public sphere. As mentioned earlier (see part 2.1.1), Habermas conceptualize the public sphere in a political world. The public sphere certainly gains its meaning with its relation though politics in Habermasian context. Further discussions on the public sphere also continue this politics oriented approach. At the same time, social media are not necessarily

political. Idea exchange and social interaction of individuals can be on very different topics, such as sport games, celebrity scandals, television shows or even gossip.

Yochai Benkler, a professor of law who conducted research about networks, one of the researchers, inspired much other research on networks with his book *The Wealth of Networks*. Benkler mostly handle the case from the economics perspective. However, he also focused on the social media's relationship with politics and media. Benkler (2006) said that the most important difference between social media and industrial media is how people become speakers. Emails, blogs and fora made becoming a speaker much easier and cheaper. Therefore, Benkler argues that social media bring more speaker participants to discussions in the public sphere. However, the most important argument in Benkler's book is, I think, his identification on social media's effect on the public sphere as not only quantitative but also qualitative at the same time. Benkler argued that people become active participants and speakers rather than passive listeners in the social media.

Jürgen Gerhards and Mike S. Schafer (2010), both German social scientists, categorized internet based social media as email, instant messaging, discussion boards, blogs etc. They argue that these new types of communications are similar to encountering and public events. They also defend the idea that these types of communication are not as effective as the mass media's influence. Although I agree with their idea of similarity, I think new ways of communication provided by the internet are also effective. Thus, in this thesis, social media represents the old ways of interpersonal communication while the new social media refers to internet based communication.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This thesis investigates the relationships between the new social media in Turkey and the public sphere. Since the topic needs to be studied in the internet environment the research should include social network websites which are popular among Turkish internet users.

3.1 Variables

I argue that four fundamental queries are required for understanding the possible relationships between the new social media and the public sphere. Those questions are:

- 1- Do events event in “real life” – either political or not – become subjects in the social media.
- 2- Is public opinion shaped through discussions in social media?
- 3- Do people take action after the discussions?
- 4- Are there impacts of these discussions and actions in real life?

Here the most important question is the second. As I mentioned in the part 2.1.4, public opinion is a critical product of the public sphere. Thus the dependent variable of the research is public opinion. I will use the case study method to seek answers to the queries.

3.2 Case Study as a Research Method

Bent Flyvbjerg, a Danish academic from Oxford University, defines the case study as the “detailed examination of a single example” (2006: 220). Robert K. Yin (2003), who owns an applied social science research company, says that the unique strength

of the case study is its variety of evidence which includes documents, artifacts, interviews and observations. For this thesis, new social media are the 'documents' investigated, similar to the date David Beer and Roger Borrowes (2007), two British sociologists, mentioned. Yin (2003) states that case studies are the best method when researcher wants to cover contextual condition and they are more useful when the researcher has no or only a little control on the events that happen in real life. Yin emphasizes that case studies can be both qualitative and quantitative and that most of the time then a mix these two methods.

Perhaps the most often mentioned weakness of case studies is that they are not scientific enough and that it is difficult to produce theory based on a case study (Dogan and Pelassy 1990 in Flybjerg 2006; Kennedy1976 in Yin 2003). This problem should be considered with another one. Can a different case study find a sufficient answer? This is obviously a question of reliability and external validity.

Yin (2003) says that even though it is hard to generalize from a single case, the same problem also arises for experimental researches. He mentions that case studies can be generalized to theoretical statements by doing multiple or comparative case studies. Dawson R. Hancock and Bob Algozzine (2006), who together wrote a book about how to make a case study, also say that generalization through case studies is possible when the research is not only descriptive but also inferential. They explain the difference between two of these approaches as the differences of sample. If the sample's power to represent general population is strong then the case study can provide inferential data. Flybjerg (2006) also suggests that it depends on the case and how it is chosen whether one can make a valid generalization. He put the emphasis on the choice of the case influences the generalizability of the case. Flybjerg uses the example of a case study of class mobility and class identity, done by a group of researchers in the 1960's. He noted the case's systematic sampling. Which shows the possibility developing a scientific theory based on case study methodology. As suggested by different researchers, sampling holds the core position in a case study. Detailed information of the sample in this thesis is written in the part 3.4.2. Also, in order to strengthen my argument, I will evaluate three cases instead of one and compare them each other as Yin (2003) suggested.

3.3 Methods in Similar Researches

David Beer and Roger Borrows (2007), both British sociologists, examine the potential research categories and methods for internet-based social networks. They say that social networks mainly have three possible issues that should be analyzed sociologically as they are the most common phenomena. Those are: 1. Changing relations between production and consumption of content; 2. Private information posted to the public domain; 3. The new rhetoric of democratization. Beer and Borrows argue that Web 2.0 or social networks are not only subject to study but that they also can be used to make research on nearly any subject. They suggest using social media as a research tool, based on the effort of the users to express themselves and to produce – consciously or not – archives. They also mention an important point for the researcher - in order to reach those archives it might be necessary also to be a part of the network. Therefore the position of the researcher becomes one of a participant observer rather than the observer only. Although their ideas are generally proper regarding which issues should be investigated in Web 2.0 environments and using social networks as an archive – which is also the model of this thesis – I do not agree that researcher should always sign up to a website in order to gather information. If the data in the website are available without registering there is no need to be a part of it.

To decide what information I should be looking for in the websites examined, I will focus on specific research topics as most researchers did. Most scholarship on the internet and its relation to the public sphere focuses on specific cases rather than trying to analyze the internet and the social media as a whole. Hans Wiklund (2009), a Swedish academic who studies deliberative democracy, researched the possibility of deliberative democracy via the internet. His research was focused on the e-government services of Swedish municipalities. Wiklund made a quantitative examination of almost 300 websites about the kind of information municipalities share with the public on their websites and what types of services they provide. He says that it is possible to strengthen deliberative democracy, in which the communication is vitally important, via e-government. He argues as well, however, that those services are insufficient at the time the article was written.

Yonghoi Song (2007), a Korean researcher who focused on social movements, studied differences between online news services and mainstream media covering news events. Her research was based on anti-US protests in Korea during 2002. Song evaluates the internet as an alternative news resource. She analyzed news reports of five media institutes. More than one thousand news reports, which was her population, were coded and analyzed in her research. The coding system was based on the type of the news report, the news source and frames as well as commentary or information reporting type. She found that independent internet media can compete with industrial media regarding issue development because of the low costs of electronic media.

Jürgen Gerhards and Mike S. Schafer (2010) researched whether the internet promotes a better public sphere than the traditional print media. Their research was based on the news available in the print media and on the internet about human genome research. Gerhards and Schafer suggest that search engines are the equivalents of the traditional media and compared these two types of media regarding their organizational structure, openness and social impact. To compare search engines with newspapers they chosen two German and two American “quality” newspapers among print media and google.de, yahoo.de, fireball.de for Germany; google.com, yahoo.com and msn.com for US among search engines, as their sample. They used content analysis and coded the articles regarding who gave the information in the news, what was the evaluation, and what was the frame of the news. They found that the internet is not a better public sphere, contrary to what most people think. I think that although their method is valid and strong, to match-up search engines with the traditional media is not appropriate.

J. Patrick Biddix and Han Woo Park (2008), both academics who study communication technologies, conducted research about how students, who use online networks, organize a protest campaign. Their research focused on protests at Harvard University in 2001. They had two main research questions: Who was the center of the social network which carried on the protests and how did the network affect the mobilization of the protests? They used a mixed methodology including hyperlink analysis, links between websites, and interviews with network members via emails.

They found that online networks helped protesters overcome some limitations such as sharing contact lists, organizing and mobilizing.

Melissa A. Wall (2007), an American scholar who conducted research on social media, studied emails and collective online identities during the globalization protests in Seattle during the G-8 meeting. Her research was based on three email groups. She registered in all three email groups as Beer and Borrows (2007) had suggested. She used a sample of 600 emails. She framed the sample emails and found as a result that the lists differentiate among collective identities. She suggests that when the internet came onto the scene a variety of identities became visible in social movements. But some of them are not similar with each other that make them not easy to be generalized as a homogeneous group.

As seen from the scholarship discussed above, although researchers examine different issues and aim to explore different phenomena about the internet they mostly focus on cases. They use different methods to analyze each case. In my thesis, based on the above methodology, the correct method of data analysis is the most important part of the case study. Since each type of case may have different issues to discover and different type of data to gather it is the researcher's responsibility to find and use the most suitable method of analyzing.

3.4 Methodology

Three cases will be analyzed in this thesis. Each examines events which occurred in Turkey in 2010 and 2011: The Sibel Arna case, the cat killing case and the case of medical subject soldiers. In each case, a real life event became a hot discussion topic in the new social media environments and many people started to express their ideas about the issue. All cases are either directly political or had been discussed as political issues – daily politics or more general – by internet users. I will use both qualitative and quantitative strategies to generate data, as Yin (2003) suggested. To answer the first query mentioned in part 3.1, I will use Google Insights and quantitative data. To answer the second query, also mentioned in the same part, I will use Ekşi Sözlük and Twitter and both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.4.1 Method for the First Query

Statistical data will be used to answer the first query. Basically, in order to ask whether public opinion was shaped in social media in any specific case, it must be shown that the issue became a discussion topic in new social media. Therefore I believe that first query is subsidiary to the second query. Statistical data will be gathered from Google Insights, a subsidiary website of Google, the most popular search engine in Turkey. It assists people by providing data on search queries made through Google. Google also has a similar service called Google Trends. However, when both websites do the same analysis Google Insight is more advanced. According to Google itself, “The data Trends produces may contain inaccuracies for a number of reasons, including data-sampling issues and a variety of approximations that are used to compute results.” Google also does not suggest using Google Trends for scientific purposes (Google Trends 2011). According to Google, data are chosen randomly among the search queries. Repeated search queries from the same computer in a brief time are eliminated. The results in Google Insights are scaled. The highest number of queries is equated to 100 in the scales. This process helps bring different data to a common scale (Google Insights 2011a). Google Insights also provides popular news headlines about a search query in a particular time, if any is available. It also shows related search queries in a different chart while also mentioning changes in the percentage of search volume.

3.4.2 Method for the Other Queries

Qualitative and quantitative data, which will be gathered in social media websites, will be generated to answer the second query. If there is evidence that public opinion was shaped through the discussions in chosen websites and turned into action, I will consider the new social media as effective in the public sphere in Turkey. To understand that, I will focus on Twitter and Ekşi Sözlük and will conduct a content analysis on what had been written during the time when the issue was still being discussed.

3.4.2.1 Ekşi Sözlük

Ekşi Sözlük, which means Sour Dictionary, is one of the most popular websites in Turkish. It can be described as a web forum that combines Wikipedia, a user-generated online encyclopedia, and 4Chan, an image board which has no mandatory ethical rules and users are with anonymous users. There are almost 2 million topics and over 12 million entries under those topics (Ekşi Sözlük 2011a). Topics can be anything, such as a word, a situation, a person or an event. However, as a strict rule in Ekşi Sözlük, users have to define, give information, an example or a web link in every entry they write. Entries most of often are funny, even sometimes sarcastic. Ekşi Sözlük is also a common platform for daily discussions for a wide range of topics such as a football match, a celebrity scandal, a terrorist attack or revolutions in North Africa. Users chose nicknames to enter the website. Only registered users are entitled as writers after a trial period. According to its official statistics written by Başak Purut – also known as Kanzuk – the website’s official attorney, the lowest and highest numbers for absolute unique visitors were 260,297 and 411,162 respectively, and totally 55 million in 2010 (Ekşi Sözlük 2010a:21117524). Total users, including writers, are more than 320 thousands. Total number of the writers is more than 32 thousands with 57% of the total writers between 18 and 25 years old (Ekşi Sözlük 2011a). The dictionary is wildly popular among the younger generation. Important events about the Ekşi Sözlük itself are also, most of the time, published on the newspapers. Those events vary from an annual celebration (Tatlıpınar 2011) to a lawsuit about censorship request for the website (Milliyet 2008).

3.4.2.2 Twitter

The third website which will be used is Twitter which describes itself as an information network (Twitter 2011a). People and corporate bodies who register on Twitter can upload information which is called status updates or ‘tweets’ on their own Twitter page. If any other user is registered to follow these tweets, the tweets will be shown simultaneously on the follower’s own Twitter page. Every tweet is limited to 140 characters although there is no limit on the number of updates. Twitter was widely used during the protests in Iran in June 2009 and in Egypt in February 2011 (Poniewozik 2009; Ungerleider 2011). Twitter provides instant trending topics information which show the most popular words or topics among worldwide Twitter users at a specific time. Trending topics helps users to participate in making a topic,

event or news be heard by other people just by typing it as a status update. Local data are also available for some countries and cities such as Brazil, the United States, Germany, Chicago, London and Sydney. Trending topics are also available for Turkey since November 15, 2010 (Twitter Blog 2010). Since trending topics and Twitter's own search service only can provide the latest data and do not have an option to query a search for a particular period, I will use another website to collect status update information in Twitter.

TwitTürk is a website that catalogues and archives tweets written by Turkish language users (TwitTurk 2011a). The website also provides a search service which is very useful for data inquiries data about for a specific time period. TwitTürk also shows the most retweeted status updates. Retweets are generally considered an indication of popularity and agreement with the original tweet.

3.4.2.3 Content Analysis as a Research Method

Content analysis has been a popular research method in the social sciences since the World War II (Krippendorff 2004). It is especially popular in communication and media studies. This method was first applied to the newspapers as a quantitative data generation tool and continued to become even more quantitative since then. However there are also qualitative uses of content analysis. Kalaus Krippendorff (2004), a well known professor of communication, who focused on data analysis, distinguishes five types of qualitative content analysis methods. Those are: 1. Discourse analysis, for focusing how a certain phenomenon is being represented, 2. Social constructivist analysis, for understanding how facts are established in interactions, 3. Rhetorical analysis, for evaluating how messages are conveyed, 4. Ethnographic content analysis, to focus more deeply on situations, meanings and niceties and 5. Conversation analysis, to understand complementary structure of conversations.

The data for this content analysis come from two sources – Ekşi Sözlük and Twitter – as mentioned. All entries related to the examined case in Ekşi Sözlük and most retweeted tweets in Twitter regarding the case will be analyzed. Here the questions such as frequency of a word or how many words that each entry contains are not important. What is relevant to the research question is the meaning of the

entries and tweets which show the opinions of social media participants about the cases. Here the biggest problem in understanding the data lies in the different ways of self expression. It is highly possible, especially in Ekşi Sözlük that writers use satire, sarcasm and/or irony to tell what they think about the topic being discussed. Therefore I will use ethnographic content analysis (ECA) to understand and interpret these data

ECA was first used by David L. Altheide, a scholar who mostly concentrated on mass media and qualitative research methods in 1982, on news reports of major American networks about the hostage crisis between Iran and USA between 1979 and 1981. Altheide (1987) describes ECA's most important characteristics as its interactivity and reflexivity. Its target is to be systematic without being inflexible. ECA uses both numerical and narrative data. Numerical data are mainly about the duration and frequency of the content being analyzed, while narrative data are mostly about the format and the message which is expressed.

3.4.2.4 Method of the Content Analysis

To develop more reliable statistical information from the entries and tweets, they will be analyzed according to the writers' approach to the discussed topic. This analysis will be based on a five level distinction regarding writers ideas about the discussed issue. Positive, positive with negative sides, not considering the issue as worth discussing, negative with positive sides and negative. These levels will be symbolized with points which will be (+2), (+1), (0), (-1) and (-2) respectively. Positive and negative total sums of the points will be considered as the public opinion in the new social media for the each case. Total sums show the tendency or the public opinion. It is possible to be caught by a statistical illusion that higher numbers mean a stronger public opinion. In fact the total number of the calculated data is also a factor to understand how strong public opinion is in each case. To avoid the illusion mentioned above, I will calculate the mean, standard deviation and median of each case. Since the datum will be valued by one of the (+2), (+1), (0), (-1) and (-2) the mean and median have to be between (-2) and (+2) as a mathematical rule. Mean and median will be used to understand whether the direction of the public opinion is strong or not. The standard deviation will be used to understand how the

opinions are diversified or concentrated. Another important point about the calculation is the retweets. Obviously each tweet can only be measured once. However retweets mostly signal agreement with the original tweet. So each retweet will be calculated separately. That means if a tweet with positive approach is retweeted 10 times it will be considered as 11 individual tweets.

3.5 Example of the Method

Sibel Arna, a columnist from Turkish daily newspaper *Hürriyet*, wrote something about her child’s nanny in her column on June 11th, 2010. There are some examples from both Ekşi Sözlük and Twitter about the issue as well as the Google Insight statistics. Since some entries are really long and it will be beyond the boundaries of this thesis to copy every entry and tweet, here I will only give the necessary link and the retrieved date for each datum. For the data from Twitter the number of total retweets will also be added.

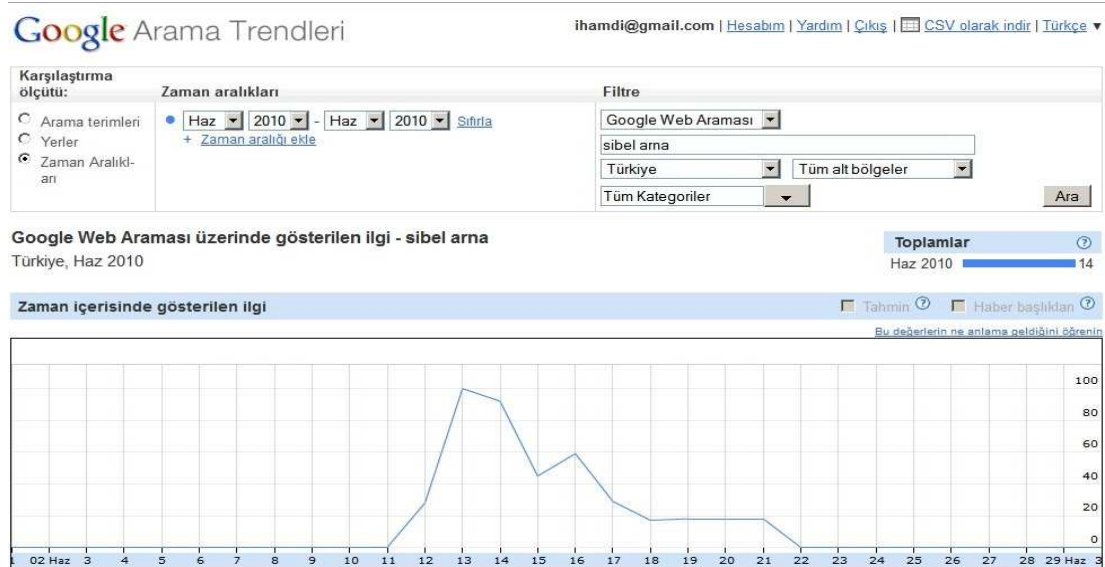


Figure 2: Google Insight statistics of search volume of “sibel arna” in June 2010
Source: <http://www.google.com/insights/search/>

It is very clear from the Google search statistics that Sibel Arna became a hot topic for Turkish web users right after she wrote the controversial column (Google Insights 2011b).

Some entries from Ekşi Sözlük, after the case became an issue, are:

TABLE 1: EXAMPLARY DATA ANALYSIS FOR EKŞİ SÖZLÜK

Link of the Entry	Value
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19363069	-2
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19363100	-2
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19363153	-2
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19363162	-2
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19368856	+2
http://www.eksisozluk.com/show.asp?id=19382188	-1
Total Number of the Data	6
Total Value of the Data	(-7)
Mean	(-1.17)
Standard Deviation	1.46
Median	-2

TABLE 2: EXAMPLARY DATA ANALYSIS FOR TWITTER

Link of the Tweet	Value	Retweet	Total Value
http://twitter.com/kaansezyum/status/16079630706	-2	44	-88
http://twitter.com/mockcaterpillar/status/16067466748	0	7	0
http://twitter.com/timblnt/status/16032054288	-2	11	-24
Total Number of the Data	62		
Total Value of the Data	(-112)		
Mean	(-1.8)		
Standard Deviation	0.53		
Median	-2		

Based on the sample data from Ekşi Sözlük and Twitter, it is very obvious that general public opinion about what Sibel Arna wrote is negative and public opinion about it is strong.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES

4.1 Sibel Arna Case

4.1.1 Background

Sibel Arna is a columnist for the popular Turkish daily newspaper *Hürriyet* who mostly writes about fashion. Although she is a columnist, she is not a well-known person in Turkey. However, she became well known for some Turkish internet users, including myself, in June 2010. On June 12th, 2010, she published an article, “Blue Voyage with 9 Month Old Baby [*Dokuz aylık bebekle mavi yolculuk*]” in her column and under her name. The article was about her vacation in a yacht. Her baby, Rüzgar, and the nanny, Hafize, were also with her during the holiday. Most of the article was about how difficult it is to have a holiday with a baby. She mentioned that one of the reasons for the bad holiday was the nanny. She wrote three paragraphs about the nanny under a subtitle of “who goes on holiday? We or nannies?” Arna wrote that the nanny “blew her mind off,” “complained about could not swim enough,” “grumbled that her husband also be there,” “failed to make Rüzgar happy” and “should not forget she is working.” Arna continued, saying, “I observed the same faults with another nanny who was also on the yacht” (Arna 2010a). As soon as the article was published it became a hot topic in the new social media environments in Turkey and it received mostly negative feedback.

4.1.2 Popularity of the Topic

As soon as the article was published it became a hot topic in the social media. Google Insight data show that search queries for “sibel arna” rose suddenly after the article was published and reached to the top level on the day after publication. According to normalized figures (see part 3.4.1 for details on normalization) there

were too few search queries to be noticed by Google Insights during June 2010 before the 12th of the month. On the 12th of the month – the day the article was published – the ratio of searches was 24. The ratio reached its top – 100 – on the day after and started to fall. Although there is another raise on the day of the 16th, popularity of the issue was diminishing every day (See table 2 in part 3.5).

Twitter statistics from TwitTürk shows a similar pattern. While there was none or only one tweet about Sibel Arna during the early days of June 2010, on the 12th of the month there were 299 tweets about her name. The issue became more popular on Twitter the day after with more than 800 tweets written about Sibel Arna. Similar to Google search statistics, it started to decline after that day (TwitTürk 2010a).

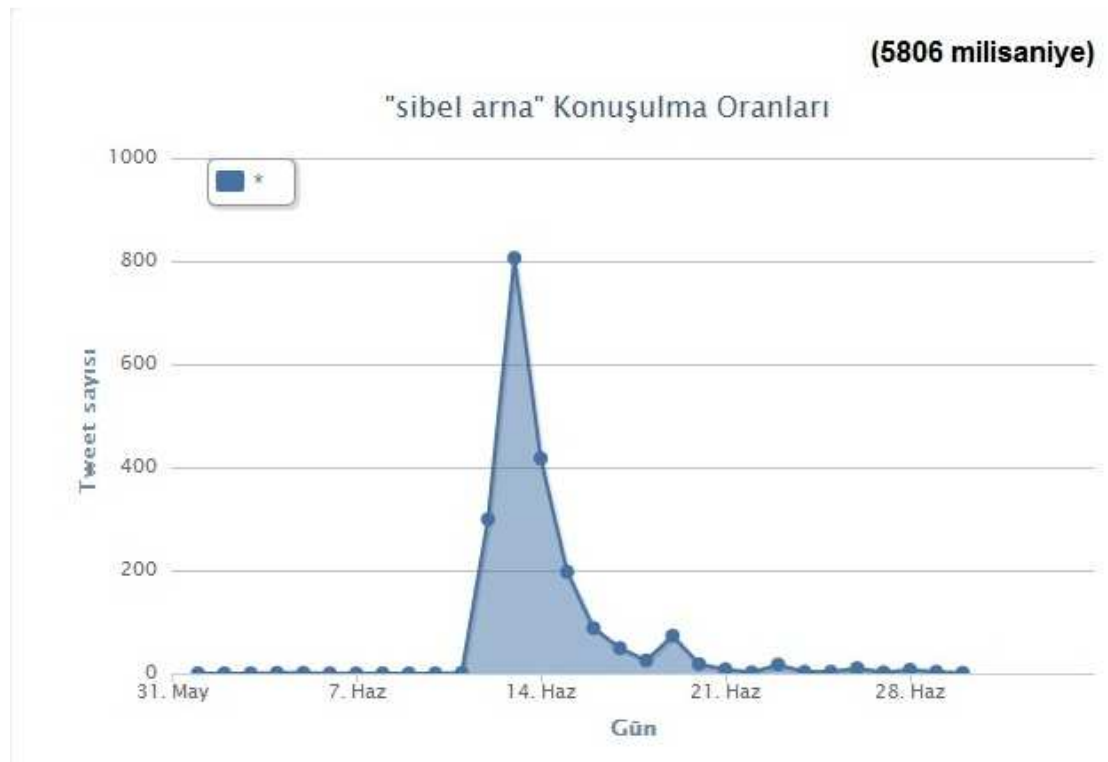


Figure 3: TwitTürk statistics about “sibel arna” in June 2010
Source <http://twitturk.com/>

Based on the above statistics, it is easy to say that Sibel Arna’s article about the nanny became an issue in the social media. Therefore it is worth examining to see whether public opinion was shaped in the social media about the issue.

4.1.3 Content Analysis

A total of 467 entries were written about the case between 12 and 16 June 2010. Before the controversial article was published there were only 17 entries about Sibel Arna. Among 467 entries, 262 were unrelated or not directly related to the case. Some of those were about her writing skills and personality rather than the event itself. Typical examples of such entries are, “A woman like a vuvuzela [*vuvuzela gibi kadın*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010a:19363259), and, “She became a columnist in the *Hürriyet* despite she is not able to write an essay even on junior high school level. Interesting” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010a:19367106). Those entries were not included when measuring the public opinion.

Content analysis was applied on 205 entries in order to calculate public opinion tendencies. Among them 173 entries show strong opposition to what Sibel Arna wrote about the nanny. A total of 26 entries suggested that the issue is not worth discussing – but they nevertheless found it worth noticing. Another 6 entries mention different opinions.

A good example of entries which express strong opposition is, “The woman who makes me wonder that whether the nanny, she insulted so much, has the insurance. Is it allowed to have tour on the yacht with the unpaid insurance charges of the nanny? But I do not want to accuse her wrongly. She is a supreme person who is able to say ‘she is also a human’. She of course thought to pay the insurance. Isn’t she? [*o kadar aşağıladığı dadısının sigortası var mı merak ettiğim kadın. dadının yatırılmayan sigorta primleri ile yata binilebilir mi? ama günahını almayayım, neticede "o da insan" diyebilen bir ulu büyüğümüz kendisi, sigortayı da düşünmüştür? müdür?*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19375135). Another good example is, “I do not intend to say anything about the motherhood she does or does not. It is something herself and her husband should consider. However her approach as “she is also a human” to the nanny who works for her is, with one word, nauseous” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19381474). Entries which call people to show their reaction also were included to this category. One of them is “We should condemn this article by sending emails to okur@hurriyet.com.tr” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19372302). There are also entries which are about taking action on the insurance issue. “I sent an email to okur@hurriyet.com.tr to complain the article. And I also called the 170, labor

insurance line, to ask them check whether the nanny has the legally obligatory insurance” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19373485). These types of entries were coded as (-2).

Only two entries coded as (-1). Those are “Thanks to her I remembered an event that I witnessed when I was working in the children camps... When I think that event I do not want to defend Sibel Arna. But. How should I say? There is an abnormality somewhere. I am really confused [*sayesinde / yüzünden (karar veremedim şimdi, unutmalı mı bunu yoksa unutamamalı mı) çocuk kamplarında çalıştığım bir dönemde gördüğüm olayı tekrardan hatırladığım yazar(!)...bu olayı düşününce sibel arna'yı savunasım gelmiyor ama... nasıl diyeyim... bir yerde bir anormallik var. 500 kadar entry girmiş ekşi yazarının kaç bu duruma o anda müdahale edebilirdi? kafam çok karışık*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19391726) and “... I am a mother of a 9 month old kid and I love travelling by a yacht. A baby is someone who needs special treatment and has special needs... If you want to take a rest you have to go to the holiday with a nanny. And nanny has to do what has been expected from her. This is not abnormal. However, being a human and having good manners require to promote the nanny to take advantage of the fairly many facilities and opportunities. I think what are lack in the article of this lady are those humanity and good manner” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19382188).

There are 26 entries which were coded as (0) because they are either said that the issue was not worth to discussing or that a fuss has been made by the users of Ekşi Sözlük. Some examples for these types of entries are, “Ugh! How unnecessary things was written. Enough! Do you realize that that woman will not understand any criticism? What you wrote are useless...[*öff ne gereksiz yazıldı cizildi yahu. yeter. bu hanımcagız kendine yoneltlen hicbir elestiriyi anlamayacak farkında misiniz? bosuna yaziyorsunuz...*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19391405). “I think I will vomit. What makes her a hot topic? Did she give the secret of universe and I missed that? Entries have been written non-stop for three days. Not even popular football players gained so many attentions in here” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19397816). “Yes the style and examples of her is a scandal. She has a point on what she tries to emphasis...It is not about class differences or being snob. If the salary includes nanny being there as the keeper of the child not as your friend or relative, she has to do her job” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19382241).

Only two entries were coded as (+1). An example is "... I do not think she is so wrong. At the end people pay salaries to the nannies and that is their right to expect more concentration... What Sibel Arna less valued for me is not her thoughts but to write those in her column. To write those means 'I am so important and you are so worthless that you have to read what I do in the holiday as a news [*kendisini çok haksız bulmuyorum. sonuçta dadılara ya da bakıcılara insanlar çocuklarını emanet ediyorlar & bu kadar pahalı bir teknesi varsa adam gibi bir maaş verir diye düşünerekten bu bakıcıdan işine tam olarak konsantre olmasını beklemek hakkıdır diye düşünüyorum... benim gözümde sibel arna'yı düşüren şey düşündükleri değil de bunları utanmadan köşesine yazmasıdır. bunun anlamı "ben çok önemli bir insanım ve sizler o kadar önemsizsiniz ki benim tatilde ne bok yediğimi haber ya da bilgi olarak okumalısınız" oluyor.]*" (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19407779).

Only two entries show full support to her. "She hired a nanny for her child, she paid her, she expected the nanny to do her job proper, yet she is labeled as dishonored and disgusting. First if you do not have a child or witnessed how difficult it is to raise a child, do not behave like you know it all. Second, the job of the nanny is to take care of the child when mother is swimming or continuing her social life...Nothing is suitable for your 'ideal' universe. Nobody in this world is as thoughtful, humanitarian and honored as you [*çocuğuna bakıcı tuttu diye, bakıcıya para ödedi diye, bakıcıdan görevlerini yerine getirmesi bekledi diye, bir de çocuğu olduğu halde dışarı çıkıp içki içti diye ne kepezeliği , ne onursuzluğu, ne mide bulandırıcılığı kalmış kadın. arkadaşlar, birincisi çocuğunuz yoksa yada yakınınızda çocuk büyüten birinin yaşadığı zorluklara şahit değilseniz hiç hariçten gazel okumayın...hiç bir şey sizin ideal evreninize uyum sağlayamıyor, hiç kimse sizin kadar düşünceli sizin kadar insancıl sizin kadar onurlu olamıyor bu dünyada.]*" (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19381642) and "I do not understand why she received so many reactions. People who work may hire other people to help them to take care of their child and expect them to do the job. As well as they may want to swim with confidence and not looking back. Because they also need some air and having a holiday" (Ekşi Sözlük 2010b:19368856). Those two entries were coded as (+2).

Total value of the 205 entries, on which content analysis was applied, is (-344). The mean is (-1.68), standard deviation is (0.81) and median is (-2) Mean shows that there is a strong public opinion in Ekşi Sözlük about what Sibel Arna did. Standard deviation shows that the opinions are concentrated as negative.

TABLE 3: DATA ANALYSIS OF EKŞİ SÖZLÜK FOR THE SIBEL ARNA CASE

VALUE	TOTAL ENTRIES	TOTAL VALUE
-2	173	-346
-1	2	-4
0	26	0
+1	2	2
+2	2	4
Total Number of the Data		205
Total Value of the Data		(-344)
Mean		(-1.67)
Standard Deviation		0.81
Median		-2

The data in Twitter show a similar pattern. Totally 19 tweets analyzed in Twitter were retweeted 358 times. Among them 9, which totally retweeted 198 times are not related with the action itself, but mainly about Sibel Arna's personality. A very typical example of them is, "The reason of Sibel Arna's anger is if she were not able to find a rich husband she would be the one who take care of the baby now [*sibel arna'nın öfkesinin sebebi: zengin koca bulamasaydı şimdi başkalarının çocuğuna kendisi dadılık yapıyor olacaktı*]" (Twitter 2010a:16173029111). Only one tweet, reweeted 7 times, is coded as 0 because it argues that those who criticize Sibel Arna in Ekşi Sözlük are hypocrites and they have similar manners as Sibel Arna (Twitter 2010a:16067466748). The rest of the tweets, which were retweeted 164 times, are coded as (-2). An example of those tweets is "Nannies of all Turkey unite! There is a little problem with the nanny Sibel Arna insulted so much. Does that nanny have insurance? [*Türkiye'nin tüm dadilari birlesin! Sibel arna'ya bu kadar asagiladigi*]"

dadisi ile ilgili küçük bir soru sorun. O dadinin sigortasi var mi?]” (Twitter 2010a:16065912755).

The total value of the 171 tweets, which include retweets, is (-328) and a mean of (-1,92). Public opinion shaped in Twitter about this case has even stronger negative tendency than did Ekşi Sözlük and opinions are more concentrated.

TABLE 4: DATA ANALYSIS OF TWITTER FOR THE SIBEL ARNA CASE

VALUE	TOTAL TWEETS	TOTAL RETWEETS	TOTAL VALUE
-2	9	164	-328
-1	0	0	0
0	1	7	0
+1	0	0	0
+2	0	0	0
Total Number of the Data			171
Total Value of the Data			(-328)
Mean			(-1.92)
Standard Deviation			0.4
Median			-2

4.1.4 Aftermath and Results

Based on the entries and tweets it is to be said that public opinion was shaped about what Sibel Arna wrote in the new social media and the opinion turn into action mostly by sending emails to complain about her. Sibel Arna wrote another article in her column about the issue on June 19th, one week after the first one. She said that it was the most difficult week of her life. She received very angry reactions because of what she wrote a week earlier. An even worse feeling was the nanny’s question of “What did I do to make you so angry?” She admitted that she was wrong. And also she afraid of the reaction of some people who accused her of treating the nanny as a slave and then crucifying her. She also afraid of the future she will share with those people (Arna 2010b). The reaction to that article was as negative as the first one

except the second article drew less attention. Social media users accused her not apologizing and blaming those who criticized her rather than making self-criticism. The case was forgotten a while later.

All four variables asked in this thesis (see part 3.1 for further explanation) were answered as positive in this case: (1) The event became a subject in the new social media. (2) Public opinion was shaped in the new social media. (3) People took action as the opinion was shaped. (4) Discussions and actions had an impact in real life.

4.2 The Cat Killing Case

4.2.1 Background

On October 11th, 2010, a video was published on the popular Turkish website Mynet. The video shows that in İzmir, a big city in western Turkey, five young males along with an attack dog came next to a cat. They first bring the cat out of the box where it lives and then one of them, who appears to own the dog, kicked the cat to death. The video ends with the blood of the cat spread on the sidewalk (Mynet 2010). The video drew public attention immediately and led to two extensive discussions animal rights and privacy.

4.2.2 Popularity of the Topic

After the video was published on Mynet it spread to other Turkish websites and became an important topic for the Turkish internet users. Google statistics shows that there were too few search queries for “kedi izmir” to be calculated on the day before the video was posted. On October 11th, search queries reached 60 on a scale of 100. And the next day it reached its top, 100. Attention declined after that, by, respectively, 75 and 38 on the following two days (Google Insights 2010c).

Karşılaştırma ölçütü:	Zaman aralıkları	Filtre
<input type="radio"/> Arama terimleri <input type="radio"/> Yerler <input checked="" type="radio"/> Zaman Aralıkları	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Eki 2010 - Eki 2010 Sıfırla + Zaman aralığı ekle	Google Web Araması <input type="text" value="kedi izmir"/> Dünya Geneline Tüm Kategoriler
		<input type="button" value="Ara"/>

Google Web Araması üzerinde gösterilen ilgi - kedi izmir

Dünya Geneline, Eki 2010

Kategoriler: [Referans \(%0-10\)](#)
Toplamlar
 Eki 2010 **14**

Zaman içerisinde gösterilen ilgi

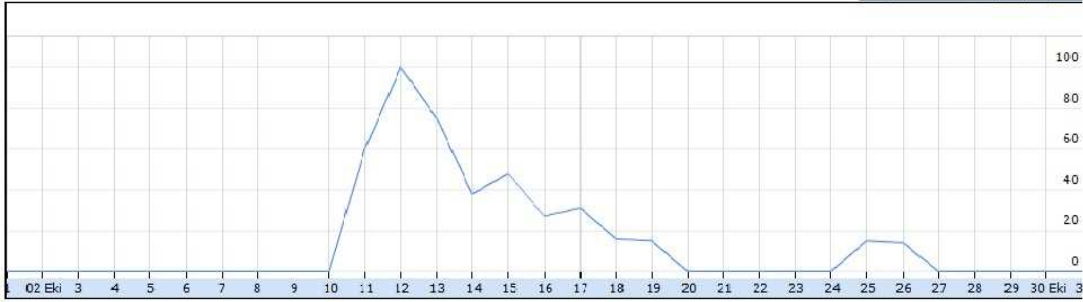
 Tahmin Haber başlıkları
[Bu değerlerin ne anlama geldiğini öğrenin](#)

Figure 4: Google Insight statistics of search volume of “kedi İzmir” in October 2010.

Source: <http://www.google.com/insights/search/>

Also statistics from TwitTürk shows that the word “kedi” was mentioned in the tweets more than usual after the video was published. Statistics show that “kedi” was only written 172 times on October 8th, 180 times on October 9th and 211 times on October 10th. However on October 11th, the day video was published, it was written 435 times. The number then increased to 1,363 on the following day and started to decline after that day (TwitTürk 2010b).

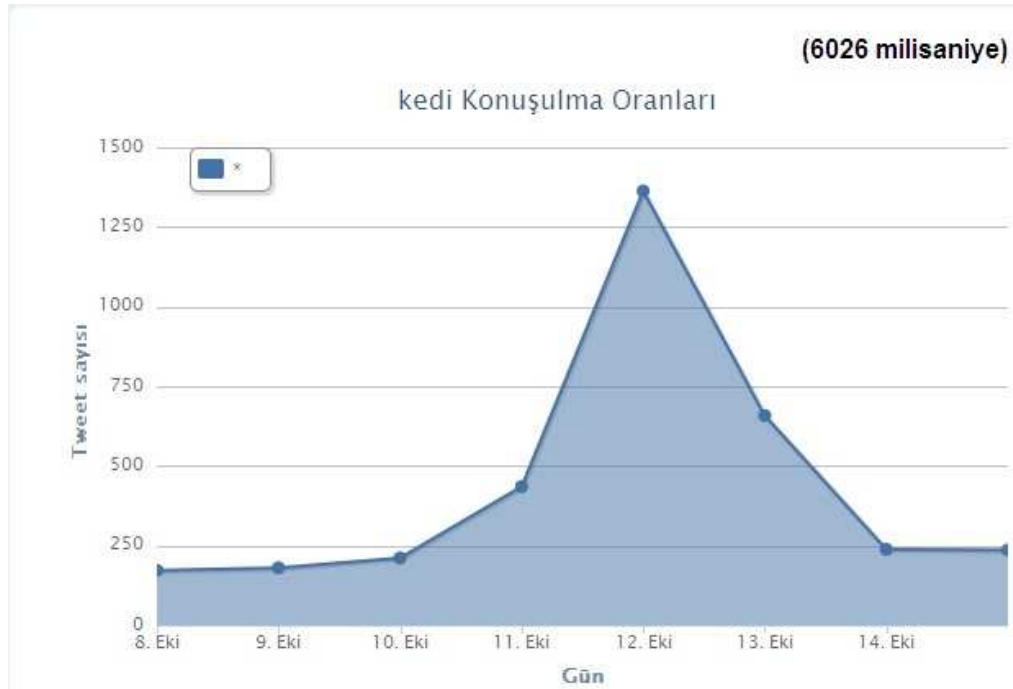


Figure 5: TwitTurk statistics about “kedi” in October 2010

Source <http://www.twitturk.com>

It is obvious from the above statistics and charts that the video became a topic in social media. Therefore the discussions which began after the video should be studied.

4.2.3 Content Analysis

Although all entries and tweets analyzed are related to this case, two different discussions started after the event. The first discussion was about animal rights in Turkey and what should have been done to punish those people involved in the cat’s death. The second discussion was followed by the first one which was about punishment. The name of the person who killed the cat was identified on various websites, including identifying his Facebook page; in addition, information was posted about the university and the department where he had been studying and even his home address was published. After he had been identified, some social media users pointed him out as a target or even wished to harm the person. The second discussion topic started was about whether it is legal and/or ethical to do any of those actions listed above.

A total of 327 entries had been written in this case regarding the first discussion topic between October 10th and 12th. Among them 195 entries do not have any statement regarding animal rights or action to catch those who killed the cat, even though they condemn the event. Those entries mostly contain cursing the killer and sympathy for the cat; sometimes posts called for brutal punishment of the cat slayer. Some posts were also totally unrelated to the topic. An extreme example of these kinds of entries is “If god existed, that would not happen [*eğer allah olsaydı, bunlar olmazdı.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20570976). More typical examples are, “That is something I tried to write about but failed. Whatever I wrote seems not enough for those ‘human imitations’. You said they are they are people. But they are bastards actually” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20570666). “My blood was frozen. Those who did this, should be killed in the same way” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20570427). “I could not find the courage on myself to watch it. I am sorry” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20574476). These types of entries were not calculated to measure the public opinion.

Among 131 entries which were coded, 103 were coded as (-2) and 28 as 0. Entries valued as (-2) are about taking legal action by complaints to the police, signing petitions against this particular killing and in favor of animal rights in general. Typical examples of these types of entries are, “We get angry, get sad, and cursed. It is over. Isn’t it? No. Let’s see what we can do. Federation of Animal Rights says...Since it the incident happened in İzmir we will send the complaints to the Provincial Department of Environment in İzmir [*sinirlendik, üzüldük, küfrettik; bitti. değil mi? hayır. bakalım neler yapabiliriz haytap der ki: ... olay izmir'de bornova'da geçtiğine göre izmir il çevre müdürlüğü'ne bu orospu çocuğunu şikayet edeceğiz.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20570496). “It is just another proof that law and penal code for the animal rights should be issued immediately in Turkey. Or right, maybe they will be punished hereafter but they should not be allowed to walk freely in this world as well...” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20571122). Another example is, “www.haykod.org www.evsizhayvanlar.org. To pursuit the incident we should send email to those non-governmental organizations and mobilize them. I called the İzmir Police Department and they told me that there are a lot of complaints about this incident” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20571594).

There are 28 entries which were coded as 0 because they either seem to suggest that the issue was exaggerated by the users of Ekşi Sözlük or that there are more important issues to protect than animal rights. A sarcastic example is, “Barbaric action. As if you kill a capitalist. Killing capitalists is acceptable but not cats. It is written ‘Valley of the Wolves 96th episode’ when you click the link. I found who is guilty. I can sleep comfortable” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20570709). More typical examples are, “Welcome to traditional gathering of cursing tortures to the animals. Murderers, scumbags, bastards, etc. Let’s cry and relax. Calm down first. And start to use your voice for all those animals whose legs are broken while they were brought to the slaughterhouse. Something, 112 times crueller than what happened to the cat, looks to your faces from your plates every day... Unhand the hamburger you are eating so we can believe you. You are sorry for one animal while you are eating the other...[*geleneksel kediye ve köpeğe yapılan eziyetleri topluca lanetleme ve faillere küfretme toplantımıza hoşgeldiniz. evet, katiller, şerefsizler, onun bunun çocukları vs.. ağlayalım, rahatlayalım. hah, bi sakinleyelim. daha sonra da tıklım tıklım mezbahaya götürülürken ayakları kırılan, havasız kalan, yarı baygın hayvanların kamyonndan indiğinde boyunlarına geçirilen iplerle çekile çekile götürülmesine, tekmelenmesine, yürüyemeyenlerin sopayla dövülmesine, kan gölüniün (evet basbaya bildiğin kan gölüniün) içinde gırtlaklanmasına, daha can vermeden derisinin yüzülmesine sesimizi çıkaralım. bu olayın yüzoniki kat vahimi, her gün tabaklarınızda size bakıyor. elindeki hamburgeri bırak önce de samimiyetine inanalım. iki yüzlüsün. bir hayvanı yerken diğerine üzülüyorsun...*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20572121). “It just showed me that how much people are hypocrites, scumbags and rubbish. I do not want to be understood wrongly but, where is your attitude when dozens of people are killed every day. Since when a cat is considered more valuable than a human?” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578309). No entry was suitable to be coded as (-1), (1) or (2).

Total value of the 131 entries that content analysis was applied is (-206). Mean is (-1.57), standard deviation is (0.82) and median is (-2). Based on the data from Ekşi Sözlük it is obvious that people’s opinions were absolutely against what happened and public opinion was negative in this case. However there is also a tendency that supports the idea that issue is not as important as people valued it.

TABLE 5: DATA ANALYSIS OF EKŞİ SÖZLÜK FOR THE CAT KILLING CASE
(FIRST DISCUSSION)

VALUE	TOTAL ENTRIES	TOTAL VALUE
-2	103	-206
0	28	0
Total Number of the Data		131
Total Value of the Data		(-206)
Mean		(-1.57)
Standard Deviation		0.82
Median		-2

Data in the Twitter show a stronger pattern. Content analysis was applied to 7 tweets which were retweeted 391 times. All of them are valued by (-2). They are mobilizing public and taking legal action against as those in Ekşi Sözlük. A typical example is, “Sign this petition because you are a human. Not for the cat whose had was smashed, not for the animal rights <http://bit.ly/dx4vgb> [*Başı ezilerek öldürülen kedi için değil, hayvan hakları için değil! insan olduğunuz için dilekçeyi imzalayın! RT! <http://bit.ly/dx4vgb>]*” (Twitter 2010b:27125870405). Another example is, “A sick cat had been kicked to death in İzmir. We support the reaction of Animal Rights Federation. <http://linkufalt.com/fsv02>” (Twitter 2010b:27126164745).

A more controversial issue started after the name and personal information on the person who killed the cat was posted on the internet. Some people suggest that it is ethical to post his information on the internet for various reasons, including helping people show their anger to the person. Some people on the other hand, believed that disclosing personal information is illegal and unethical. Those who support the later idea most of the time also said that one crime or guilt cannot be punished by another one.

There are 249 entries that were written under the topic of the person who killed the cat after his name was first known. The first entry is, “The leader of the five who killed the cat. He said ‘We were drunk. And the cat wounded my dog’s head’ He was

released after paying 300 TL fine ” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20573167). A total of 124 entries were excluded from the content analysis because they are not about the second issue mentioned above. Typical examples of those kind of entries are, “He is a psycho. Even the dog is more pitiful than him [*psikopattır. yanındaki köpek bile daha merhametli.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20573330). “We call him son of a bitch with my friends” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20575383). “It is been said that he is from Tunceli. If you wonder why what he done is related with his Kurdish identity check these similar news...” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20577405).

Entries which support the idea of disclosing personal information, pointing him as a target and supporting the illegal actions against him, as well as entries which do these directly, were coded as (-2). Total number of those entries is 69. A very typical and direct example of them is, “I would pay 300 TL to make his head smashed [*kafası ezilerek öldürülsün 300 lira veririm.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20577553). Another example is “I want to break off his leg and beat him with that one” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20579126). Examples of identity disclosure are “He has a profile in Yonja. He is a student of Aegean University, School of Aquaculture.” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20573288). “According to rumors he lives in Küçük Park area of Bornova. In the building where XXX and XXX are” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20576255). “He just reactivated his Facebook profile” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20576799). And there are entries which advocate the entries which are similar to those above. “I hate those who say ‘the lynch culture’ and ‘pointing him as a target’ as much as I hate him. He is a conscious grown-up... Are you the only one who knows pointing as a target and lynching a person is bad?” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20576056). “If something happens to him, he will be responsible for that. Not those who report or react his actions” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578922). “He is a murderer that his life should be made miserable. He should live his life as a hate object of the society. Maybe you cannot punish him legally but you can spit on his face wherever you see him. You can call him ‘cat murderer’. You should turn his life into a hell. We all should do... We point him as a target. If we do not he will walk among us freely and perhaps the next time he will kill one of us” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20577743).

Only 7 entries were coded as (-1). Those have the tendency of entries valued by (-2) but also mention the legal system. A typical example is “To defend him is absurd.

To beat him is futile. To curse him is unnecessary. Some users say ‘lynching him is the same with what he did’. Of course lynch is not appropriate but why to look at the issue behind the pink glasses. Here is the justice. I do not even curse. It does not worth it [*savunması komik, dövülmesi abes, küfür edilmesi yersiz ve bazı yazarlar tarafından 'linç etmekte aynıdır' diyerek kendisi ve son yaptıkları hakkında bilgi sahibi olabileceğiniz bir cisimdir. linç edilmesi tabi ki olmayacak şey ama gidip pembe rayban gözlükle mevzuya bakmak nedir onu çok merak ettim. alın size adalet. küfür bile etmiyorum. değmiyor. analar böyle yapsın diye doğurmuyor bu cisimleri.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578441).

Only 8 entries were coded as 0. Those entries criticize the discussion completely. Such as “Thousands of cyber-space activists who took their revenge from him will sleep comfortably tonight [*kendisinden hinclarini alan binlerce siberuzay aktivistinin o gece gorevlerini basariyla tamamladiklarinin bilincinde misil misil uyumalarına vesile olmuştur.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578417). “His name should be given to mosques, schools, streets. He reminded us that we are a hypocrite nation that do not care for the animals but only cats” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20580192).

Only 8 entries were coded as 1. Those oppose the disclosing of personal information, targeting and lynching but in this specific case they support illegal actions or at least disclosing the privacy. “I like cats. I like laws. I do not like lynching. But It would be relieved if I know who was beaten harshly [*kedi severim hukuk severim linç sevmem ama bu adamın temiz bir dayak yediğini bilmek içimi rahatlatır. o kadar.*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578063). “Pointing him as a target and lynching him are wrong in my idea. However his identity should absolutely be posted online” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20578305).

Totally 33 entries, which totally opposed the identity disclosure, targeting and lynching, were coded as 2. Those mostly advocate that the issue should be solved in legal ways and people should focus on animal rights. “Targeting this man for the animal rights advocates to make him to be lynched is as dishonorable as kicking a cat to death. If he would be killed in the university tomorrow who will be responsible. [*bir kısım hayvansevere hedef göstererek bu adamı linç ettirmeye çalışmak da en az tekmeleyerek kedi öldürmek kadar şerefsizcedir. yarın bu adam üniversite*”

kampüsünde dövülerek öldürülse, kan içindeki cesedinin sorumlusu kim olacak ben onu merak ediyorum.]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20573378). “He is the proof that which level Ekşi Sözlük reached about targeting and lynching. People just lost themselves to open a way for a lynching” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20576310). “What he did was psycho and felonious. But we should focus on animal rights and to make public getting a consciousness about animals...” (Ekşi Sözlük 2010c:20576358).

According to content analysis, the mean of the data in the Ekşi Sözlük is (-0.57). Standard deviation is 1.78 and median is (-2). The mean and standard deviation show that although there is a tendency in the public opinion which favors illegal actions, disclosing personal information, pointing a person as a target and lynching him, there is also an opposite idea, which is not so strong among the public, that favors and advocates doing everything in legal ways. Public opinion is diversified in this case.

TABLE 6: DATA ANALYSIS OF EKŞİ SÖZLÜK FOR THE CAT KILLING CASE (SECOND DISCUSSION)

VALUE	TOTAL ENTRIES	TOTAL VALUE
-2	69	-138
-1	7	-14
0	8	0
+1	8	8
+2	33	66
Total Number of the Data		125
Total Value of the Data		(-78)
Mean		(-0.57)
Standard Deviation		1.75
Median		-2

The data in Twitter show the same pattern as in the first discussion. Content analysis was applied on 7 tweets which were retweeted 420 times. All were coded as (-2). A typical tweet is “I point him as a target. This man <http://bit.ly/9W0AW5> who called as XXX is a scumbag that do not has basic human values <http://bit.ly/92fsT3>

[*hedef gösteriyorum; XXX adındaki şu adam <http://bit.ly/9W0AW5> insanlıktan nasibini almamış şerefsizin biridir <http://bit.ly/92fsT3>]*" (Twitter 2010b:27064584079).

4.2.4 Aftermath and Results

Several online petition campaigns were started after the video was posted on the internet (Bizi Bozmaz 2010). The person who killed the cat had been caught by the local police after his identity was disclosed. He paid only 300 Turkish lira (200 USD) as a fine because killing an animal is not defined as a crime in Turkish law and penal code. However a group of animal rights activists pursued the case and made the court open a lawsuit against him. The first hearing of the case was on April 12th 2011. However the person who killed the cat was not present at the court (Karşı Gazete 2011a; Karşı Gazete 2011b). The issue also was brought to the Turkish Parliament after the petitions (YHS 2010). Activists and NGO's are now trying to get the person who killed the cat sentenced and changed the law to protect the rights of the animals.

As in the first case, which analyzed, all four variables were tested as positive in this case. (1) The incident on the video became a subject in the new social media. (2) Public opinion about animal rights was shaped in the new social media. (3) People took action by online petitions. (4) Discussions and actions had an impact in real life.

4.3 The Case of Medical Subject Soldiers

4.3.1 Background

On March 29th, 2011, a Turkish daily newspaper, *Bugün*, published a report about soldiers in the army who had been used as test subjects in medical research in a military hospital called GATA. The newspaper claimed that six doctors from the Neurology Department of GATA had used 20 privates as test subjects against their will by telling them that the process to which they were submitted was for diagnostic purposes. The doctors, later, published this research as a scientific paper based on the process (Bugün 2011). The Turkish Armed Forces made a press release on the same day the newspaper article was published, and said that the GATA ethics committee

had approved the research and that the soldiers had also signed papers agreeing to be a part of this research (TSK 2011). As soon as the news was published in the newspaper, it spread to websites and became a topic in the new social media as well. Most of the discussions were about whether the news was correct as well as whether the army was guilty for using soldiers as test subjects against their will.

4.3.2 Popularity of the Topic

After the news was published, news discussions started in the social media. Google Insights statistics show that, although “GATA” was a popular search query in Turkey in March 2011, searches reached the top level on March 29th and 30th, right after the news was published. Statistics show that searches never passed the level of 70 during the month until March 29th. On the day the news was published it reached 99 and the following day it reached the top level (Google Insights 2011d).

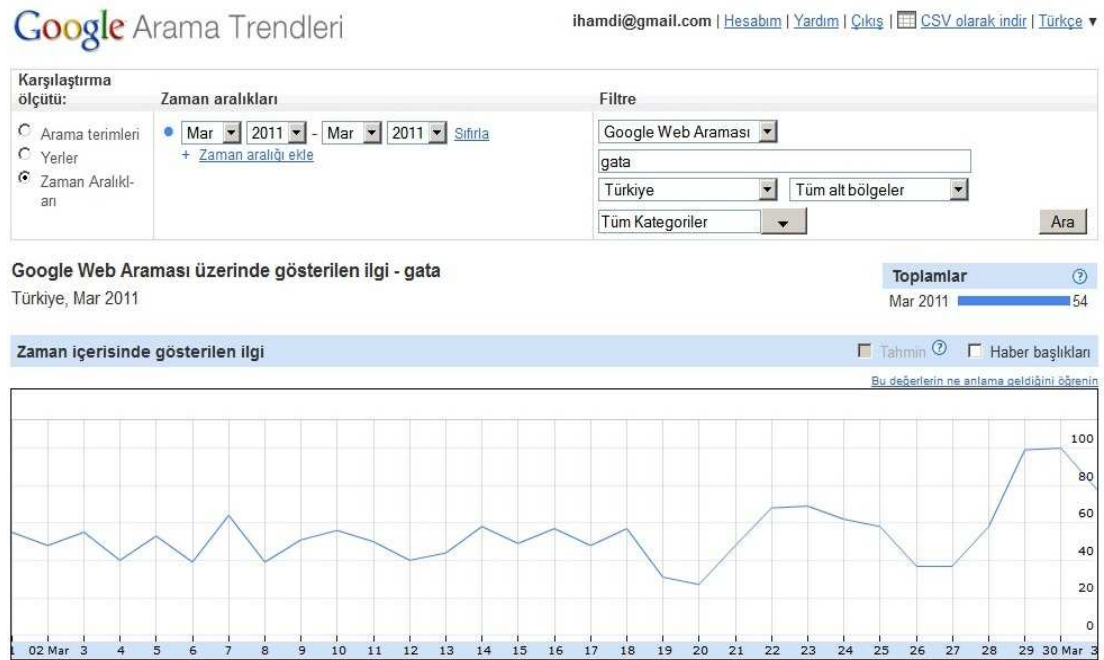


Figure 6: Google Insights statistics of search volume of “gata” in March 2011.

Source: <http://www.google.com/insights/search>

Data from Twitter show a similar pattern. While “gata” was only mentioned a few times in the tweets of Turkish users, it was mentioned much more frequently at the end of the month, after the news published. It mentioned 567 times in the tweets on March 29th (TwitTürk 2011b).

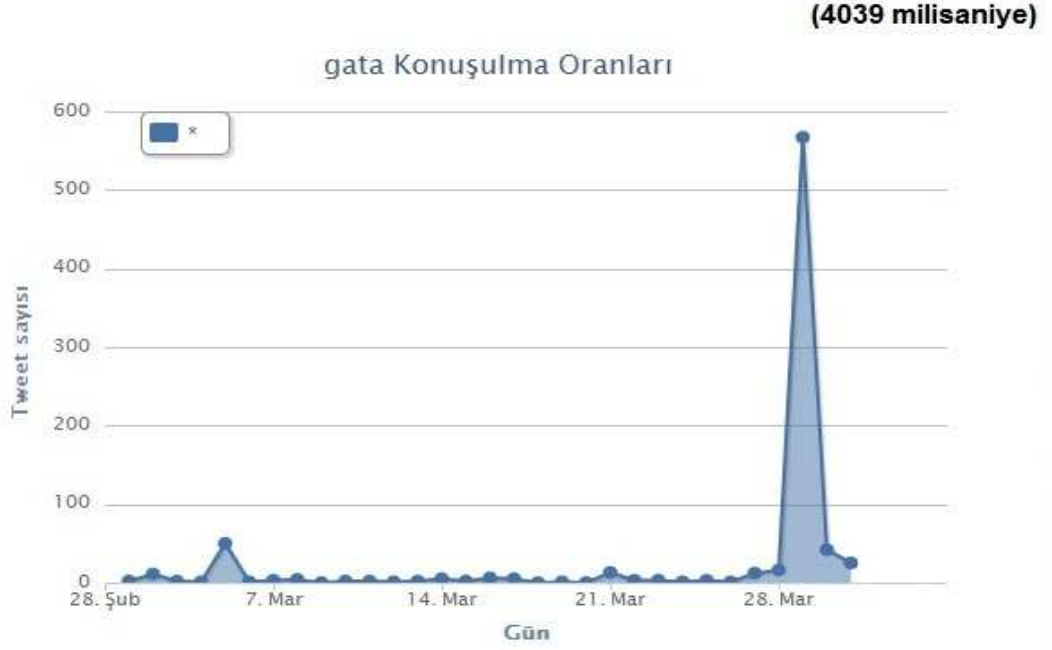


Figure 7: TwitTurk statistics about “gata” in March 2011.

Source: <http://www.twitturk.com>

4.3.3 Content Analysis

Totally 126 entries were written about the case although 30 of them were not directly related to the issue. A good example of that kind of entry is, “Worst thing about the issue, I think, is, no matter it happened or not, it did not surprise me at all.” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22786519). Another example is, “When foreigners do it they became Captain America. Ours are just became test subjects [*gavur yapınca captain america oluyor biz yapınca kobay...*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22787881).

Among 96 entries which been coded, 65 of them were coded as (-2). Those are the entries that think the news is not false and criticize both the army and the doctors. A very typical example for this type of entries is, “It is nothing else but torture [*işkencedir başka bir şey değil*]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22786529).

Two entries were coded as (-1). Those are the entries that criticize both what had been done to the soldiers and the approach of the news. Those entries are, “...Maybe the real crucial question is who made those soldiers suffer in the military bases. Why they were not just excused from the military duty. They cannot even walk straight... However when you look at how the news was presented it is tend to give bad names

to the people [*belki de asıl can alıcı soru şu: bu askerleri kışla köşelerinde süründüren kim, niye çürük verilmemiş? adamlar düz çizgide yürüyemiyor ne askerliği ama haberin sunuluş tarzına bakarsak, tamamen insanları karalamaya yönelik olduğu belli.*]]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22787506). “It is very important that how soldiers were involved to this experiment. By their own will or by chain of command?.. If the soldiers were pushed to join the experiment media have to chase the case. However, disinformation and presenting this experiment as vulgar is also unethical” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22790584).

Two entries were coded as 0 because they criticize the discussion more than the discussed event. Those entries are “Fuck the conscience of those still defend this because of their political view, if the claims are correct. Fuck those who pretend as humanitarian just because the army did the fault. Fuck all of your conscience who see the politics and army when you look at this [*şu olay gerçekse... siyasi düşüncesinden dolayı hala ibnece savunmaya geçenlerin vicdanını sikeyim... olayı sadece asker yaptığı için burada insancılık oynayanların vicdanını sikeyim. şu videoya bakıp, siyaset, asker, politika görenlerin vicdanını sikeyim.*]]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22786397). Another example is “... Before talking about experiments and test subjects we should talk some scientific information first. Are not there any doctors here?” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22786492).

Another 27 entries were coded as 2. Those entries oppose the scandal claims and blame the media that published the news. Some typical examples of those entries are, “An unnecessary scandal as always. Attack! Attack a bit more and there will be nobody to protect you at the end [*her zamanki gibi gereksiz bir skandal. yuklenin, biraz daha yuklenin. sonra sizi koruyacak kimse kalmasin.*]]” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22786001). “It is scandal for those who think ethic committee approves every medical research. Who are in this committee? My friends. Yes, my friends. But it is not like what you think. Ethics committee made me suffer even for the thesis of my assistant. I run back and forward so many times. They suggested dividing the thesis in two parts. We had to do what they said, but still did not receive the permission” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22791159). “Was propounded, was claimed, was indicated. Who are those people? Who propound, claim, indicate? If the experiment was not fit to

ethical standards how did they presented it in an international medical congress?” (Ekşi Sözlük 2011b:22788373).

Public opinion tendency is generally negative in this case according to the data in Ekşi Sözlük. The mean of the opinions is (-0.81), standard deviation is (1,80) and the median is (-2). The mean and the standard deviation show that public opinion in this case is more diversified than the previous cases. The data show that there are two opposite tendencing in this case.

TABLE 7: DATA ANALYSIS OF EKŞİ SÖZLÜK FOR THE CASE OF MEDICAL SUBJECT SOLDIERS

VALUE	TOTAL ENTRIES	TOTAL VALUE
-2	65	-130
-1	2	-2
0	2	0
+2	27	54
Total Number of the Data		96
Total Value of the Data		(-78)
Mean		(-0.81)
Standard Deviation		1.8
Median		-2

Data in Twitter show a more negative tendency. Totally 11 tweets which were retweeted 102 times were analyzed. Two of the tweets were not directly related to the case. One of them was a reminder of a blog about the bad behaviors of the army officers (Twitter 2011b:52736458047459170). The other one had no comment but only a link of the news video (Twitter 2011b:52722873302925312). Other tweets were all coded as (-2). They were very critical about the GATA. One of them is, “General staff said ‘there is no need of permission’ about the test subjects soldiers. It is just like talking a mouse instead of a human [*genelkurmay askerlerin kobay olarak kullanılmasıyla ilgili "izne gerek yok" demiş. insandan değil fareden bahsediyor gibi.*]” (Twitter 2011b:5284589652811712). Another typical example is, “Every Turk born as a test subject” (Twitter 2011b:52781663784153088) which is a

reference to the well-known motto “Every Turk born as a soldier.” Mean of the data in the Twitter is (-1,68), standard deviation is 0,77 and the median is (-2).

TABLE 8: DATA ANALYSIS OF TWITTER FOR THE CASE OF MEDICAL SUBJECT SOLDIERS

VALUE	TOTAL TWEETS	TOTAL RETWEETS	TOTAL VALUE
-2	9	84	-168
0	2	18	0
Total Number of the Data			102
Total Value of the Data			(-168)
Mean			(-1.68)
Standard Deviation			0.77
Median			-2

4.3.4 Aftermath and Results

Both in Ekşi Sözlük and Twitter, public opinion was shaped to the negative about the alleged scandal. However there is also a tendency of protecting the army and denying the news. Some human rights associations brought the case to the court (Zaman 2011). And military prosecutors started an investigation about the claims (Today’s Zaman 2011). The political agenda was too busy to focus on this case. The event was disclosed only 11 weeks before the general elections in Turkey. However the event was forgotten by general public a few days later.

The event became a discussion topic and public opinion was shaped in the new social media. However, although there are actions and impacts of those actions in real life, there is no sign that those actions were led by the discussions in the new social media. On the other hand, since social events have multiple causes, it is reasonable to say that discussions in social media helped the above mentioned actions took place. So that, first and second variables are answered as positive in this case, while the other two variables can only be answered as partly positive.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The main argument of this thesis is to show the new social media's effect in the public sphere in Turkey. I selected three cases to explore this relation. The cases were investigated to analyze four variables: (1) Does an event in the real life become a discussion topic in the new social media? (2) Is the public opinion shaped through the discussions in social media? (3) Do people take action after the discussions? (4) Are there impacts of these discussions and actions in real life? A mixed methodology which combines statistical data of the search queries and ethnographic content analysis was used to find a persuasive answer to these four questions.

According to content analysis applied on three cases, public opinion is shaped in the new social media. Moreover this opinion is also transformed into action. Discussion took place in the websites and people informed others to join protests by sending emails, informing law enforcement forces and starting online petitions. Some actions targeted a person or an institute. They became successful since the person or institute had to apologize or start an internal investigation. Some actions, on the other hand, were targeted more such as changing the law or growing public consciousness about an issue. These actions are partly successful because they were able to gather some support from general public after the incidents but the process is not yet finalized. Therefore it can be said that new social media in Turkey have a demonstrative impact in the public sphere.

While this thesis shows a correlation between the new social media and public opinion, I do not claim that the new social media cause changes in public opinion in three cases I analyzed. A causal argument would require further data and a complementary method.

However the new social media have both advantages and disadvantages. The new social media form a different version of traditional ways to affect the public sphere. Discussions and actions, which arise from these discussions, happen very fast. The availability of instant communication, despite not being in the same physical space helps the discussion and the action take place in a relatively short period of time. The same availability also provides a chance to improve the diversity of participants. People get together to protest or support something in the new social media. However, it seems that, at the same time those groups also disappear very quickly. The new social media's effect in the public sphere, from this point of view, can be identified as more reactionary than proactive. As a result of being reactionary, those groups do not follow the aftermath of the event with the same carefulness of the first reaction.

In order to avoid miss generalizing the position and effectiveness of counterpublics in the new social media should be researched. This aspect of the new social media and the public sphere relations was not included in this thesis for the sake of keeping the thesis limited. Further research may focus on how different counterpublics use the new social media to reach their goals as well as how they debate and communicate with each other in the new social media.

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