

**T.C.  
IŞIK UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**MASTER THESIS  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM**

**İnci Secem AVCI**

**DISINFORMATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND POPULISM:  
EMOTIONAL POLITICS AND POLARIZATION  
DYNAMICS IN TURKEY'S 2023 PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTIONS**

**SUPERVISOR  
Prof. Özlem KAYHAN PUSANE**

**İSTANBUL, July 2024**

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IN TURKEY'S 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

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**İSTANBUL, July 2024**

## ÖZET

### (DEZENFORMASYON, SOSYAL MEDYA VE POPÜLİZM: TÜRKİYE’NİN 2023 CUMHURBAŞKANLIĞI SEÇİMLERİNDE DUYGU SİYASETİ VE KUTUPLAŞMA DİNAMİKLERİ)

Bu tez, popülist söylemler ile sosyal medya algoritmaları arasındaki etkileşimi ve bu etkileşimin siyasi kutuplaşmayı neden artırdığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Birincil amaç, popülist söylem ile sosyal medya etkileşimini artıran algoritmalar arasındaki ilişkiyi belirleyerek, bu ilişkinin toplumsal bölünmeyi nasıl teşvik ettiğini ve hem platformlara hem de siyasi aktörlere nasıl fayda sağladığını net bir biçimde vurgulamaktır. Tez, eleştirel söylem analizini kullanarak, 2023 cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimlerinde aday olan (Mutz, 2002) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ve Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu'nun paylaştığı X (eski adıyla Twitter) gönderilerini analiz etmektedir. Kampanyanın ilk turunda, 06.05.2024 ile 14.05.2024 tarihleri arasında Erdoğan tarafından 108 ve Kılıçdaroğlu tarafından 65 olmak üzere, paylaşılan toplam 173 gönderi incelenmiştir. Bu gönderilerin tam metinleri X'in resmi internet sitesinden alınmıştır. Bulgular, popülist söylemlerin daha fazla izlenme ve etkileşim aldığını açıkça göstermektedir. Bu durum, duygusal içerikleri önceliklendiren sosyal medya algoritmalarının farkında olmadan popülizmi teşvik ettiğini düşündürmektedir. Çalışma, sosyal medya platformlarının tasarımının duygusal söylemi desteklediğini ve bu durumun hem siyasi adaylar arasında hem de seçmen arasında popülist söylemlerin artmasına yol açarak kutuplaşmayı artırdığı sonucuna varmaktadır. Sosyal medya algoritmaları popülist söylemleri güçlendirerek toplumsal etkileşimi şekillendirir. Bu bağlamda, popülist söylemlerin ve sosyal medya algoritmalarının etkileşiminin incelenmesiyle, tez, toplumsal ve siyasi dinamiklerin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dezenformasyon, Sosyal Medya, Popülizm, Algoritmalar, Duygu Siyaseti

## ABSTRACT

### **DISINFORMATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND POPULISM: EMOTIONAL POLITICS AND POLARIZATION DYNAMICS IN TURKEY'S 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

This thesis explores the relationship between populist discourse and social media algorithms, examining their role in exacerbating political polarization. Its primary aim is to identify the correlation between the use of populist rhetoric and the algorithms driving social media engagement, highlighting how this relationship fosters societal divisions and benefits both platforms and political entities. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), the thesis analyzes X (formerly Twitter) posts shared by 2023 Turkish presidential election candidates Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. In the first round of the campaign, shared posts were analyzed between 06.05.2024 and 14.05.2024. A total of 173 posts, 108 by Erdoğan and 65 by Kılıçdaroğlu, were analyzed. The full texts of these posts were obtained from X's official website. The findings reveal that posts featuring emotionally charged and populist discourse have garnered higher views and engagement in the run-up to the 2023 presidential elections. This analysis will help to understand the political polarization in Turkey. Social media algorithms shape social interaction by strengthening populist discourses. This suggests that social media algorithms, prioritizing emotionally charged content, unintentionally promote populism. The study concludes that the design of social media platforms increases divisive content, leading to a rise in populist rhetoric among political candidates and voters.

**Keywords:** Disinformation, Social Media, Populism, Algorithms, Emotional Politics

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İnci Secem AVCI

## **DEDICATION**

To diversity in all its forms...

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## ABBREVIATIONS LIST

<b>AKP:</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>AP:</b>	Justice Party
<b>BTK:</b>	Information and Communication Technologies Authority
<b>CDA:</b>	Critical Discourse Analysis
<b>CHP:</b>	Republican People's Party
<b>DP:</b>	Democrat Party
<b>DPL:</b>	Digital Political Labor
<b>DSP:</b>	Democratic Left Party
<b>ECHR:</b>	European Court of Human Rights
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>FETÖ:</b>	Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization
<b>HDP:</b>	Peoples' Democratic Party
<b>İYİ:</b>	Good Party
<b>KO:</b>	Civic Coalition
<b>LGBT:</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
<b>MHP:</b>	Nationalist Movement Party
<b>MLS:</b>	Machine Learning Systems
<b>MSZP:</b>	The Hungarian Socialist Party
<b>PKK:</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party
<b>PiS:</b>	Law and Justice Party
<b>PO:</b>	Civic Platform
<b>SP:</b>	Felicity Party
<b>The U.K.:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>The U.S.:</b>	United States
<b>YSP:</b>	Green Left Party

# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

### 1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION AND THEORY IN BRIEF

Democratic systems refer to political structures in which individuals can elect decision-makers representing them at domestic and international levels. Election processes are significant in the operation of democratic systems, serving as the decisive moment when voters use their ultimate power to select their leaders. This electoral process marks the culmination of citizens' participation, determining the individuals who will guide and represent them in government (Katz, 1997). Accordingly, campaign periods are crucial for the election process because of their specific venue for politicians to interact with voters, make promises, and convince them to vote for themselves (Wojtasik, 2013). In this context, the media serves as a platform that facilitates the connection between voters and candidates. It plays a crucial role in informing voters about candidates' promises and conveying public reactions to candidates.

With the development of information technologies, how we get informed about and involved in politics has also transitioned into the digital realm. Social media networks started to customize their algorithms for each person to connect them and give them a digital journal through which they could share their words with others. Later, political engagement in social networks started to increase, and social media platforms have become a central element in political communication, offering an accessible and immediate way to reach out to followers, disseminate messages, and influence public opinion (Smith, 2013).

All those social networks utilize machine learning systems (MLS) to personalize the user experience, presenting content customized to individual preferences. This personalization extends across various aspects, including feed content order, targeted advertising, and suggested connections. It also ensures

that the system adapts to evolving user behaviors over time (Devito et al., 2017). The primary motivation behind this process is to enhance user engagement and extend the time spent on applications. However, in some cases, users are exposed predominantly to content that aligns with their existing beliefs, limiting the diversity of perspectives and quickly experiencing echo chambers and filter bubbles (Venaria, 2020). As a result, this deliberate customization blurring of the boundaries between reality and customized reality leads to serious concerns about the reliability of our decisions and the way we perceive reality.

The milestone in integrating social media with political engagement can be traced back to U.S. President Barack Obama's election campaign in 2008. President Obama's victory was notably associated with the groundbreaking success of his social media campaigning, and this moment marked a paradigm shift, showcasing the potential of social network platforms as influential tools for political communication and mobilization (Hughes et al., 2010). After three years, the Arab Spring, led by the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria from 2010 onwards, went down in history as another critical process in which the role of social media in mobilizing the masses was emphasized. Following this, the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey are an important example, showcasing how individuals engaged in individual broadcasting and got swiftly organized. This event highlighted the transformative potential of social media, underlining its capacity to stimulate people for collective action in a remarkably short time (Poell and Van Dijck, 2018).

In addition to facilitating social movements and protests, such as the Arab Spring or the 2013 Gezi protests, social media's impact took a different direction in election campaigns. Contrary to its previous constructive use, it gradually became a tool governments utilize. The aftermath of the 2016 Brexit referendum and Donald Trump's U.S. presidential election campaign sustained extended discussions, shedding light on social media networks' influential role in various contexts (Gorodnichenko et al., 2018). The Brexit process, in particular, underscored the potential for a mere rumor to be perceived as reality, following polarizing public opinion (Höller, 2021). The Cambridge Analytica case further

intensified concerns<sup>1</sup> by implicating personal privacy, sparking global discussions about the widespread influence of social media in shaping our perceptions, modes of communication, information consumption, and, fundamentally, the broader landscape of our democracies.

In Turkey, the media environment during the Gezi protests was established, and anti-government news outlets were affected by opposition political parties. At the same time, the government directly influenced pro-government news outlets (Aydın-Düzgit and Balta , 2019). Additionally, ongoing efforts have been made to assert control over online conversations, underscoring the significance of these platforms in shaping the narrative and political discourse in Turkey. Also, due to the presidential powers extended by the presidential vote held in 2018 following the 2017 constitutional referendum, the government's increased pressure and authority over media began to be felt among the public (Saka, 2017). The 2019 local elections emerged as a crucial juncture. Beyond shaping local governance, these elections led the AKP-MHP coalition to determine the political agenda. This marked a significant shift in Turkey's political dynamics (Celep, 2019). Lastly, the 2023 presidential elections are a critical case in the ongoing discussions, not only because social media campaigns have taken over an essential part of the candidates' campaign strategies but also because the use of artificial intelligence and tech companies' value have reached their peak worldwide.

Politicians' social media accounts are not only necessary for election campaigning. It is also essential for politicians to maintain their political presence, especially in the international arena. This necessity has brought about many discussions on how social media and globalism interact (Flew and Iosifidis, 2020). Social media networks' ability to provide people with a timeless

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<sup>1</sup> The Cambridge Analytica scandal raised many concerns about the unauthorized collection of personal data, inadequate data security measures, and using personal information for political purposes. The scandal specifically involved data analytics company Cambridge Analytica, which illegally collected the personal data of Facebook users and used that data to influence their political preferences.

discussion space, connect people worldwide, and strengthen opposition politics are among popular study subjects aimed at proving their positive impact (Reitz, 2012). However, the capacity of social media networks to control societal perception for political purposes, its association with the rise of populism, and its economic capacity also reveal the dark side of the coin. At this point, this thesis asks the research question: Why does disseminating election campaigns through social media networks increase social polarization despite their mission of bringing communities together?

This thesis explores why election campaigns through social media contribute to social polarization in light of Turkey's 2023 presidential elections with a critical discourse analysis of Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu. The current literature reveals an essential relationship between polarization and social media usage (Tucker et al., 2018). Although recent research has focused on the idea that social media networks may tend to polarize society due to their algorithmic nature, there is a vacuum in the current literature to explain why algorithms' working principles contribute to populist discourse and increasing polarization. For this reason, this thesis aims to explore and contribute to the current literature about the increasing polarization in society during election campaigning by establishing a relationship between the 2023 Turkish presidential election candidates Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu's discourses on these platforms and the working principle of MLS of social media platforms.

## 1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past decade, we have transitioned from a period when 36% of the world's population had limited access to the internet to a new era in which 66% of the population are internet users (Statista, 2023). With the advent of Web 3.0, the purpose of using phones has changed unprecedentedly. Phones once limited to communication purposes, have evolved into versatile technologies that enable us to check bus schedules, complete flight check-ins, pass the time while waiting, and access global and local news 24/7. Furthermore, smartphones empower individuals to "report" on significant events. In a mere decade, social

media networks have accelerated information flow to unprecedented speeds and interconnected the world (Evans and Annunziata, 2012). The concept of "social warming," which also gave Charles Arthur's book its title, allows us to understand this social transformation better. Arthur identifies this transformation as an *evolution* rather than a *revolution*. Discussing this process with the warming metaphor emphasizes that it is impossible to understand the amount of the change without looking back to the past.

According to a study conducted to understand the role of social media in communicating about space science, the most critical features of engaging messages on social media networks are photos for Facebook, as well as elements of anger, visual description, positivity, and anxiety. For X (formerly Twitter), visual elements (images, GIFs, videos), hashtags, and precision are used in the field (Hwong et al., 2017). Researchers have considered various motivations for people to use social media networks, with the most popular reasons being seeking information, communicating with others, following others' sharing of identities, engaging in social networking, and fulfilling needs for self-expression and self-actualization (Lampe et al., 2006). Also, we need social networks, which are hormonally similar to our purpose of using social media. Psychologically, dopamine oscillation is associated with novelty, surprise, and the sense that we are on an exciting track. This puts people in a state of readiness, anticipation, looking, seeking, and scrolling on social media to find something exciting and trigger dopamine release (Macit et al., 2018). When this artificial effect becomes too easy, this behavior turns into addictiveness, which is why we also define social media as an addiction.

MLS systems are programmed to keep users on the platforms longer, depending on the user's experience. However, the fact that these algorithms are exempt from ethical concerns has led to another problem, further complicating the situation. Violence and chaos attract people's attention more. In 2017, as part of a research project, more than half a million tweets about gun control, gay marriage, and climate change were reviewed (Brady et al., 2017, p. 7316). Research findings showed that using moral-emotional language received 20%

more interaction and revival than other content. Creating annoyance among users is an effective but socially destructive way to increase engagement, significantly when all income rises directly with the time users spend on the app.

In addition, another study examined the mood of Facebook users by changing their news feeds, highlighting the impact of social media networks on emotions. This study showed the contagious nature of mood among individuals. When positive posts were removed from users' news feeds, their engagement with more somber posts' increased. When the negative posts were removed, users' moods improved, and they responded to posts enthusiastically and in kind (Kramer et al., 2014). However, this research also brought up ethical debates on this subject. Facebook's decision not to require users' consent for participation in experiments raised concerns about which authority could or should restrain these experiments if they were to continue.

In an era where online corporate power is shaped by covertly modeling people's personalities and behaviors, the potential for large corporations and governments to manipulate individuals can lead to power shifts in society (Susser et al., 2019). Furthermore, MLS can create information asymmetry by using people's ability to answer questions they do not know (Tüfekçi, 2014). Accordingly, despite the absence of direct interaction, active users receive political messages through their actions on social media and contribute significantly to discussions through user-generated content. The concept of digital political labor (DPL) describes this new method of mutual communication (Falasca et al., 2019).

Another study suggests a link between changes in election results and Facebook likes (Bengtsson, 2018). Interestingly, this implies that even if a political party experiences a decline in performance between elections, the leader's number of followers on Facebook continues to increase. This observation raises unanswered questions. Right-wing populist leaders are expected to have a much larger Facebook following than their non-populist counterparts. This pattern holds across Western European countries, challenging the conventional wisdom that the largest offline party necessarily has the most

extensive online following. The study suggests that political parties predominantly receive Facebook likes from a certain percentage of their voters, regardless of their offline electoral success. In other words, unlike real people and institutions, social networks can continue to grow, even if unsuccessful, as long as they attract attention.

The same research study also showed that right-wing populist political parties that emphasize issues such as immigration, Euroscepticism, and nationalism are statistically more likely to attract more Facebook followers than non-populist parties. The findings reveal a significant correlation indicating that the average right-wing populist party is expected to have more followers, ranging from 190,000 to 200,000, exceeding the range of 100,000 to 125,000 predicted for non-populist parties (Bengtsson, 2018, p. 21). Liking something may seem like a small and almost insignificant action. However, when all the likes come together, they create endless communication networks. Who decides what subjects to discuss, those who support a political party on Facebook, or those who vote for it is a crucial issue to consider.

A survey conducted in Turkey examines the effects of access to news. The findings reveal a positive correlation between internet use and political knowledge. Individuals who actively use the internet generally demonstrate higher levels of political knowledge. However, this study also uncovers a negative relationship between social media use and misinformation. Concerns regarding social media's role as a channel for spreading information can pose a significant challenge to democratic governance (Andı et al., 2019).

Disinformation, misinformation, and fake news refer to disseminating false information but differ in intent and context. Fake news is intentionally disseminating false or misleading information presented as news, aiming to deceive readers, support specific agendas, or generate financial gain. Conversely, misinformation involves the unintentional spread of incorrect or misleading information, often stemming from a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding (Aïmeur et al., 2022). Although misleading, its dissemination is not intended to deceive. Disinformation, however, is deliberately

disseminating false or misleading information with strategic goals to mislead the public, create distrust, and increase social polarization.

Russia has become a prominent model of disinformation in the literature, where references are often made to "Russian disinformation." Russian disinformation operations are multi-faceted, involving state media, social media manipulation, cyberattacks, and the cultivation of foreign media outlets and political actors sympathetic to Russian narratives. A study by Marianna Prysiazhniuk and Volodymyr Solovian (Prysiazhniuk and Solovian, 2023) examined the impact of Russian disinformation on the positions of "neutral states" regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study revealed that Russian disinformation campaigns strategically targeted these states with narratives portraying Russia as a defender against Western aggression while emphasizing Western hypocrisy and failures.

According to (Prysiazhniuk and Solovian, 2023), Russian disinformation operates through a well-coordinated system involving state media like RT and Sputnik, which broadcast propaganda internationally. Additionally, it uses diplomatic missions, foundations, and cultural centers to extend its influence. For example, Rossotrudnichestvo and the Russian Orthodox Church play significant roles in disseminating Russian narratives abroad (Prysiazhniuk and Solovian, 2023, p. 4). This multi-level approach ensures that Russian disinformation can appear in various societal layers and maintain a continuous presence in global information.

The Kremlin's approach is rooted in a sophisticated propaganda system combining state-run media, foreign media financial support, and collaboration with aligned organizations and individuals. One critical aspect of Russian disinformation is its emotional appeal. By targeting individuals' emotional core, disinformation campaigns can evoke strong reactions such as anger, fear, and hatred. These emotions can motivate users to take action and drive them to engage more intensely with disinformation content, sharing it widely across their networks (Daukšas et al., 2024).

For example, former Ambassador to Türkiye and Uzbekistan M.K. Bhadrakumar commented on an Indian news site: "*...there is always a possibility that Ukraine will try to regain the status of nuclear power. So, in such a lawless environment, they can always create a dirty bomb.*" Manipulations concerning "*Kyiv's nuclear program*" or the specter of a "*dirty bomb*" are designed to provoke fears of nuclear war within societies of the Global South (Prysiashniuk and Solovian, 2023, p. 8).

Emotional manipulation through disinformation can be effective on social media platforms like X. The platform's structure, characterized by rapid information dissemination and user engagement metrics (likes, retweets, comments), can create an environment where emotionally charged content can go viral quickly. Thus, emotionally engaging content can be more likely to be shared (Bakir and McStay, 2018).

For example, disinformation that taps into societal fears or prejudices can create echo chambers where individuals are repeatedly exposed to similar content. This reinforcement loop solidifies the disinformation narrative and can increase polarization by isolating users from differing viewpoints. The emotional intensity of such content can lead to higher engagement metrics, which X's algorithm then prioritizes and further can increase the visibility of the disinformation (Ide et al., 2017). This algorithmic amplification can be double-edged. While it can help spread important information rapidly, disinformation can gain significant traction, especially if it is emotionally manipulative.

In Turkey, a notable example of Russian-style disinformation was the use of a deepfake video during the 2023 presidential election campaign, showing opposition leaders in compromising situations (Medyascope, 2023). In the video, opposition leader Kılıçdaroğlu was depicted with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) footage incorporated into the campaign advertisement for the May 14 elections, giving the impression that it was the CHP's official campaign film. Also, PKK leader Murat Karayılan was included in the video, singing the campaign song alongside Kılıçdaroğlu. This video was used in Erdoğan's

campaign rallies to discredit Kılıçdaroğlu and the opposition and pro-government media, portraying the linked opposition to terrorism.

This strategy aims to trigger thoughts about connecting Kurds with the PKK, which is one of Erdoğan's tactics: creating an association between Kurds and terrorism and supporting the idea that citizens who do not vote for the AKP but instead support the HDP could be considered part of terrorist organizations and periodically using this idea in his campaign in different tones (see Appendix A, number 61). While associating the opposition with terrorism can be considered a factor that increases confusion within the opposition, it can also be observed as an advantage for the government by creating suspicion in the eyes of the voters.

This populist attitude plays a crucial role in shaping political discourse. Emotions and prejudices intensify within the political sphere in an environment characterized by echo chambers and filter bubbles (Bos et al., 2011). Consequently, even if citizens doubt the capability of their preferred candidate to resolve economic and judicial issues impacting their daily lives, they start believing in the necessity of confronting an enemy first. This belief aligns with Mudde's concept of "the friend or foe" paradigm, which underscores the perceived need to fortify the country by identifying and opposing a common adversary (Mudde, 2007). This dynamic is particularly evident in how media coverage influences the public image of political leaders, especially those from right-wing populist parties, as they navigate their portrayal through a balance of authoritative and populist rhetoric (Bos et al., 2011). Such media-induced perceptions enable political leaders to exploit public concerns about terrorism, reinforcing the populist narrative and sustaining their political support base.

This example also shows how Kılıçdaroğlu reacted to this video published on social media with an X post accusing Russia of interfering in Turkey's election process (see Appendix B, issue 37). This supports the claim that politicians generally form their first impressions based on such incidents.

Media outlets are crucial in providing accurate and reliable information in these situations. Media responsibility must be addressed within legal, financial,

public, and professional frameworks to combat disinformation. Legal regulations enforce the media's duty to provide accurate information. Financial structures of media organizations should support independent and unbiased journalism, as reliance on advertising revenue can compromise impartiality. Media must act according to the principles of social media, prioritizing public interest and aiming to minimize the adverse effects of disinformation on society. Adherence to journalistic ethics is essential for providing accurate and reliable information, with journalists diligently verifying the accuracy and reliability of their reports (Taş, 2016).

It is possible to see the importance of these issues in several cases around the World. For example, Fidesz's leader Victor Orbán initiated the "Civil Circles Movement" in Hungary in 2002. The movement criticized the Magyar Szocialista Párt (MSZP) and liberal ideology, supporting the vision of "Citizen's Hungary." This movement helped create a basis for Fidesz's populist discourses (Greskovits, 2020). Also, with the 2008 global crisis, raising economic nationalism once again was a favoring condition for Fidesz. In December 2010, the government instituted legal regulations created by the National Media and Information-Communication Authority and the Media Council to oversee the Hungarian media market. The Media Council, dominated by Fidesz supporters, subsequently led to the media sector aligning with government perspectives and the rise of pro-government oligarchs (Turan and Göksel, 2023).

Media control and portraying Fidesz as a "friend of the poor" contributed to their victory. In addition to his image of being a "friend of the poor" with his policy of finding short-term jobs for the unemployed through temporary projects, media control, mainly the influence exerted through affiliated or aligned media outlets, can also be considered as the factors behind this election victory (Turan and Göksel, 2023). For example, in Hungary, the Media Authority and the courts have paved the way for significant media acquisitions that have helped the government establish a hegemonic role but a non-monopolistic information environment (Kreko, 2022). On one hand, large

masses of Hungarians are kept in an information bubble by their government. On the other hand, they also have access to alternative information.

However, as the media becomes more restricted, the information reaching the people who do not actively seek out independent sources of information becomes increasingly pro-government. For example, according to a survey conducted before the 2022 election in Hungary, 86% of Hungarian voters had heard the news that the leading opposition candidate would send troops to Ukraine. Additionally, 67% believed that the left supported gender reassignment surgeries, and 85% thought the government had been successful in dealing with COVID. It is important to note that many people who encountered such information on social media platforms accepted these statements as accurate; for instance, regarding the claim that Hungarian soldiers would be sent to Ukraine if the main opposition won, approximately 60% of those who heard these statements accepted them as factual information (Jack, 2022). However, Orbán won the elections by receiving more votes than in 2018. This reinforces the notion among politicians that presenting themselves as the people's voice leads to unrequited support and hampers the public's ability to assess reality critically.

Also, the 2023 Polish parliamentary elections marked a significant shift in Poland. The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party won the largest share of the vote but lost its majority in the Sejm. A coalition of opposition parties, including the Civic Coalition (KO), the Third Way (Trzecia Droga), and the Left (Lewica), secured enough seats to form a government. This outcome potentially highlighted the effectiveness of the opposition's unity against the incumbent government (Reuters, 2024). Conversely, in Turkey, incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan secured another term in office during the 2023 presidential elections, defeating opposition candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Despite forming a broad coalition, the opposition in Turkey failed to unseat Erdoğan, underscoring the challenges of coalition politics in the country.

In Poland, the success of the opposition coalition was mainly due to its ability to present a unified front against PiS. Also, social media platforms were important in amplifying public discontent with PiS's policies in Poland (Wanat,

2019). However, in 2023, opposition parties also ran powerful campaigns on social media to mobilize supporters and disseminate their message. Despite ideological differences, the opposition parties focused on common goals such as restoring the rule of law, improving relations with the European Union (EU), and addressing social inequalities. The opposition's campaign aimed to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters, emphasizing democracy, justice, and economic stability (Cienski, 2023).

An analysis of the election campaigns of PiS and KO in Poland shows that PiS's campaign focused on traditional values, nationalism, and the welfare state. PiS extensively used social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, leveraging their reach to engage directly with voters. The campaign emphasized Polish sovereignty, Christian values, and national pride while highlighting the economy. On the other hand, the KO, a coalition led by the Civic Platform (PO), adopted a more positive approach, focusing on liberal values, EU integration, and countering the PiS narrative. KO utilized social media platforms like X and Facebook, with a more substantial presence on X for political discourse and Facebook for broader voter engagement (Giannaccini and Kleineidam, 2023).

In the 2020 U.S. presidential elections, Biden's unifying campaign against Trump exemplified the effectiveness of polarization in shaping electoral narratives (Landergeran, 2019). Also, this strategy hindered the opposition's ability to present a robust and cohesive alternative to voters in Poland. In Turkey, the opposition's strategy was mainly based on unifying against Erdoğan, but this opposition coalition struggled with internal coherence throughout the campaign. Different parties had varying agendas and lacked a unified vision beyond defeating Erdoğan. As will be discussed in more detail later, Turkey's political environment was also volatile during this process. Even the decision about the candidate was made very late due to an intense process (Medyascope, 2024).

Mark Zuckerberg once said his initial goal in launching Facebook *was to "give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."* (Kelly, 2017). Still, then he switched it to "the most important thing we at Facebook can do is develop the social infrastructure to give people the power to

build a global community that works for all of us.” How have these practices, whose original goal was to create a stronger voice by bringing people together, become one of the leading polarization tools today? For example, when a video from an earlier incident was circulated on YouTube in the Indian city of Muzaffarnagar, where two Hindus stabbed a Muslim guy to death after an argument, this video was perceived in real-time among the public, reigniting anger. The video spread rapidly through platforms such as WhatsApp, leading to four days of violent incidents between Hindus and Muslims in the region (Bute, 2014).

Myanmar, previously isolated under military rule, experienced a shift after the 2011 partial elections led to a semi-civilian government. Despite easing media and internet censorship, laws enabling the arrest of individuals for content-related offenses persist, reflecting challenges in achieving complete freedom of expression (BBC, 2015). This overnight internet adoption in Myanmar must have appeared as an opportunity for Facebook. The company made deals with local phone providers, selling smartphones with the Facebook app preloaded and allowing these new internet users to browse Facebook for free without using their expensive mobile data (Stecklow, 2018). As a result, the number of online users in general and Facebook users in particular increased significantly throughout the country. This user-moderated social network, Facebook, has become an internet browser and a primary news source in Myanmar, especially after decades of military pressure on the media.

Ashin Wirathu, leader of the extremist 969 movement targeting the Rohingya, faced a 25-year prison sentence in 2003 for spreading hate speech and conspiracy theories against the Rohingya. However, he was released in 2012 and continued to propagate hatred. Initially disseminated through traditional means, his speeches gained wider reach on Facebook and other online platforms, amplifying their impact (Mahtani, 2014). Considering the censorship imposed by the government, people may rely on what they see on Facebook due to the heavy pressure on traditional media outlets. The algorithm uses user engagement and retention principles by serving content that triggers strong reactions.

However, this approach lacks an ethical filter, potentially promoting content solely based on its ability to generate reactions, contributing to extended user retention on the platform. Accordingly, as users click on content including violence or moral issues, the Facebook algorithm quickly learns to promote racism against the Muslim minority in Myanmar (Whitten-Woodring et al., 2020). Although Facebook in no way caused this tension and racism, it was on Facebook that a troubling pattern began to emerge (Amnesty International, 2022).

Documentary maker and journalist Aela Callan produced a documentary on Myanmar, highlighting the reliability of social media networks in a country where ethnic politics are at play despite Facebook's mission to connect like-minded people no matter who they are. In her interview in Arthur's book, she stated: "The more I delved into this for the documentary, the more everyone said to me, 'I read on Facebook that Muslims are raping our women, I read on Facebook that Muslims are trying to hang us,'" "I read the presentation on Facebook, I read this!" (Charles, 2021). The main problem here is that searches on Facebook only displayed Facebook content, with larger, more active groups standing out in these searches. There was a serious mismatch between Facebook engineers and users in Myanmar. To assess this situation, Facebook's algorithm was programmed to anticipate enthusiastic participation from users, even though it could not decode the content. Callan also criticizes Facebook engineers' approach to security measures. She mentions that Facebook advises users to use content security measures like reporting. However, in a nation with a history of enduring years of oppression and censorship, merely invoking the term "reporting" may offer limited protection to users.

The fact that identity politics is at the forefront has brought about discussions regarding lifestyles and voting behavior. Lifestyle is increasingly essential in understanding individuals' political views and voting behavior (Praet et al., 2021). Our beliefs and judgments on political issues such as climate change, religion, immigration, and minorities are strongly linked to our consumption choices and daily lifestyles (Purhonen and Heikkilä, 2017). This

represents an alternative way to understand political preference and voting behavior. Authors such as Bennett (1998) and Giddens (1990) argue that collective identity has replaced personal identity in the postmodern society, and individuals' politics has become increasingly dependent on their lifestyle choices. Accordingly, contemporary political discussions increasingly focus on identity, values, and moral issues, which can easily differ from one person to another. These choices regarding lifestyle reflect fundamental aspects of personality that not only fuel cultural conflicts on topics such as race or sexuality but also shape individuals' perspectives on traditional economic matters. (DellaPosta et al., 2015) argues that we are more likely to have our communities and social networks formed by individuals with similar aesthetic tastes, lifestyles, hobbies, consumer habits, moral attitudes, and traditions.

Bringing like-minded people together may unite communities, radicalize beliefs, and create sharper community divisions. In 1999, Cass Sunstein explained the concept of what he calls the principle of group polarization through a series of social experiments. Sunstein's principle of group polarization argues that people tend to interact with like-minded individuals, which results in ideas within the group becoming stronger. According to this principle, individuals prefer to be in groups with whom they share their views, especially in online environments (Sunstein, 1999). The repetition of similar thoughts among group members can narrow the gray areas in society by increasing polarization within the group and causing alternative views to be disregarded. In other words, after discussion and negotiation, the parties' views on the issues they advocate may become more polarized than before. For example, connecting a group of anti-vaccine individuals allows them to support one another and become more convinced about the justice of their cause. It also encourages the discussion of new ideas about convincing the rest of the world of their beliefs.

Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler also developed a theory about influencing people's decisions based on behavioral economics and behavioral science (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008). They explored various policy and technological tools to guide and shape users' choices. The central theory posits

that those employing interventions, or "nudges," can assist individuals in making improved, well-informed decisions. Moreover, it delves into echo chambers and filter bubbles, highlighting how information algorithms influence user interactions with content across social media and other online platforms.

Another prominent name in this regard is Eli Pariser, who popularized the term "Filter Bubbles." Pariser proposes a filter bubble theory in which algorithms show users only content reflecting their current views, preventing users from being exposed to diverse information and opinions. The new generation of Internet filters attempts to understand our preferences based on our past actions or the preferences of people with similar characteristics, such as yourself, and makes predictions or generalizations from there. In Pariser's words: *"They are prediction engines, constantly creating and refining a theory of who you are and what you will do and want next."* *"Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us, what I have come to call a filter bubble, which fundamentally alters how we encounter ideas and information"* (Pariser, 2011).

Social media has emerged as an essential factor profoundly influencing social dynamics. The current literature provides examples from diverse geographies, intending to explore the global impact of social media on polarization. Mark Zuckerberg has frequently expressed his platform's vision of uniting people. However, the tragic events in Myanmar have demonstrated the potential for Facebook's influence to create division and tension at times. Moreover, beyond Facebook's algorithm, deliberate government interventions in the media landscape should also be considered noteworthy. In this context, the Hungarian example allows us to make a meaningful comparison not only between the Orbán government and the Erdoğan government, which have many standard features but also between the leadership characteristics of Erdoğan and Orbán. While each country has its own historical, cultural, and political context, the spread of populism and the dissemination of disinformation perpetuated by governments are observed across various countries.

These cases underscore the local consequences and emphasize similar strategies and shared patterns that undermine democratic values, ultimately triggering social polarization. Also, adapting users to social media networks constitutes a crucial and extensively discussed topic. The goal here is to understand and explain their impact within the context of Sunstein's theory of group polarization and Eli Pariser's theory of filter bubbles. These theories contribute valuable insights into the mechanisms that drive and deepen polarization within the social media landscape, especially during politically charged events like elections.

Valentino and his team's (Valentino et al., 2008) research on political participation can summarize Sunstein's and Pariser's theories and explain why emotions affect engagement on social media and why this participation results in polarized users. Research shows that anger promotes risk-taking behavior and frequently leads to actions like violent rallies, which often turn into costly events.

In this context, this thesis argues that social media platforms use metrics to measure users' engagement, performance, and feedback from people—metrics influenced by user experience shape algorithms aimed at maximizing time spent on the platform (Reviglio and Agosti, 2020). Therefore, algorithms amplify emotional politics through filtered news feeds, creating echo-chambers and filter bubbles that unite like-minded people and cause social divisions. Social media metrics support emotional discourse in politics. The aim is to address why bringing like-minded people together results in group polarization, highlighting the importance of social media in democracies by examining the relationship between algorithms and discourse in the current literature.

### 1.3. CAUSAL MECHANISM

This thesis explores the contributions of Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's social media discourse to polarization in Turkey during their 2023 presidential election campaigns. Why do echo chambers and filter bubbles through social media networks lead to societal polarization? Moreover, what role did Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's campaign discourses play in this mechanism in 2023?

On one hand, groupthink tends to direct individuals towards more extreme versions of their beliefs (Sunstein, 1999). These concepts signify that algorithms filter users' online experiences by considering personal preferences and opinions to provide users with customized content.

On the other hand, Eli Pariser's "filter bubble" hypothesis (Pariser, 2011) offers a significant framework for clarifying political polarization and comprehending the issue within the realm of algorithmic filtering. These concepts illustrate how algorithms customize users' online experiences by considering personal preferences and opinions, filtering content to provide tailored results.

Social media companies, in their pursuit to enhance user engagement, often link individuals with ideas that align closely with their pre-existing beliefs. Additionally, individuals tend to trust information that aligns with their established perspectives (Pariser, 2011). The importance of social media in this context is worth considering from a broader perspective. The key is the working practice of algorithms. For example, recommendation systems connect users with information similar to their beliefs to increase metrics like engagement and ad income.

Understanding the potential of algorithms to filter and present information, thereby influencing user behavior, is crucial. As a result, the emotions triggered by news often precede actual informational content and highlight the impact of its emotional politics in shaping discourse and dynamics on social networks during the election period (Tucker et al., 2018, pp. 44-48). This influence was particularly evident in the tone of social media campaigns. The candidates' long-standing leadership contributed to the formation of echo chambers throughout the campaign. The argument suggests that individuals gravitate toward more extreme versions of their beliefs through groupthink combined with the filter bubbles and echo chambers created by social media platforms.

#### 1.4. METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate the role of social media networks in polarizing Turkish society in the run-up to the 2023 presidential elections, focusing on X posts shared by the incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the opposition candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as part of their election campaigns. According to Norman Fairclough (Fairclough, 2012), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach (rather than a theory) used to analyze the role of language (whether written, spoken, or visual) in the construction of knowledge, ideology, and power. It seeks to identify the types of discourse that current social and cultural systems produce and how this discourse shapes social and cultural structures. On the other hand, case studies are beneficial for investigating complex and context-dependent phenomena in depth, allowing researchers to explore the interactions between various factors within a specific setting. Moreover, it is a widely used method for systematically examining communication discourse, particularly political messages and their impact on public opinion (Lin, 2014).

This thesis aims to identify patterns and trends in Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's messages and engagement with their supporters on social media networks and explore what kind of a relationship could be observed between the tone of their discourse and the interactions they received on social media. Data from the Facebook ad library will also be included in the analysis based on Facebook's political advertising regulations 2018. According to these new regulations, Facebook requires location and identity information to publish political ads.

The core of CDA analysis is the fundamental concept of meaning construction. Meaning emerges through intricate systems of historical or social relationships, weaving together diverse practices, objects, and entities. Teun A. van Dijk (Van Dijk, 2015), characterizes CDA as a research program that analyzes how text and talk enact, reproduce, legitimize, and resist social power abuse and inequality in various social and political contexts. Van Dijk's approach

highlights the socio-cognitive processes involved in discourse comprehension and production, exploring how language reflects and constructs social reality through cognitive and communicative practices.

Every practice and object carry meaning at this theory's core, yet these meanings are inherently dynamic and resist permanent fixation (Kemmis, 2008). Hence, individuals' acceptance of meaning relies on the interplay of discourses delineating social practices and identity within a specific framework. Conversely, identity and social practices can be depicted through various negotiations among conflicting discourses, implying that meaning remains perpetually susceptible to alteration.

Two essential concepts for CDA are intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Intertextuality refers to the inclusion of history and society in the text and the impact of the text on history and society. It explores how language is reused to establish or challenge social roles and meanings. Interdiscursivity is the creation of new practices by bringing different discourses together (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). This concept investigates socio-cultural change and stability by examining the connection between discourses within and outside discursive practices. These concepts can contribute to challenging or maintaining the status quo.

On the other hand, Fairclough's CDA focuses on the study of change; concrete language use is always based on predetermined meanings. In this context, Fairclough focuses on intertextuality and examines how other texts and discourses influence a text. This involves investigating the use of concrete language, which, by combining different discourses, can affect individual discourses and, therefore, the social and cultural world. The analysis of intertextuality can investigate the reproduction of discourses without including new elements and discursive change through new combinations of discourses.

In this thesis, CDA is intended to help understand the ideological, cultural, and social messages underlying Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu's language. Emotional politics and glorifying the country, personalities, and events were

chosen as discourse topics. These topics frequently appear in these two political leaders' discourses and tend to stir emotions, making them popular among users.

Examining Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's most reshared posts allows us to study the language used and how visible these messages are on X, helping us understand how these leaders communicate and connect with their audiences on social media and why their discourse matters. Additionally, mentioning Facebook Ads could give us insight into the emotional dimension of the government's election campaign and its perception management strategies, which could be related to Kılıçdaroğlu's reputation, including the deepfake video targeting him.

These advertisements, together with the aforementioned deepfake video, may have triggered users' prejudices by supporting the terrorist image that Erdoğan created for Kılıçdaroğlu. Given Facebook's advanced targeting algorithms and precision in audience segmentation, these ads influence public perception and can serve as essential tools in shaping emerging narratives.

Despite Kılıçdaroğlu having a higher interaction on X, than Erdoğan, the opposition failed to achieve victory. This inconsistency may emphasize that the opposition's perception is also open to distortion. Social media is often used as a benchmark to predict users' participation decisions based on the intensity of reactions to events. However, this measure may have led the opposition to believe that their interactions on X effectively reached and persuaded voters.

## 1.5. ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter Two covers three main topics. First, it provides the historical background of social media in Turkish politics to offer a comprehensive understanding of social media polarization within the country's political landscape. Second, it explores populist communication on social media. Third, it examines how leaders' social media use can contribute to polarization by analyzing how political figures engage with social media. Chapter Three explores the political discourse on X employed by

Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu to understand the relationship between leaders' social media rhetoric and societal polarization during the 2023 Turkish Presidential Election campaigns. Chapter Four briefly summarizes the main arguments and explores the broader implications of the research findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, SOCIAL MEDIA AND POPULISM

#### 2.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICS IN TURKEY

In Turkey, imposing restrictions on traditional media and government takeovers has led to a significant shift in the political landscape. Social media has increasingly become an alternative platform for political discourse, particularly for opposition forces, offering them a new avenue to express dissent and mobilize support (Hacıyakupoğlu and Zhang, 2015).

As the AKP government regained power in the 2007 general elections, it began exerting increased control and pressure on the media, marking a new phase of crackdowns and intimidation tactics. This escalation was marked by assaults, pressures on journalists, detentions, lawsuits, injunctions to media bosses, and raids, intensifying within the mainstream media. From 2007 onwards, the government has increased its efforts to control and influence the media landscape. Prominent media figures began to experience pressures, threats, and substantial financial penalties. In 2009, Doğan Media group faced a tax fine of 2.4 billion dollars following allegations of corruption related to a charity organization affiliated with the Erdoğan government, as reported by the Hürriyet newspaper. Due to this penalty, Doğan Group was compelled to divest the Milliyet and Vatan newspapers within the group before the 2011 parliamentary elections (BBC, 2018). This media monopolization, particularly when favoring political power, significantly threatens the public's right to information.

Pro-Erdoğan actors' takeover and his allies' takeover of prominent media companies before the presidential and parliamentary elections marked a significant consolidation of media control (Yeşil, 2018). Following the Gezi Protests, this control extended to efforts by government-aligned individuals,

who, recognizing the influence of social network platforms like Facebook and X, sought to regulate online discourse and disseminate information favorable to the government. In this respect, it is also important to note that in 2016, during the July 15 coup attempt, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used the FaceTime application on TV to call the people to the streets and resist the coup (Al-Jazeera, 2016). This exemplifies the government's direct engagement with digital resources to mobilize citizens.

One of the landmark developments in Turkey's internet governance is that the the 2014 Internet Law, which granted authorities broad powers to block websites without court orders and mandated the retention of user data for up to two years, raised concerns about privacy and freedom of expression such as periodic blocking of websites and social media platforms during political crises or sensitive periods. For example, Turkey has seen notable instances of internet censorship impacting platforms like Wikipedia. Wikipedia faced a nationwide ban starting in April 2017 over articles alleging government ties to terrorism. Despite legal challenges and court rulings favoring unblocking, access remained restricted until January 2020, when the Constitutional Court deemed the ban unconstitutional.

Subsequently, Turkey's internet policies have undergone significant changes, particularly after the 2016 coup attempt. The post-coup landscape saw increased governmental control over internet usage, primarily under the auspices of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK). This agency has played a significant role in enforcing internet restrictions and monitoring online activities to ensure national security and public order (Yeşil et al., 2017).

Erdoğan has an instinct for addressing people and capturing their attention, which has been crucial to his popularity. Initially, he employed a traditional communication strategy, focusing on unifying themes in election campaigns, speeches, and campaign songs. This approach helped him appeal broadly across different segments of Turkish society (Aydın-Düzgit et al., 2023). However, AKP's discourse shifted from this inclusive approach to a more exclusionary in

2010's with the key events such as the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016. This change in communication strategy has been instrumental in fostering polarization and maintaining Erdoğan's grip on power by effectively targeting and mobilizing specific voter bases.

The social media law of 2020 required platforms to appoint a local representative and comply with content removal requests within 48 hours. This law significantly enhanced the powers of the BTK. Non-compliance could lead to bandwidth throttling, which makes platforms practically inaccessible. Additionally, the law requires user data to be stored locally, making it easier for Turkish authorities to access and control information. This move has been criticized for potentially enabling increased surveillance and censorship, aligning with the broader trend of Turkey's tightened internet regulations since the failed coup attempt (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Concerns about using government-sponsored trolls to manipulate online discussions and amplify pro-government narratives have also arisen. The aftermath of the Gezi Park protests saw the Turkish government leveraging social media to maintain its narrative control. The government allegedly formed a “troll army” to counteract dissenting voices on social media platforms. A study by Erkan Saka highlights how social media has become a battleground for political narratives in Turkey (Saka, 2018). The rise of pro-government social media users, known as AKTrolls, has been particularly notable. These individuals actively engage in spreading pro-AKP propaganda and discrediting opposition voices, contributing to a polarized digital environment.

In February 2023, the Center for Countering Disinformation (Dezenformasyonla Mücadele Merkezi) was established within the Presidential Directorate of Communications, headed by Fahrettin Altun. This center aims to identify and counter misleading content across various platforms. It collaborates with law enforcement, media outlets, and social media platforms to mitigate the spread of false information that could undermine public discourse or national interests. However, this center has been criticized as a propaganda tool aimed at

discrediting journalists and media outlets critical of the government, rather than genuinely combating disinformation (Adal, 2024).

Thus, by 2023, the AKP governments already had much sway over Turkey's media environment. Following Erdoğan's contentious announcement of his candidacy in 2023, with debates about the expiration of his term of office (Kaynar, 2023), the opposition, comprised of six parties, namely the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi- CHP), Good Party (İyi Parti- İYİ), Democracy and Progress Party (Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi- DEVA), Future Party (Gelecek Partisi), Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi- SP), and with the external support of the Green Left Party (Yeşil Sol Parti-YSP) nominated CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as their candidate. Soon after, Meral Akşener, the leader of the İYİ Party, made a public statement, expressing her intention to withdraw from the opposition alliance if Kılıçdaroğlu were to become the candidate. Simultaneously, she urged the mayors of İstanbul and Ankara, two prominent figures with substantial public support, to declare their candidacies (Camut, 2023). In contrast, despite the collaborative efforts of six opposition parties and external support from the YSP, the opposition faced challenges in the 2023 elections. The outcome revealed a divergence from the 2019 municipal election success, when the opposition won several cities, including Ankara and İstanbul, prompting a reevaluation of their political strategies and alliances in the evolving Turkish political landscape. The opposition's strategy in the 2023 elections has diverged from its successful, united approach in municipal polls, revealing increasing polarization in the Turkish political landscape. This shift has highlighted significant challenges in sustaining democratic pluralism as political disagreement and fragmentation between major parties intensify.

This circumstance indicates a characteristic inherent to presidential systems, as the polarization of the populace during electoral periods assumes significance as a critical benchmark for achieving the essential 50%+1 majority. Establishing a coalition capable of meeting these conditions requires a profoundly detailed strategy. It is important to note that populism, which has marked recent Turkish politics, significantly amplifies the discourse centered

around the leader. As a result, populist leaders tend to employ divisive language, defining the boundaries that distinguish "us" from "them" based on an idealized ideology or a conceptualization of the citizenry (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017).

Despite the inclusive use of the pronoun "we" within their discourse, it is crucial to perceive that this collective representation is inherently exclusionary, capturing a specific segment of the populace. Notably absent from this constructed ideal are individuals belonging to elite circles or those engaged in business dealings with foreign entities. Therefore, according to Mudde, various profiles conflicting with the leader's stance are systematically excluded from conceptualizing the idealized "people." This exclusionary phenomenon manifests occasionally, victimizing certain groups within the broader societal context.

In essence, forming an idealized society with the exclusion of others escalates social tension, concurrently intersecting with the broader polarization phenomenon (Erçetin and Erdoğan, 2021). Moreover, in specific cases, such as the 2023 Turkish presidential elections, the opposition adopted a parallel approach in response to the prevailing circumstances. It is undertaking to construct an alternative ideal of the society, clarifying the attributes that define the effectiveness and involvement expected of the opposition (Mudde, 2004). As a result, election dynamics were often shaped by competing definitions of the ideal people, potentially leading to an electoral discourse that did not necessarily serve broader societal interests but instead focused on determining who embodies the more authentic representation of the people.

On a broader scale, populist policy shifts, as highlighted in various political landscapes such as Viktor Orbán's Hungary, Narendra Modi's India, Erdoğan's Turkey, and Andrzej Duda's Poland, or Putin's Russia, share similar narratives. These narratives are not limited to specific regions but mirror the observed patterns in certain political parties. Notably, the strategy of presenting a united front against a prominent figure, as evidenced in Biden's 2020 campaign rally against Trump, exemplifies the effectiveness of polarization in shaping electoral narratives (Landergan, 2019). Likewise, in the context of the 2023

Turkish presidential elections, the cohesive force within the opposition was centered around opposition to Erdoğan. However, the opposition's effort to establish its distinctive polarity also contributes to the persistence of polarization. Without intentional efforts to address and reduce the impact of polarization, the resulting social divisions will likely emerge as a self-reinforcing cycle (Mudde, 2004).

## 2.2. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The liberation of information among people today has brought about significant changes and contributed to improving democratic regimes. This is why we categorize the source of information, media, as the fourth estate (Martin, 1998). Until around ten years ago, TV broadcasting followed almost the same pace as the news via live streaming. It functioned within the same time and space limitations as the government or the state but operated faster. There was plenty of time for the editorial processes to act as gatekeepers. Local newspapers were known to use the local language occasionally, but the overall output was very similar. Today, we refer to newspapers, radio, and television as the “traditional mass media” subject to external mediation.

However, with the digital transformation, the information flow has become personalized for each user, and the time perception has also changed. In a news feed, time perception is influenced by the sequence in which the content is displayed and how users interact with it. Newer posts typically appear at the top of the feed, and this can create a sense of chronological order. However, the algorithm may prioritize certain content based on relevancy, engagement, and other factors, which can change users' perception of the time flow (Sülflow et al., 2019). For example, if a user spends more time engaging with a particular post or the algorithm surfaces older content, it can make past events feel more current or vice versa. This can lead to distortions in the perception of time and manipulate people about current affairs, as previously mentioned in the example of Myanmar. Time and speed of the spread of information are important factors. However, the most significant change may not concern the speed at which information is spread.

The most significant change within the context of the ongoing digital transformation is happening regarding who shares the information. Today, what the information conveys is often more significant than who shares it. Ten years ago, people were watching TV or reading newspapers, and who was broadcasting or publishing was an important matter for the reliability of

information. On the contrary, the reliability of information on social media depends on various features, and it is hard to search for reliable sources. It is important to note that the Fourth Estate consists of media institutions because media is crucial in ensuring checks and balances within democratic systems. Even though governments tend to exert influence over traditional mass media, it still has a level of reliability that helps traditional media reach large audiences. Moreover, since the mass media provides information to the government, it can also directly influence decision-makers and supporters (Cobb et al. , 1976).

The relationship between power and knowledge is closely related to how and against whom the information will be used. Foucault emphasized the "discourse" of each knowledge instead of epistemes. According to him, knowledge was always purposeful, characterized by the desire to dominate and capture. It was not a neutral, abstract entity. Information was sought to be used: solid and unstable. This led Foucault to develop the concept of "knowledge/power," illustrating the inseparable connection between the two (Strathern, 2000). According to him, the most critical aspect of power is found in social relations. Power can be found in individuals through domination and oppression, but more importantly, power is also present in the production and use of knowledge. Power shifts and power disputes create space in which discourses can emerge. This information - and, in fact, all theories - are definitive. The definition of truth and lie within the scope of this information is the same (Strathern, 2000).

What stands out more than the reliability or falsity of information today is who shares it or how much trust we place in the person sharing it. Machine learning systems learn through imitation, and they interpret emotionally charged content, particularly those involving anger and violence, as positive outcomes due to increased interaction. This can increase polarization through populism because the algorithms highlight the most interacted content. Also, emotions triggered by the news can reduce the importance of the information content.

Prioritizing the emotions experienced over the content of the information may harm social psychology. For example, suppose the public needs help

addressing complex issues like inflation. In that case, people may increase emotional engagement by prioritizing discussions less relevant and sometimes, even insignificant to societal interests. The algorithm can also support this due to the popularity of the discussion, and this weakened social intelligence appears to be a factor that triggers political apathy in society. Moreover, apathy can replace informed voting behavior with emotional voting behavior, making it easier to use populist forms of communication effectively. Therefore, candidates who propagate suitable discursive campaigns, employing discourses that inspire the desired emotions in voters, have an increased chance of winning.

In this respect, inflation can be cited as a compelling example in Turkey's 2023 elections. The public's tendency to view the government as a savior in times of deprivation or security gaps and to maintain the current status quo can also fuel emotional rhetoric, a common feature of demagogue politics inherent in populism. Instead of viewing this as a struggle between power and opposition, we can see it as a success for those who effectively employ emotional discourse. Despite the economic crisis, which started with the Andrew Brunson (Gall, 2018) crisis and worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic and the inadequacy of disaster management after the February 6 Earthquakes in southeast Turkey, Erdoğan's election victory can be identified as an example that supports this claim.

In the lead-up to the Turkish presidential election, significant concerns about digital manipulation emerged, particularly surrounding the use of deep fake technology. CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu issued a public warning to Fahrettin Altun, head of the Communications Directorate, and his team, alleging plans to create fake videos and audio recordings to discredit the opposition. Kılıçdaroğlu claimed that President Erdoğan had hired foreign hackers to produce these deep fakes, drawing parallels to the infamous Cambridge Analytica scandal (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2023). The goal, according to Kılıçdaroğlu, was to manipulate voter perceptions and discourage opposition supporters from voting. Reports from high-ranking CHP officials, including those shared by journalist Murat Yetkin, supported these allegations, suggesting that Erdoğan's

campaign was set to launch a smear operation using sophisticated digital manipulation techniques. These reports indicated that hackers were hired through the dark web to produce fake media and conduct cyberattacks, such as DDoS attacks, to suppress opposition voices online while promoting pro-government content (Yetkin, 2023).

Fahrettin Altun responded to Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's allegations by denying any involvement in producing deep fake videos. Altun criticized Kılıçdaroğlu's claims, describing them as baseless and aimed at undermining the government's efforts to combat misinformation. He emphasized the Directorate's focus on defending national interests and protecting democratic processes from foreign interference (Altun, 2023). However, Kılıçdaroğlu's accusations were given more weight when President Erdoğan publicly showed a deep fake video of Kılıçdaroğlu during his campaign.

A deepfake video, showing Kılıçdaroğlu shaking hands with a group known as terrorists, which Erdoğan showcased at various rallies. This can be regarded as an example of precisely this kind of campaign. Erdoğan even admitted that the video was not accurate with these words; “The leader of the CHP has leaned back on the PKK terrorist organization. Kılıçdaroğlu has video recordings with those in Kandil. They published these. “Come on, come on” type. Nevertheless, it is edited; it is this, it is that. PKK members supported them with videos” (Medyascope, 2023).

Another example was the discourse against the YSP. The YSP supported Kılıçdaroğlu in the 2023 presidential elections while remaining outside the opposition alliance. The YSP was associated with Kurdish voters and could appeal to nationalist sentiments. We can observe that Facebook ads shared during the election campaign supported this discourse. For example, all ads shared via the Erdoğan Volunteers page (one of the top 10 pages by advertising budget) focused on themes of martyrs and terrorism, utilizing customized filters. These ads implied that a vote for Kılıçdaroğlu was a vote for those responsible for terrorist attacks, thereby creating a perception that the YSP supported these terrorists (Facebook, 2023).

Social media is an effective tool for reputation management and the use of deep fake technology in this context underscores the potential dangers of digital manipulation in modern political campaigns. To address this issue in more detail, we can refer to and discuss the e-commerce agencies' determination of their target audiences. E-commerce agencies collaborate with platforms like Google or Meta to assist their clients in reaching the targeted buyers online. Essentially, they identify potential customers based on their internet activity or use habits and exclude users unlikely to purchase that product (Brands, 2023). These agencies offer their clients those ads that will reach the individuals likely to be interested in that product. So, target audience identification services can also be considered for political campaigning on social media, and the same process can be comparable with politicians' social media posts.

### 2.3. POPULIST COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The literature on the definition of populism as a communication framework covers a wide area of debate. Approaches that see populism as a communication framework focusing on the conflict of in-group and out-group social identities come to the fore and are closely related to identity politics. Debates on defining populist communication are shaped around the basic principle of “struggle” between people and “corrupt elites”. It is often defined as an ideology, strategy, political communication style, or discursive logic, but beyond these discussions, populism is also considered a means of communication (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007).

We can consider populism within the scope of two communicative features: content and style. On the one hand, the content describes the relationship between “the people” and “them” and generally emphasizes the rhetorical features of anthropocentrism, anti-elitism, and exclusion. These characteristics shape the tone and populism's contribution to the struggle between the “in-group” and the “out-group”. Style, on the other hand, is about the way populist messages are communicated. Populist style refers to the sensational communication style instead of the rational style (Moffitt and

Tormey, 2014). With the influence of social media, populist communication styles tend to be confrontational, attracting public attention, as discussed earlier. In the context of campaign promotion, populism as a political style is essential.

The populist communication style can increase the visibility of leaders' emotional messages and positively contribute to their ability to mobilize the masses. Electing leaders in Turkey is also closely related to leaders' ability to build emotional ties with the public. Populism on a Turkish scale can set an example for essential discussions.

The history of populist ideologies in Turkey is built on anti-elitism, emphasis on national will, and the tendency to establish direct relations with the public. These ideologies have changed and adapted over time, but we can say that they have generally adopted a strategy of gaining the support and trust of the public (Çarkoğlu et al., 2022). We can examine populist ideologies in Turkey under three different periods. First, the definition of “the people” (*halk*) adopted by the CHP in the 1960s and 1970s attracts attention. For the CHP, this “the people” can be exemplified by peasants, workers, and city dwellers. Secondly, the Democrat Party (DP)'s center-right populism based on the peasantry is also noteworthy. Thirdly, Erbakan, the leader of the National View (*Milli Görüş*), defines the Islamic nation as crucial in understanding the ideology Erdoğan refers to as the Dava (the cause) today.

The first populist article appeared in the journal titled *Halka Doğru* [Towards People]<sup>2</sup>, was inspired by the Russian populists of the 1870s. In this magazine, the concept of “the people” referred to the peasantry and was also incorporated into the populism principle of the CHP as the political extension of the Committee of Union and Progress (Özden, 2006). However, over time, the CHP's populism, as it turned into Turkey's elite, was criticized for its approach of “*for the people despite the people*”, allowing for the enhanced role of the

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<sup>2</sup> The journal was affiliated to the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki*) and published weekly by the Association of Turkish Homeland (*Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti*) between 1913 and 1914.

Turkish military in politics. This situation formed the basis of the populism of the center-right and Islamist-right political movements.

Adnan Menderes, the leader of the Democrat Party (DP), marked the transition to a multi-party system in Turkey and is often considered the beginning of center-right populism in the country. According to Menderes, the proper guardian of the Republican reforms is the Turkish nation, and the "Kemalist elites" are obstructing this will. During this period, the DP created employment by establishing factories in regions where it received electoral support, provided state credits, and encouraged mechanization in agriculture. However, due to the increasing inflation in 1958, these populist policies remained limited, and the DP's resources were exhausted. This situation led to the second phase of the DP's political populism (1958-1960), which took on a more authoritarian character. Ultimately, the Turkish Armed Forces carried out the coup of May 27, 1960 (Özden, 2006, p. 7).

In contrast, a center-left populism emerged under the leadership of İsmet İnönü and later Bülent Ecevit, which characterized the idea of the "Left of the Center." Bülent Ecevit, known as CHP's "Third Man," is a significant figure in Turkish political history. He earned this title not just for being the third general president of the party after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü but for his unique impact on the party and Turkish politics. By the end of the 1970s, Ecevit had transcended his role as merely the third leader and became a defining character in CHP's history, alongside other legendary Turkish political figures like Demirel, Erbakan, and Türkeş (Kaynar, 2019). His approach emphasizes the protection and empowerment of the people against social injustices and various societal problems. This approach can be defined as a populist left movement based on the view that the people deserve safeguarding from various societal problems and should be protected against injustices.

The Justice Party (AP) followed similar policies as the DP appealed more to the religious sentiments of the people under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel. According to Demirel, the AP represented and protected the Turkish nation. During Demirel's tenure, the definition of elites was more

comprehensive, including the state bureaucracy and leftist groups collaborating with foreign enemies, emphasizing the concept of national will (Çınar, 2024). Center-right populist movements like AP and DP encountered the National View movement led by Necmettin Erbakan. Erbakan's ideology focused on the concept of the nation rather than the people, encompassing not only Turks but the entire Muslim ummah. For him, the elites constituting the status quo were seen as capitalist and Zionist Western states and their collaborator parties (AP and CHP). Just Order (*Adil Düzen*) would be the primary goal in challenging foreign enemies (Özden, 2006, p. 8).

The Justice and Development Party, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, followed right-wing patterns and discourses. Emphasizing national will and the people's common sense, Erdoğan has fought against the elites and reinforced the tendency to reach out directly to the nation. However, as the AKP's power has grown, it has become more authoritarian, and the definition of the elite has shifted. Erdoğan has adopted a harsh stance against the opposition and business community, which he views as collaborators of terrorist organizations supported by foreign powers (Özden, 2006, pp. 91-99). For today's CHP, under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, it is possible to observe İsmet İnönü's and Bülent Ecevit's CHP approach, as he often states that he did not want to be the presidential candidate. However, he was needed by the people and was responsible for carrying the country through a more democratic stage because people needed this (Gazete Oksijen, 2024).

Turkey transitioned to democracy after a period of single-party rule, marked by the polarization that intensified during debates over military influence and the tenure of Adnan Menderes (Aytaç and Elçi, 2019). This era is widely recognized as the beginning of populism in Turkey, forming a cornerstone of Erdoğan's ideological framework.

The military's populism discourse for the people (populism on behalf of the people) can be evaluated as left-wing populism in this respect. The February 28 process, which Erdoğan frequently refers to, is precisely like a summary of this discourse. In democratic systems, the rise of populism is often perceived as

a threat to democratic values and institutions. Also, the assumption that populism is associated with low institutionalism suggests that populism can only emerge in situations of low institutionalization. However, it has been observed that, for example, in Europe, populist parties are on the rise when they have high levels of institutionalization.

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser explain exclusionary and inclusionary populism by examining its three dimensions: material, political, and symbolic (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013). This is important because, besides the subject of rhetoric, it is crucial to consider what is being served. Additionally, their study examines four selective cases from Europe and Latin America, providing valuable insights into how populism emerges in both high and low-institutionalized contexts. The three dimensions of populism are explained below in this study.

### 2.3.1 The Material Dimension

Material exclusion and inclusion concern distributing material and non-material state resources to specific societal groups (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 158-160). While material exclusion means explicitly limiting the access of certain groups to state aid or job opportunities for various reasons, material inclusion aims to provide more support to these groups. Therefore, this situation can easily expose the government-voter relationship to conflicts of interest and further strengthen identity politics. Alongside being a significant factor in Turkey, local solidarity is also among the selective criteria utilized by clientelism. In this regard, nationality, religion, or sectarian affiliation, alongside the distribution of state resources or the provision of aid and job opportunities mentioned previously, can be perceived as crucial factors in persuading voters or fostering emotional bonds. Alternatively, these factors can independently create such conditions.

### 2.3.2 The Political Dimension

Political exclusion and inclusion refer primarily to political participation and public contestation, which Robert Dahl (1971, 1989) defines as the two fundamental dimensions of democracy (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 161-164). Political exclusion refers to preventing certain groups from fully participating in the democratic process and their conscious exclusion from public struggle. In contrast, political inclusion aims explicitly to increase the participation and representation of certain groups. Often, these groups are already part of the voters and have full political participation and representation rights, but they are ignored and marginalized by the political establishment. For example, LGBT supporters or people who attended the Gezi Park protests in 2013 in Turkey can be considered in this context.

### 2.3.3 The Symbolic Dimension

The symbolic dimension is less evident, but this does not mean it is the least important. Populism essentially implies a process of defining “the people” and ‘the elite.’ When populists define “the people” (with specific characteristics and values) through rhetoric and symbols, the latter group is symbolically excluded (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 164-166). (for example, conservative youth or Turkey's new and powerful citizens). Similarly, when certain groups are associated with “the elite”, they are implicitly excluded from the definition of “the people” (for example, seculars). Additionally, research conducted on populist communication on social media also found support for the assumption that first-person references are often made to the people. In contrast, third-person references are made to the politicians (Schmuck and Hameleers, 2020).

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. ERDOĞAN AND KILIÇDAROĞLU ON SOCIAL MEDIA

#### 3.1. DISCOURSE TOPIC 1: EMOTIONAL POLITICS

##### 3.1.1 An Inclusionary Approach

Emotional politics and an inclusive approach can contribute to polarization on social media by amplifying emotional reactions and tribalistic tendencies, leading to the creation of echo chambers where dissenting views are dismissed or attacked. While emotional appeals can mobilize support among like-minded communities, they can reinforce existing prejudices and deepen divisions between ideological groups. On the one hand, it can offer inclusive rhetoric only for candidates' core voters, excluding minority groups or marginalized groups. On the other hand, it can be an excellent example of the catch-all parties' strategy, which includes everyone but the opposing candidate.

For example, Erdoğan's X post about Kurds has an inclusive tone in the sense that it refers to Turkey of the 1990s, before their governments, implying the risk of losing the struggle for rights and freedoms acquired during their tenure. Erdoğan also associates election outcomes with people's traumas in collective memory. This post reached 19.2M views on X, becoming one of Erdoğan's top-viewed posts.

67	<i>Dear Kurdish brothers and sisters. We have fought great battles to ensure that your rights, as pure as your mother's milk, are delivered to you in an honorable manner. We have made serious efforts to prevent mothers from crying, to prevent hearts from burning. You are the closest witnesses to our sincere efforts. You know very well the adversities we have overcome to come to this day, and the traps that have been set before us. Of course, there have been shortcomings, things we wanted to do but couldn't; however, what we have achieved for Turkey in terms of rights and freedoms is evident. We will absolutely not allow any regression from these gains. Whoever tries to revive the old Turkey under the threat</i>
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	<p><i>of terrorism will find us against them. Whoever tries to give guns to poor Kurdish children and make them shoot soldiers, police, and our people will find us against them. Whoever attempts to harm our nation's peace on behalf of imperialist powers will find us against them. Whoever tries to reach for your rights will find Tayyip Erdoğan and the People's Alliance against them. As long as our Allah grants us life and our people grant us authority; In this country, mothers will not cry again... No one will be able to forcibly take our children to the mountains... The darkness of terror will not descend upon our cities along with the night... No one will be able to threaten my Kurdish brothers, no one will be able to put their will under the yoke of a gun! We will work until Turkey becomes a freer, more peaceful, and prosperous place for all 85 million people. With the support of our Kurdish brothers, we will build the Turkey Century together.</i></p>
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(see Appendix A, issue 67, emphases added)

Cemre Demirel is a social media influencer who shared a video in which he criticizes Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy and he claims that Kılıçdaroğlu cannot win the elections against Erdoğan. And Erdoğan showed his video at his Istanbul rally. Kılıçdaroğlu's post for Cemre Demirel is an answer to Erdoğan.

12	<p>AK Party has used Cemre Demirel as material for its rally. Demirel is young and youngsters can sometimes be impulsive. It's normal. <i>My request is that no one should say anything bad to him on social media. Those who exploit young people should be ashamed of themselves. Those who criticize or support me are all dear to me.</i></p>
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(see Appendix B, issue 12, emphases added)

In Kılıçdaroğlu's post, a catch-all party strategy can be observed. Kılıçdaroğlu posted. In addition to directing negative emotions toward the president, there is an emphasis on the equality of those who love and criticize him.

### 3.2.2 An Exclusionary Approach

Exclusive rhetoric on social media can gain visibility with the support of algorithms. In countries like Turkey, where identity politics and emotional politics are at the forefront, we can say that populist exclusive rhetoric tends to increase during election periods. In this context, users' increased engagement with anger and violence-laden posts (for example, the tendency of a user to

comment on content that makes them angry during any debate on the platform) can lead the algorithm to highlight exclusive language to increase interaction and keep the user on the platform longer (Tucker et al., 2018, p. 44). Additionally, these systems, which produce responses and analyses based on the existing pool of information, can further deepen the issues faced in generating knowledge and policies toward disadvantaged groups by taking societal inequalities as a given.

There are some instances where the AKP, on the one hand, defines all members of “the people” as equals in its rhetoric and blames political elites who think otherwise. However, it excludes certain groups in society from its definition of the people. For example, February 28th supporters (28 Şubatçılar), FETÖ (Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization), PKK, LGBT supporters, or Feminists are excluded groups in Erdoğan’s rhetoric.

As can be observed in the X posts below, on the one hand, it is possible to observe that Erdoğan is highlighting that they allow TRT Kurdî (TRT6), elective Kurdish lessons, and the opening of Kurdish language departments at universities to bring equal rights for Kurds. On the contrary, he strategically links Kılıçdaroğlu to the PKK and FETÖ, underscoring their associations with Kandil (this refers to the Kandil Mountains, a region in northern Iraq where the PKK has its stronghold) and Pennsylvania (this refers to Fethullah Gülen, the cleric residing in Pennsylvania, USA). He goes as far as to suggest a connection, likening Kılıçdaroğlu to “baby killers” (a notorious accusation often aimed at Abdullah Öcalan) and drawing parallels between him and the 6-8 October events (involving Selahattin Demirtaş's conviction). Furthermore, he subtly implies a correlation between the Gezi protests and the July 15 coup attempt. A new historical narrative is being constructed in which the CHP and Kılıçdaroğlu are blamed for both current and past issues.

The AKP blames the Unionist/CHP mindset for Turkey's current domestic and international issues. It seeks to replace the current “official” history with its version, presenting it as the “true” history. Ironically, while the AKP's approach to history has been highly politicized, it simultaneously attempts to establish its historical narrative as the official one (Palabıyık, 2017).

12	<p>Goodbye Kemal, two days ago you emerged saying “everything about <i>the December 17-25 coup attempt was fabricated</i>” after 10 years. Now, I ask this confessant. If you knew that it was all fabricated, all slander; why did you parade them in public for the people to hear? If you knew it was lies, fabrications; why did you stomp on those lies for months from the parliamentary rostrum? If you knew December 17-25 was a plot by <i>FETÖ</i>, why did you become complicit in this coup attempt? Who forced you to lead this lie and slander campaign? Which organization dragged you into this mudslinging politics? Who asked you to tarnish the <i>July 15 epic</i> by calling it a “controlled coup?” It is time for Goodbye Kemal to answer these questions. If he wants to do a favor to this nation and Turkish politics, he should come forward, bravely dispel the clouds of suspicion upon him. If he truly wants to 'make amends', he should start from here. We, as our responsibility to our country and our nation, will pursue this matter to the end.</p>
61	<p>After years of crisis, instability, and underdevelopment, we brought the <i>"true spring"</i> to Turkey in 2002, thanks to God. Over the past 21 years, we have strengthened this climate with bold steps in the economy, democracy, counterterrorism, and rights and freedoms. We cleared the wreckage left by the guardianship and raised the standards of our democracy. <i>We shelved denial policies that disregarded our people's faith, language, and culture, ensuring they never resurface.</i> From TRT Kurdish to optional Kurdish lessons and the opening of Kurdish language departments at universities, we turned many dreams into reality that were previously unimaginable. Throughout this struggle, we faced <i>Mr. Kemal and the CHP mentality</i> trying to obstruct us. <i>They</i> tried every possible means, including threats, to stop us. Now <i>they</i> talk about spring. The <i>false spring</i> Mr. Kemal will bring means a harsh winter for this nation. <i>Mr. Kemal's spring would only bring spring to Kandil and Pennsylvania. It would bring spring to terrorist nests in northern Syria and Iraq. It would bring spring to those dreaming of getting out of prison, to baby killers, organizers of the Gezi events, and perpetrators of the October 6-8 events.</i> It would bring spring to the <i>FETÖ</i> traitors who rained bombs on our people on the night of July 15th. <i>My people</i> know very well that those promising them a "false spring" are actually talking about winter. I believe <i>my people</i> will not fall into such a trap on May 14th.</p>

(Also see in Appendix A, issue 12, 61 emphases added)

For example, the 12th tweet heavily accuses Kılıçdaroğlu and questions his aims and actions during the 17-25 December coup attempt. The fact that his actions are repeatedly questioned and labeled as lies and fabrications exclude

Kılıçdaroğlu or the CHP mentality, holds him responsible for political events. At the same time, it aims to cast a shadow over Kılıçdaroğlu's honesty.

The 61st tweet celebrates the achievements of the AKP since 2002. The phrase "real spring" refers to the opposition's "spring" slogan. It underlines the deep pride and gratitude for Turkey's bold steps in various sectors, its growth, and progress and he portrays all of this as a win despite the opposition. Also, he directly associates Kılıçdaroğlu with terrorism. "*Mr. Kemal's spring would only bring spring to Kandil and Pennsylvania*".

For the opposition, the primary target of exclusion is typically Erdoğan and his administration. However, SADAT supporters, gangs of five<sup>3</sup>, or refugees can also be observed in Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse as excluded groups.

In tweets numbered 8 and 33, Kılıçdaroğlu positions himself as a defender of democracy, cautioning the public against alliances with government-affiliated groups and asserting that their influence will diminish under his leadership. His rhetoric echoes Ecevit's approach, exemplifying left-populism in Turkey. Furthermore, Kılıçdaroğlu's portrayal of an Anatolian student benefiting from the republic reinforces this comparison, highlighting his campaign's thematic emphasis on social equity (OdaTv, 2011).

6	<i>Mafias, militants, SADAT members, gangs, and troublemakers have come together, threatening Turkey. Young one, you will bury them in the garbage bin of history in the first round, and then Bay Kemal will send them all where they belong. I promise you!</i>
8	<i>They plundered our citizens in the stock market. Small investors were subjected to an unprecedented operation. I'm very sorry, I tried to warn. Some didn't listen to me, some mocked. Bless their hearts. We will collect what was stolen from the manipulators. On May 15th, I will issue an investigation order for the stock market.</i>
33	<i>I won't even look at the tears in your eyes, stock market manipulators. I swear by God, I won't.!</i>
55	<i>This is not what we believe in. This language is AK Party's. In our time, whoever, wherever, however they want to practice their art, it's not for us to interfere. Friends, please understand why we are here. We will not</i>

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<sup>3</sup> The gang of five; is a political term for companies accused of corruption by the opposition, includes Cengiz Holding, Limak Holding, Kalyon Holding, Kolin Holding and Makyol Group.

fight with artists; the world is our arena for competition. Let's understand it now!
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(Also see Appendix B, issues 6, 8, 33, 55 emphases added)

In the 55<sup>th</sup> post, Kılıçdaroğlu attributes the strained relationships and divisive language in society to Erdoğan and the AKP government. In essence, this rhetoric aims to mobilize voters through exclusionary discourse.

### 3.2.3 Emotional Bond and Local Solidarity

Emotional bonds and local solidarity can contribute to polarization on social media by encouraging an “us vs. them” mentality in which individuals prioritize the interests of their group over cooperation and understanding with others

Some studies argue that policy stance strongly influences the communication styles of left/right populist parties. For example, a study focusing on the 2016 campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders found that right-wing populist communication contained a negative, exclusionary, and authoritarian tone. In contrast, leftist populist communication has been described as more positive, tolerant, and participatory (Tucker et al., 2018). In this context, in the 2023 Turkish presidential election campaigns, the opposition and the government have discourses that will confirm this hypothesis. (see Appendix A, issues 16, 23, 39, 53)

Moreover, (see Appendix B, issues 26, 31, 48, 58). It is possible to observe a negative, exclusionary, and authoritarian tone in Erdoğan’s post because he references historical events, such as his conviction in Edirne or his correlation between Vecihi Hürkuş<sup>4</sup> and the Atatürk Airport reference. In the 21<sup>st</sup> post, although Erdoğan’s narrative about Hürkuş and how his dreams being

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<sup>4</sup> In 1923, Vecihi Hürkuş manufactured the first Turkish aircraft using engines captured as spoils from the Greeks. Vecihi Hürkuş, on January 28, 1925, covertly prepared his plane and flew without obtaining permission from anyone or informing the airfield command. This incident, a violation of the chain of command and flight discipline, resulted in him receiving an administrative penalty.

buried are somewhat accurate, the unfortunate events were not necessarily related to Vecihi Hürkuş's efforts in aviation.

### 3.2. DISCOURSE TOPIC 2: GLORIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY, PERSONALITIES AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

#### 3.2.1 Self-Glorification

Erdoğan positions himself as the guardian of a will that has encountered numerous obstacles over the years, emphasizing his role in ensuring national survival. As seen in the posts below, he asserts that he and his administration have been instrumental in bringing democracy to Turkey and insists that only he can sustain these democratic gains. Otherwise, he warns that the hard-won rights and freedoms, whether for minorities (Kurds) or the majority (conservatives), could regress to the mindset reminiscent of CHP's policies before 2002.

80	<p><i>Our love and struggle are for our dear nation. We don't pick fights with anyone on our behalf, and when it comes to our nation, we don't recognize anyone else. We take it upon ourselves to run for the sake of our beloved nation with all our might and devotion. We only develop projects, produce works, engage in politics of the heart, and strive to win hearts. No matter what traps are set before us, we never give up serving our country. We never refrain from expanding our country and cities, our bread, with investments. Regardless of the attacks we face, we never cast a shadow on the will of the people and our democracy. When necessary, as we did on the night of July 15th, we stand up for our independence and future at the expense of our lives. Because we exist for this nation, which we proudly belong to and serve. We exist to serve over 85 million people with love, without any discrimination. In pursuit of this goal, we have faced many betrayals, overcome many hardships, and engaged in many struggles for existence in the past 21 years. We have laid the groundwork for the Turkey Century in every field, and we are ready. Inshallah, with May 14th, we will begin the construction of the Turkey Century. We will achieve this, as we have for the past 21 years, with your unwavering support and sincere prayers. Despite the attempts of those who sow seeds of discord among us, we will uphold our brotherhood. We will UNITE. We will BE BIG. We will BE ALIVE. We will BE BROTHERS, SISTERS. TOGETHER, WE WILL BE TURKEY!</i></p>
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96	<p>Dear people,</p> <p>Since our youth, we have been actively involved in politics, standing before you now. In our 40 years of political life, 21 of which have been in power, <i>we have always upheld democracy and national will.</i> Despite the injustices we faced since 1994, we have upheld justice and acted with fairness. <i>We have embraced all 85 million of our citizens,</i> without alienating anyone. <i>We have not interfered in the lifestyles or ways of life of any of our citizens. We have expanded the rights and freedoms of all segments of our society. Before us, there were bans on headscarves and clothing styles in this country; we abolished them.</i> There was <i>unfair application of quotas</i> in our high schools; <i>we ended it.</i> People could not freely or <i>comfortably practice their beliefs; we changed that.</i> <i>Terrorist organizations</i> were suffocating our citizens; <i>we crushed them.</i> <i>Our democracy was stumbling</i> along slowly and difficultly; <i>we strengthened it.</i> <i>The state used to look down on its citizens; we introduced a new understanding.</i> <i>Foreign countries</i> were constantly trying to meddle in our affairs, <i>dictate terms to us; we said stop.</i> Of course, in this struggle, we encountered many obstacles, pressures, threats, coercion, conspiracies, and smear campaigns. Attempts were made to block our democracy initiatives, and our lives were threatened with coup attempts. But we stood firm without flinching, and <i>we have brought our country to a freer, more prosperous, more peaceful, and economically stronger position than it was 21 years ago.</i> Since 2002, we have only engaged in politics of service, politics of accomplishment, and politics of brotherhood. God willing, after May 14th, we will continue to work passionately for all of Turkey.</p>
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(Appendix A also shows issues 80, 96, emphases added).

In the election campaign of the opposition candidate Kılıçdaroğlu, we mainly come across statements that associate him with democracy. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's biggest election promise is to bring democracy back to Turkey. The opposition's promise to return to the parliamentary system against the presidential system can be considered one of the most important motivations to keep the opposition together. His campaign aims to create an umbrella by being the defender of everyone who has been wronged by this government, making peace with everyone, and opposing the one-person regime. However, the fact that Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy has been a long-discussed issue and that it was announced under intense criticism from his base voters appears to be a factor that weakens the opposition (Gültekin, 2023). Ultimately, all these discussions have expanded the axis of emotional politics.

5	Tonight at 11:00 PM, I will announce our most strategic and magnificent project here. <i>You will hear about our project that will change our position in the world order and elevate Turkey to the highest level.</i> Come, I'm waiting!
42	The Euro has fallen. The stock market has soared. Just wait until Mr. Kemal comes on May 15th, you'll see what happens. <i>We will enrich this country!</i>
52	Can I give you one more promise? While we govern this country, you will never see all channels broadcasting the same content again. <i>We promise democracy, democracy.</i> Democracy is a very beautiful, very wonderful thing, do you know...
60	<i>Democracy is Mr. Kemal's most ambitious project,</i> young people. Because democracy and freedom are the best gifts that can be given to the youth as a revolution.

(Appendix B also shows issues 5, 42, 52, 60 emphases added).

### 3.2.2 Glorification of Historical Personalities and Events

Politicians can protect themselves from criticism by identifying themselves or their parties with important personality cults or historical events on social media. In other words, creating specific identity definitions for themselves and their supporters can create a discussion environment where disagreements become personal attacks.

In this context, the election of Erdoğan as the candidate of the AKP-MHP coalition can be observed as a consistent move on the part of the People's Alliance. AKP and MHP stand out in loyalty to the leader in their party traditions (Ayan, 2010). However, we can observe that in the CHP, where Nation Alliance leader Kılıçdaroğlu is also the party leader, the tradition of loyalty to the party rather than the leader comes to the fore.

On the other hand, we can say that for CHP, loyalty to the leader has matured with loyalty to Atatürk and his principles and reforms (Ayan, 2010). Therefore, loyalty to Atatürk stands out for Turkish citizens as loyalty to Erdoğan in Erdoğan's vision of the new Turkey. In other words, while CHP voters vote for CHP out of allegiance to Atatürk, AKP voters similarly vote for

Erdoğan, not AKP. In this argument, two voter profiles (bone voters) that are similar in theory but behave differently in practice match with the party, including their own identity and lifestyle choices. Hence, when examining undecided voters and those who remain loyal to their party despite various challenges, it is essential to consider individuals who seek change beyond partisan or national affiliations but encounter representation issues.

21	<p>It was certainly no coincidence that we chose to have our largest embrace on the road to May 14th at Atatürk Airport People's Garden. Yesterday, Istanbul was more beautiful, more magnificent than ever. At Atatürk Airport People's Garden, we said "TURKEY TRUSTS US" with over 1.7 million of our fellow citizens from all 39 districts of our city. We renewed our oath, refreshed our love, strengthened our affection, and further solidified our solidarity. <i>Atatürk Airport was the place where, at the beginning of the last century, our country's aviation technology initiative began, only to be abruptly halted by the single-party CHP before it could take root.</i></p> <p>Atatürk Airport was the place where the dreams of the late <i>Vecihi Hürkuş</i> were buried. We see that similar actions to what happened to Mr. Vecihi are now being done to our defense industry companies. With the same insidious methods, efforts are being made to cut off the growth and expansion of the world's number one Aviation, Space, and Technology Festival, TEKNOFEST, before it can grow further. Of course, the main target is the TEKNOFEST youth who are curious, questioning, passionate about science and technology, and devoted to their country and nation.</p> <p>Another characteristic of Atatürk Airport is that it is the place where we, along with the <i>people of Istanbul, wrote the epic of July 15th</i>, while some were fleeing through the tanks. Those who are disturbed by the rise of national will experienced the same defeat, the same disappointment, every time they pass through these places. Hopefully, we will never end their nightmares.</p> <p>Just as we have walked the path with only our nation until now, today and tomorrow, we will continue to walk hand in hand with our esteemed nation. I thank all my brothers and sisters who filled the square with their love, enthusiasm, gratitude, determination, and patience, but were unable to enter.</p>
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(Appendix A, issue 21, emphases added)

57	<p><i>Those who dare, win. We learned that from our Atatürk. We're at Anıtkabir with the youth.</i></p>
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(Appendix B, issue 57, emphases added)

In the 21<sup>st</sup> post, Erdoğan references to the period of the Turkish National Struggle with Vecihi Hürkuş and he links the mentality that hindered Vecihi Hürkuş at Atatürk Airport to Kılıçdaroğlu and the CHP. Furthermore, he takes pride in Turkey's Century projects as another achieved victory despite CHP. Distorting or shaping history to one's advantage is a strategy employed by the AKP. We observe a similar example in this post, where the sequence and structure of events linking the July 15 coup attempt, subtly making a reference to February 28, and mentioning Vecihi Hürkuş create the perception that the CHP has remained unchanged since the single-party era.

At this point, it is necessary to briefly mention Selahattin Demirtaş, both in terms of setting a precedent in these elections and being an important figure, especially for Kurdish and socialist voters. Demirtaş was arrested in 2016 along with HDP Co-Chairman Figen Yüksekdağ and nine HDP MPs after being detained on allegations of "establishing an organization to commit a crime", "being a member of an armed terrorist organization" and "committing a crime on behalf of an organization." Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş are also being tried on charges of "disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the state" due to the Kobani Incidents<sup>5</sup> (Arslan, 2020).

Although the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that keeping Demirtaş in prison constituted a violation of rights, the government did not implement the decision, making Demirtaş an essential figure in Turkish politics. Selahattin Demirtaş is an important example because of his power to consolidate voters through social media (Oksijen, 2023). The share of the alliance, which he is not a part of, in consolidating his voters is essential for the opposition candidate and requires a more comprehensive discussion. However, sharing the

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<sup>5</sup> The Kobani Incidents refer to the violent clashes and unrest in Turkey in October 2014, triggered by the events in the Syrian town of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab), near the Turkish border. The Kurdish population in Turkey, particularly supporters of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party), protested against the Turkish government's perceived inaction and reluctance to support the Kurdish fighters defending Kobani. The protests quickly escalated into violent clashes, resulting in dozens of deaths and widespread destruction.

letters or messages he wrote in prison on his social media account as tweets (later as X posts) successfully conveyed Demirtaş's sincerity. Although a different person managed the account that shared his tweets, Demirtaş could communicate directly with the voters through this platform (Demirtaş, 2023). This may feel different from reading the news in the newspaper, and this is an essential example of the power of representation on social media platforms.

The distribution of similar voter profiles among Turkey's well-established parties can ensure their continuity. However, the voters complaining about the lack of representation are again divided into two groups: those who prefer the familiar and relatively predictable status quo and those who do not have a better option but at least prioritize the change of the current order (Şaşmaz et al., 2022). In such a layered example of polarization, it is not a coincidence that social networks trigger polarization. Because social media encourages immediate emotional reactions, populist leaders' influence over rapidly changing public opinion can also be misleading. Additionally, populism can escalate political conflicts and weaken the sense of national unity due to the strong perpetuation of us versus them understanding. What happens in Turkey is closely related to this.

Separated by culture, religion, language, race, or lifestyle, people gradually become disconnected from each other and unable to share a particular familiar national feeling. The fact that Erdoğan still frequently makes statements about Adnan Menderes, the year 2002 when he was the Mayor of Istanbul, or the February 28<sup>th</sup> process maintains the ongoing polarization among the people alive in the public memory and keeps alive the metaphor of the cause for which they did everything

In long-term governments, such as those in Turkey or Russia, political debates are susceptible to manipulation by creating new realities for their supporters. Keeping events like February 28, December 17-25, or past terrorist attacks alive in social memory can create illusions. This can lead to rewriting history to fit their ideologies, endorsing actions deemed best for specific groups mistreated due to their culture, religion, or class, not only bringing justice to the

people but also perpetuating these manipulations and legitimizing their governance (Palabıyık, 2017).

Türkiye Century is an excellent example of an argument that can be observed in this regard. It is a concept that expresses Turkey's development and transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in light of Erdoğan's vision (Yalçın, 2023). It summarizes the critical events, achievements, challenges, and changes that Turkey has encountered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, spilling it over before the AKP and after the AKP. The changes and the economic growth that Turkey has experienced in domestic and foreign policies, especially since the early 2000s, are essential elements of this vision.

The X post below, as he explains, is a clear example: "They tried to hinder us with court decisions, intimidate us with guardianship," or "They tried to intimidate us by setting our streets on fire during the Gezi events." In this context, he suggests that these same opponents remain, and Erdoğan positions himself as the one suppressing their efforts. This could change how the country sees elections, making it seem like the winner will dominate the loser in every way.

55	We have experienced everything that has happened to the politicians who served our country in the past, and even more. For the past 21 years, <i>we have been fighting against dirty scenarios on behalf of the nation.</i> They tried to hinder us with court decisions, intimidate us with guardianship. They targeted us through our colleagues with the MIT conspiracy. They tried to intimidate us by setting our streets on fire during the Gezi events. <i>On December 17-25, they attempted to usurp national will through recordings that Bay Bay Kemal himself now admits were "fabricated". On July 15, they directly targeted our lives through the treacherous FETÖ gang. They unleashed all terrorist organizations from ISIS to PKK against us.</i> Their aim was to forcibly revoke the mandate given by the people at the ballot box. <i>But we, at the risk of our lives, stood up for our democracy.</i> We lost many of our comrades in arms in the treacherous attacks of the separatist organization. Molotov cocktails were thrown at our election offices, many of our brothers and sisters were harassed and humiliated. Despite all the provocations we faced, we did not deviate from the path of law, democracy, and legitimacy. <i>We never tarnished the honor and dignity of the ballot box.</i> We said whatever we had to say through the ballot box. We trusted in the "Anatolian Wisdom," not in what <i>Western powers</i> whispered in our ears. Today, we trust in the insight
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and sagacity of 85 million people. We wholeheartedly believe that <i>Anatolian Wisdom</i> will prevail on May 14th.
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(Appendix A, issue 55, emphases added).

The above analysis demonstrates the connections between Tayyip Erdoğan's and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's populist discourse on social media platform X during the campaign period of Turkey's 2023 presidential elections, social media algorithms and their role in the polarization of the society. The analysis focused on specific discourse topics, namely, emotional politics and emotional bond and. Although the CDA presented in this thesis cannot show exactly the extent and specific level of polarization caused by the discursive strategies of President Erdoğan and the opposition leader Kılıçdaroğlu, the analysis clearly demonstrates that posts featuring emotionally charged and populist discourse garnered significantly higher views and engagement during the election campaign. It can be observed that these discourses found a clear response in the society, and social media played an influential role.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

#### 4.1. Findings

This thesis examines the relationship between populist discourse and social media algorithms, highlighting their role in fostering political polarization. By analyzing the impact of emotive and populist rhetoric on social media engagement, this study provides insights into how these dynamics benefit both digital platforms and political entities. The analysis of X (formerly Twitter) posts of the 2023 Turkish presidential election candidates Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu reveals a clear pattern: posts featuring emotionally charged and populist discourse garnered significantly higher views and engagement. This analysis covered posts shared between May 6 and May 14, 2024, totaling 173 posts (108 from Erdoğan and 65 from Kılıçdaroğlu).

Erdoğan's posts, characterized by nationalistic and emotive language, consistently attracted higher engagement than Kılıçdaroğlu's more moderate posts. Despite the similar frequency of shares, the disparity in engagement levels suggests that social media algorithms prioritize content that evokes strong emotional reactions. This finding aligns with existing research indicating that social media platforms are designed to maximize user engagement by promoting content likely to generate high interaction. The study highlights the feedback loop created by these algorithms: political actors are incentivized to adopt more extreme and dynamic discourses to enhance their visibility and influence online. This dynamic fosters an environment where populist rhetoric thrives, contributing to political polarization.

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of emotive discourse in driving social media engagement. Posts featuring emotionally charged content receive higher views and interactions, suggesting that social media algorithms

are designed to amplify such content. This design flaw creates a feedback loop where political actors are encouraged to use more populist, emotive rhetoric to gain visibility and engagement.

Disinformation campaigns often rely on emotionally charged narratives to manipulate public opinion and deepen societal divisions. In the context of the 2023 Turkish presidential elections, Russia's disinformation tactics, such as deepfakes and coordinated social media narratives, can be observed influencing public perception, contributing to increased polarization. This is important because it can influence the nature of political discourse and shape public perceptions and voting behaviors. By promoting populist rhetoric, these algorithms contribute to political polarization and societal division. The impact is particularly pronounced when media freedom is limited and government influence over media outlets is strong. The relationship between emotive discourse and disinformation is a critical area of concern.

#### 4.2. Discussion

The implications of these findings extend beyond the Turkish context, reflecting broader trends in global political communication. Social media platforms, designed to maximize user engagement, inadvertently promote populism by amplifying emotionally charged content. This phenomenon is not unique to Turkey; it is observable in other political landscapes, from Myanmar to the USA or India to Hungary.

The comparison of Erdoğan's and Kılıçdaroğlu's campaigns with the Polish context aims to provide insights into the role of social media in contemporary electoral politics. In Poland, the opposition's strategic use of social media to counter PiS's populist messaging highlights the potential for digital platforms to serve as a tool for democratic engagement. However, the algorithmic prioritization of divisive content can foster an environment where populist rhetoric thrives, contributing to societal divisions.

The findings of this study highlight the need for further research into the intersection of social media algorithms, emotive discourse, and political

polarization. Future studies could explore the potential parallels between political campaigning and marketing strategies in e-commerce, examining how algorithmic biases influence consumer behavior and political engagement. Additionally, investigating the relationship between emotional discourse and algorithms in further contexts and its impact on democratic processes could provide valuable insights into the broader implications of digital communication technologies.

The relationship between populist discourse and social media algorithms should be critical in contemporary electoral politics. By promoting emotionally charged content, social media platforms inadvertently contribute to political polarization and the rise of populist rhetoric. This study's findings underscore the urgent need to address these issues, highlighting the importance of media literacy, algorithmic transparency, and democratic institutions in mitigating the impact of disinformation and fostering a more inclusive and informed political discourse.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A. PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE CANDIDATE RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN'S X POSTS BETWEEN 06.05.2023 - 14.05.2023**

	Tweet Text	Date	Retweets	Likes	Views	Link
1	Magnificent Kayseri!	06.05.2023	11K	53K	15.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654839109037309953">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654839109037309953</a>
2	May God protect you from the evil eye and bad intentions. Mashallah, Kayseri!	06.05.2023	11K	53K	16.5	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654903351199531009">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654903351199531009</a>
3	The one whose companion is like Kayseri, and brother is like a person from Kayseri, won't fall. Thank you, Kayseri!	06.05.2023	8.4K	38K	7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654834191320621057">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654834191320621057</a>
4	We are in Kayseri. #TheRightChoiceForKayseriIsAKParty	06.05.2023	8K	33K	73K	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654817794809012226">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654817794809012226</a>
5	We are in Mersin. #TheRightChoiceForMersinIsAKParty	06.05.2023	8.3K	36K	6.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741</a>
6	Magnificent Mersin!	06.05.2023	9.1K	47K	10.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654892529949483010">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654892529949483010</a>
7	We are in Mersin. #TheRightChoiceForMersinIsAKParty	06.05.2023	8.3K	36K	6.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741</a>
8	The city of civilizations, cultures,	06.05.2023	7.1K	31K	6.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654874695156596741</a>

	and beliefs, Mersin... Thank you, Mersin!					gan/status/1654888290351284229
9	May the earthquake victims keep their hearts at ease. By God's permission, just as we promised, we will never leave them alone.	06.05.2023	7.7K	26K	5.6M	https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1654846476684775425
10	We are reducing the number of days for premium payments for our 1 million small tradesmen to 7,200 by equalizing them with SSK workers. Congratulations to our fellow tradesmen.	06.05.2023	8.9K	30K	8.5M	https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1654826386727608323
11	By God's permission, we will emerge victorious once again from the most important elections in our history on May 14th. But who will win in these elections? Every single member of the 85 million, young and old, women and men, will win. All 81 provinces of our country, from east to west, north to south, will win. All segments of our society, including Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, Alevis, representing all colors of Turkey, will win. All citizens belonging to different beliefs, including Christians,	06.05.2023	15K	73K	21.9M	https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1654733560291504128

<p>Jews, Assyrians, will win.</p> <p>Not only supporters of the AK Party and the People's Alliance, but also those who support the CHP, the Good Party, the Felicity Party, and other parties, will win.</p> <p>By God's permission, we will emerge victorious once again from the most important elections in our history on May 14th. But who will win in these elections? Every single member of the 85 million, young and old, women and men, will win. All 81 provinces of our country, from east to west, north to south, will win. All segments of our society, including Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, Alevis, representing all colors of Turkey, will win. All citizens belonging to different beliefs, including Christians, Jews, Assyrians, will win. Not only supporters of the AK Party and the People's Alliance, but also those who support the CHP, the Good Party, the Felicity Party, and other parties, will win. Millions in Asia and Africa who heed our</p>					
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<p>call for “A Fairer World is Possible” will win. Our kinsmen who find peace and security under our crescent-starred flag will win. Those who pray for Turkey's success across our country and around the world will win. In other words, all of Turkey will win, regardless of ethnic origin, sect, or worldview; our brethren in our heartland will win, the oppressed and the downtrodden will win.</p> <p>May 14th, God willing, will be a celebration for all of us, a day of pride, and a festival for Turkish democracy. Therefore, let no one succumb to pessimism, let no one feel excluded. Let no one, absolutely no one, lose faith in the bright and prosperous tomorrows of our country. Let us not allow the sweet competition inherent in politics to turn into political hostility. Let us fiercely protect our unity, our togetherness, our thousand-year-old brotherhood in these lands. Let us strengthen our love, mend rifts, and win</p>					
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	over more hearts. By God's permission, the rest will follow. May God perpetuate our brotherhood.					
12	<p>Goodbye Kemal, two days ago you emerged saying “everything about the December 17-25 coup attempt was fabricated” after 10 years. Now, I ask this confessant If you knew damn well that it was all fabricated, all slander; why did you parade them in public for the people to hear? If you knew it was lies, fabrications; why did you stomp on those lies for months from the parliamentary rostrum? If you knew December 17-25 was a plot by FETÖ, why did you become complicit in this coup attempt? Who forced you to lead this lie and slander campaign? Which organization dragged you into this mudslinging politics? Who asked you to tarnish the July 15 epic by calling it a “controlled coup?” It is time for Goodbye Kemal to answer these questions. If he wants to do a favor to this nation and Turkish politics, he should come forward, bravely</p>	06.05.2023	17K	60K	15M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654856132035330048">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654856132035330048</a>

	<p>dispel the clouds of suspicion upon him. If he truly wants to “make amends”, he should start from here. We, as our responsibility to our country and our nation, will pursue this matter to the end.</p>					
13	<p>We are offering our country's own resources, which those celebrating “we found debt money” from London loan sharks could never dream of, to our nation. How? With our Black Sea natural gas, our discovered oil in Gabar, our country's largest solar power plant established in Konya, and projects like Akkuyu, the billions of dollars of energy money leaving the country will now be at the disposal of our people. This money will enter the pockets of our people as investment, employment, and social support. We have already started to establish the mechanisms for this. With the Family and Youth Bank, we will support activities that concern the foundation stone of our nation, the apple of our eye, the future</p>	06.05.2023	15K	59K	10M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654920292299415555">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1654920292299415555</a>

	<p>of our children, with our own resources. We will retire housewives by covering one-third of their premium expenses for free. We will support young people in every area, from education to employment, from starting their own businesses to getting married. We will ensure that at least one person from each household is employed. With the Income Complementary Family Support System, we will ensure that a certain level of income enters all households. We will reorganize existing social assistance payments within this framework. Aside from everything, no one can match us in terms of accomplishments and services in politics. After May 14th, God willing, we will continue to compete with ourselves.</p>					
14	Magnificent Istanbul! #TurkeyTrustsYou	07.05.2023				
15	I extend my gratitude to all my brothers and sisters flooding from every corner of our Istanbul's 39 districts to Atatürk Airport	07.05.2023	36K	128K	35.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/165522">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/165522</a>

	People's Garden, overflowing onto the streets, roads, and avenues. #ThankYouIstanbul!					9220497 268742
16	Beloved Istanbul, my love Istanbul, my passion Istanbul... Thank you Istanbul! #TürkiyeSanaEmanet	07.05.2023	19K	91K	5.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655249633118138368">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655249633118138368</a>
17	In the last 21 years, we have allocated a total of 812 billion Turkish liras to Istanbul solely through public investments. Now, we are also implementing our Great Istanbul Tunnel Project.	07.05.2023				
18	Great Istanbul Rally #TurkeyTrustsYou	07.05.2023	9.9K	36K	2.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655264732645818369">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655264732645818369</a>
19	Beloved Istanbul, my love Istanbul, my passion Istanbul... Thank you Istanbul! #TürkiyeSanaEmanet	07.05.2023	19K	91K	5.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655249633118138368">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655249633118138368</a>
20	Since we took over the task of governing the country in 2002, we have been working tirelessly with the ambition of building a "great and powerful Turkey". We are fighting to fulfill the trust that our nation	07.05.2023	11K	45K	8.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655096111600730114">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655096111600730114</a>

<p>has placed on our shoulders at the ballot box</p> <p>Since we took over the task of governing the country in 2002, we have been working tirelessly with the ambition of building a “great and powerful Turkey”. We are fighting to fulfill the trust that our nation has placed on our shoulders at the ballot box. What hurdles we have overcome in this pursuit, only God and our esteemed nation know. If today, we have raised the per capita income from \$3,600 to \$10,650, if our annual exports have reached \$255 billion instead of \$36 billion, if our agricultural gross domestic product has surpassed 407 billion Turkish liras, if the Central Bank reserves have reached a total of \$115 billion, if we have brought employment to the brink of 32 million, if we are welcoming 51.5 million tourists annually, if we have undertaken the largest transportation, defense, technology, energy, health, housing, and environmental</p>					
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<p>projects in our history, if despite the earthquake disaster we have not let our retirees, workers, and civil servants succumb to inflation, if we have a strong economy, solid infrastructure, ambitious goals, and high self-confidence, then it is thanks to the efforts of all 85 million citizens, with all 81 provinces playing their part. In this success, there is the sweat of industrialists, workers, farmers, traders, housewives, and civil servants as much as there is of Tayyip Erdoğan. In this success, our partners in the People's Alliance, with whom we have united in the cause of Turkey, have also made their contribution. In this success, the efforts, sincerity, and ownership of all our citizens who say "country first" regardless of their political views, sects, or origins are present. In this success, there is the diligence, sincerity, and support of all our brothers and sisters who have not withheld their prayers and support from us</p>					
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	during the most difficult times of the past 21 years. God willing, from May 14th onwards, we will add new links to this chain of success that has lasted for 21 years. Together with our people, we will build the Century of Turkey once again, shoulder to shoulder.					
21	It was certainly no coincidence that we chose to have our largest embrace on the road to May 14th at Atatürk Airport People's Garden. Yesterday, Istanbul was more beautiful, more magnificent than ever. At Atatürk Airport People's Garden, we said "TURKEY TRUSTS US" with over 1.7 million of our fellow citizens from all 39 districts of our city. We renewed our oath, refreshed our love, strengthened our affection, and further solidified our solidarity. Atatürk Airport was the place where, at the beginning of the last century, our country's aviation technology initiative began, only to be abruptly halted by the single-party	08.05.2023	14K	62K	9.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655461106230370306">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655461106230370306</a>

<p>CHP before it could take root.</p> <p>Atatürk Airport was the place where the dreams of the late Vecihi Hürkuş were buried. We see that similar actions to what happened to Mr. Vecihi are now being done to our defense industry companies. With the same insidious methods, efforts are being made to cut off the growth and expansion of the world's number one Aviation, Space, and Technology Festival, TEKNOFEST, before it can grow further. Of course, the main target is the TEKNOFEST youth who are curious, questioning, passionate about science and technology, and devoted to their country and nation.</p> <p>Another characteristic of Atatürk Airport is that it is the place where we, along with the people of Istanbul, wrote the epic of July 15th, while some were fleeing through the tanks. Those who are disturbed by the rise of national will experienced the same defeat, the same disappointment, every time they pass through</p>					
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	<p>these places. Hopefully, we will never end their nightmares.</p> <p>Just as we have walked the path with only our nation until now, today and tomorrow, we will continue to walk hand in hand with our esteemed nation. I thank all my brothers and sisters who filled the square with their love, enthusiasm, gratitude, determination, and patience, but were unable to enter.</p>					
22	Beloved Istanbul, heralding the Century of Turkey!	08.05.2023	19K	75K	6.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655316594602520577">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655316594602520577</a>
23	Uncle Hüseyin... May Allah be pleased with you and all the friends who attended our Istanbul rally.	08.05.2023	15K	66K	6.6M	<a href="https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655674192749010946">https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655674192749010946</a>
24	We are in Kırklareli. #TheRightChoiceFor KırklareliIsAKParty	08.05.2023	7.2K	29K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655524530180292608">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655524530180292608</a>
25	I rely on Kırklareli's support in turning our dreams into reality. Thank you, Kırklareli!	08.05.2023	6.5K	25K	2.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/165554">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/165554</a>

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26	“We walked together on these roads, Kırklareli! After May 14th, we will also walk together towards the Century of Turkey, Kırklareli...	08.05.2023	9K	34K	7.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655583080105787392">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655583080105787392</a>
27	Magnificent Kırklareli!	08.05.2023	7.3K	34K	3.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655545583191351298">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655545583191351298</a>
28	Magnificent Tekirdağ!	08.05.2023	7.2K	32K	3.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655622590654820359">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655622590654820359</a>
29	Murat Hüdavendigâr's entrusted beautiful Tekirdağ... Thank you, Tekirdağ!	08.05.2023	6.9K	28K	2.1M	<a href="https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655618835553173505">https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655618835553173505</a>
30	We are in Tekirdağ. #TheRightChoiceForTekirdağ	08.05.2023	7.7K	32K	1M	<a href="https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655594625527103488">https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655594625527103488</a>
31	We are in Edirne. #TheRightChoiceForEdirne	08.05.2023	7.4K	30K	1.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655557184627920898">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655557184627920898</a>
32	Magnificent Edirne!	08.05.2023	19K	75K	6.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com">https://twitter.com</a>

						/RTERdogan/status/1655316594602520577
33	A lifetime is not enough to love you, Edirne...	08.05.2023				
34	Edirne, which served as the capital of our state for a century and paved the way for the conquest of Istanbul step by step... Thank you, Edirne!	08.05.2023	8.8K	39K	7.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655639199901700096">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655639199901700096</a>
35	We are appointing 45,000 teachers today.	08.05.2023	7.5K	31K	2.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655499485357699076">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655499485357699076</a>
36	Today, we have carried out the largest teacher appointment in the history of our Republic in one go. For 21 years, we have prioritized education. Let's take a look at the historic steps we have taken, from free textbooks to providing meals for 5 million children every day. We have increased our education budget to 651 billion liras. In 2002, we had about 500,000 teachers, now this number has reached 1.2 million. The number of teachers appointed during our tenure has reached 800,000. In	08.05.2023	8.7K	30K	4.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655520511533670403">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1655520511533670403</a>

<p>the last 10 years, we have brought together 12,098 disabled teachers with their students. We have increased the number of classrooms from 343,000 to 620,000. We have reduced the student-teacher ratio from 28 to 15 in primary education and from 18 to 13 in secondary education; we have reached the OECD average. In 2002, only 44 out of 100 high school-age students could go to school, today 99% of them are attending. In 2002, the enrollment rate for 5-year-olds in preschool was 11%, today it is 90%. In 2002, only 39 out of 100 girls were accessing school in secondary education, today 95% are accessing. We are reintroducing idle village schools to the service of our nation with a new and modern approach. Within just 1 year, we have opened 2,670 village life centers. This year, we plan to open all the schools in villages with more than 10 households as life centers. We provide free textbooks for each student, cover</p>					
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	<p>additional resource needs, and provide daily meals for 5 million children. By implementing the Teaching Profession Law, which has been on the agenda for 60 years, we have provided additional financial and economic rights to our teachers. From now on, we will continue to increase the welfare and quality of life of our teachers, together with all our public servants. I congratulate the teachers we have appointed today and wish them success in their duties. With our strong education army, we will turn the Turkey Century into the "century of education".</p>					
37	<p>Today is a day of pride, a day of happiness... Congratulations on the appointment of 45,000 teachers.</p>	08.05.2023	6.7K	28K	6.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655510728995123200">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655510728995123200</a>
38	<p>By provoking the people, and when their power falls short, by attempting to discredit them, they are already seeking excuses for the defeat they will face. They staged the same scenario in previous elections.</p>	08.05.2023	12K	52K	5.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655589060948140036">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655589060948140036</a>

	<p>This time, they will not succeed. They will not be able to manipulate this nation into their dirty games. They will not tarnish our eternal brotherhood. My request from my people is to take good care of the ballot boxes on May 14. But that's not all; until May 14, I also urge you to find at least one neighbor, relative, spouse, or friend who is still undecided about their choice and encourage them to join the side of the Turkey Century.</p>					
39	<p>Yesterday, we embraced our people, met our compatriots in the western frontier cities, our unshakable fortresses in Kırklareli, Edirne, and Tekirdağ, and relieved our longing. Thrace, especially Kırklareli, has a very different and special place in us and our political movement. When we were unjustly punished for reading a poem, Kırklareli hosted us in Pınarhisar. We never forgot the tears shed by hundreds of thousands as they escorted us to Pınarhisar prison. We never forgot the</p>	09.05.2023	7.4K	27K	7.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655820740732526592">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655820740732526592</a>

<p>conscientious stance our nation showed against this injustice, while others measured our political life from newspaper headlines. We never forgot how Kırklareli and all of Turkey stood by us. The dungeon they threw us into, by God's decree, turned into a "Medrese-i Yusufiye," a school, the first step of a new journey. We outlined our party's horizon there, crystallized our dreams for Turkey, and shaped our future vision there. With the help of our Lord and the support of our people, we realized the "Anatolian Revolution" in the November 3, 2002 elections. We shattered the chains of tutelage imposed on the will of our people; the shackles of crisis, chaos, coup, and political instability. Of course, like every human, there are things we really wanted to do but couldn't. If we were to list the projects blocked by bureaucratic oligarchy, obstructed by the opposition, sabotaged by marginal organizations, we</p>					
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	would never finish. But by not surrendering to this obstructive politics, we have embroidered our country with our works. After May 14, we will continue to work to grow and strengthen Turkey. We will sweat more, run more, to serve our dear nation. Our song and our love for serving the nation never end.					
40	May you smile within the Hasbahçe forever, may your face smile eternally, Tekirdağ!	09.05.2023	8K	37K	4.7M	<a href="https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655693809941090304">https://x.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655693809941090304</a>
41	Public Collective Labor Agreement Signing Ceremony for the Year 2023	09.05.2023	6.6K	25K	1.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655862605787852800">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655862605787852800</a>
42	As of today, voting has been completed for our dear citizens living abroad in the countries they reside in... Thanks to you, we achieved a record turnout and participation rate in these elections from abroad. Despite efforts to obstruct and attacks by separatists, I express my gratitude to all my brothers and sisters who reflected	09.05.2023	9.8K	47K	6.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655939717060493313">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655939717060493313</a>

	their free will at the ballot box. Voting at airports and border crossings will continue until May 14th. Citizens registered in the overseas voter registry can cast their votes at these locations until the closing time of the polls on May 14th. I invite all my brothers and sisters abroad to use this democratic right until the last moment. I believe together we will build the Turkey Century.					
43	Magnificent Adana!	09.05.2023	9.7K	42K	3.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655987237316591630">https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655987237316591630</a>
44	We're in Adana. #TheRightChoiceforAdana	09.05.2023	7.5K	30K	2.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655971133647093769">https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655971133647093769</a>
45	The love, enthusiasm, and excitement of this city give us an extra strength. Thank you, Adana!	09.05.2023	7.9K	33K	2.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655994431768494101">https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/1655994431768494101</a>
46	Magnificent Aydın!	09.05.2023	7.6K	35K	5.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/165593">https://twitter.com/RErdogan/status/165593</a>

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47	We are in Aydın. #TheRightChoiceFor Aydın	09.05.2023	7.6K	31K	1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655914305642983426">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655914305642983426</a>
48	Land of heroes, land of brave, beautiful Aydın... Thank you, Aydın!	09.05.2023	6.5K	27K	1.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655930815879200768">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655930815879200768</a>
49	Once again, Aydın, overflowing like a restless river, unable to be contained!	09.05.2023	9.1K	40K	3.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656013415813632000">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656013415813632000</a>
50	Our civil servants can rest assured that it's our responsibility to ensure their rights are protected. We have preparations based on inflation differentials and welfare bonuses for July. We will continue the efforts we initiated at the beginning of the year in this regard. We won't let anyone suffer due to inflation, nor will we hold anyone back. On the contrary, we will always strive to push forward. Just as we've addressed all the shortcomings of our country so far, we'll also be fortunate	09.05.2023	10K	47K	11.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655874365370540032">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1655874365370540032</a>

	enough to solve today's problems.					
51	We are allocating an additional quota of 25% beyond the general placement for high school students in earthquake-prone provinces to enroll in state universities in their own provinces. This arrangement, benefiting 21,560 students, is good news for our youth.	09.05.2023	6.2K	19K	2.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655974457431687170">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655974457431687170</a>
52	We are increasing the wages of public workers by 45%, including a share of prosperity, within the framework of collective agreements. This is good news for our workers and institutions.	09.05.2023	9.4K	31K	10.4	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655870491272400896">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655870491272400896</a>
53	Wherever they may be in the world, we never left any of our people without support. We rescued thousands of citizens in need of urgent intervention with our air ambulances. The century of health, the century of Turkey!	09.05.2023	9.7K	30K	2.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655882807305179139">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1655882807305179139</a>
54	The city of courage and bravery, our pride, Adana!	10.05.2023	9.2K	44K	5.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656056701538148353">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656056701538148353</a>
55	We have experienced everything that has happened to the	10.05.2023	11K	41K	7.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656056701538148353">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656056701538148353</a>

<p>politicians who served our country in the past, and even more. For the past 21 years, we have been fighting against dirty scenarios on behalf of the nation. They tried to hinder us with court decisions, intimidate us with guardianship. They targeted us through our colleagues with the MIT conspiracy. They tried to intimidate us by setting our streets on fire during the Gezi events. On December 17-25, they attempted to usurp national will through recordings that Bay Bay Kemal himself now admits were "fabricated". On July 15, they directly targeted our lives through the treacherous FETÖ gang. They unleashed all terrorist organizations from ISIS to PKK against us. Their aim was to forcibly revoke the mandate given by the people at the ballot box. But we, at the risk of our lives, stood up for our democracy. We lost many of our comrades in arms in the treacherous attacks of the separatist organization. Molotov cocktails were thrown</p>					<p>gan/statu s/165618 3159137 107968</p>
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	<p>at our election offices, many of our brothers and sisters were harassed and humiliated. Despite all the provocations we faced, we did not deviate from the path of law, democracy, and legitimacy. We never tarnished the honor and dignity of the ballot box. We said whatever we had to say through the ballot box. We trusted in the "Anatolian Wisdom," not in what Western powers whispered in our ears. Today, we trust in the insight and sagacity of 85 million people. We wholeheartedly believe that Anatolian Wisdom will prevail on May 14th.</p>					
56	<p>Council of State Presidency 155th Anniversary Ceremony</p>	10.05.2023	5.4K	21K	936.9K	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656228466193321984">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656228466193321984</a>
57	<p>We want to bring Turkey to a civil and libertarian constitution prepared by national will. Achieving this will, hopefully, mean the dispersal of the last clouds over our democracy. With the constitutional amendment in 2017, we realized one of the</p>	10.05.2023	7.1K	24K	3.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656243740238057473">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656243740238057473</a>

	<p>most important governance reforms in the history of our country. While establishing the Presidential Government System, we also strengthened the principle of separation of powers. With this constitutional amendment, we also added the term "impartiality" to the "independence" of the judiciary. We believe that by bringing our country to a new and civil constitution, we will provide significant service to our judiciary along with other areas.</p> <p>After the elections, we will bring this issue back to the agenda of both our people and our Parliament. We will continue our efforts with determination for a new, civil, and libertarian constitution, which is one of the most important goals of our vision for the Turkey Century.</p>					
58	<p>We are in Batman. #TheRightChoiceforBatman</p>	10.05.2023	8K	33K	1.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656271638743199746">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656271638743199746</a>

59	We are both travel companions and fate partners with the people of Batman, and we have been brothers since the beginning. Thank you, Batman!	10.05.2023	7K	29K	3.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656284798522908673">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656284798522908673</a>
60	Magnificent Batman!	10.05.2023	8.1K	41K	44M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656288478337060869">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656288478337060869</a>
61	After years of crisis, instability, and underdevelopment, we brought the "true spring" to Turkey in 2002, thanks to God. Over the past 21 years, we have strengthened this climate with bold steps in the economy, democracy, counterterrorism, and rights and freedoms. We cleared the wreckage left by the guardianship and raised the standards of our democracy. We shelved denial policies that disregarded our people's faith, language, and culture, ensuring they never resurface. From TRT Kurdish to optional Kurdish lessons and the opening of Kurdish language departments at universities, we turned many dreams into	10.05.2023	8.6K	32K	7.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656296376127606786">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656296376127606786</a>

<p>reality that were previously unimaginable. Throughout this struggle, we faced Mr. Kemal and the CHP mentality trying to obstruct us. They tried every possible means, including threats, to stop us. Now they talk about spring. The false spring Mr. Kemal will bring means a harsh winter for this nation. Mr. Kemal's spring would only bring spring to Kandil and Pennsylvania. It would bring spring to terrorist nests in northern Syria and Iraq. It would bring spring to those dreaming of getting out of prison, to baby killers, organizers of the Gezi events, and perpetrators of the October 6-8 events. It would bring spring to the FETÖ traitors who rained bombs on our people on the night of July 15th. My people know very well that those promising them a "false spring" are actually talking about winter. I believe my people will not fall into such a trap on May 14th.</p>					
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62	The opening of the Necat Nasıroğlu Complex in Batman.	10.05.2023	6K	25K	1.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656304622095532033">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656304622095532033</a>
63	We are in Mardin. #TheRightChoiceForMardin	10.05.2023	7.3K	30K	1.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656324774375702531">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656324774375702531</a>
64	The cradle of religions, languages, and civilizations, the pearl of Mesopotamia, Mardin... Thank you, Mardin!	10.05.2023	7K	29K	2.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656338306588606480">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656338306588606480</a>
65	Magnificent Mardin!	10.05.2023	7.8K	38K	2.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656342081508343822">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656342081508343822</a>
66	Just as Dicle loves you passionately, we are also deeply in love with you, Batman!	10.05.2023	9.9K	43K	4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656350891346382848">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656350891346382848</a>
67	Dear Kurdish brothers and sisters. We have fought great battles to ensure that your rights, as pure as your mother's milk, are delivered to you in an honorable manner. We have made serious efforts to prevent mothers from crying,	11.05.2023	18K	67K	19.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656545570499043333">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656545570499043333</a>

<p>to prevent hearts from burning. You are the closest witnesses to our sincere efforts. You know very well the adversities we have overcome to come to this day, and the traps that have been set before us. Of course, there have been shortcomings, things we wanted to do but couldn't; however, what we have achieved for Turkey in terms of rights and freedoms is evident. We will absolutely not allow any regression from these gains. Whoever tries to revive the old Turkey under the threat of terrorism will find us against them. Whoever tries to give guns to poor Kurdish children and make them shoot soldiers, police, and our people will find us against them. Whoever attempts to harm our nation's peace on behalf of imperialist powers will find us against them. Whoever tries to reach for your rights will find Tayyip Erdoğan and the People's Alliance against them. As long as our Lord grants us life and our people grant us</p>					
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	<p>authority; In this country, mothers will not cry again... No one will be able to forcibly take our children to the mountains... The darkness of terror will not descend upon our cities along with the night... No one will be able to threaten my Kurdish brothers, no one will be able to put their will under the yoke of a gun! We will work until Turkey becomes a freer, more peaceful, and prosperous place for all 85 million people. With the support of our Kurdish brothers, we will build the Turkey Century together.</p>					
68	<p>Young people asked, and I answered. Tonight at 9:00 PM on TV channels and our social media accounts...</p>	11.05.2023	19K	58K	54.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656577384114700290">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656577384114700290</a>
69	<p>HAK-İŞ The General Assembly.</p>	11.05.2023	5.6K	22K	1.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656603307769491457">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656603307769491457</a>
70	<p>We are raising the minimum salary for civil servants to the level of 22,000 TL. We are automatically reflecting these salary increases to retired</p>	11.05.2023	19K	66K	19.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656608644648108032">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656608644648108032</a>

	civil servants as well. May it be beneficial for our nation.					
71	With the opening of our parliament, we hope to bring joy to citizens who receive retirement pensions of over 7,500 liras.	11.05.2023	8.1K	26K	4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656615736356347905">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656615736356347905</a>
72	We are in Pursaklar. #TheRightChoiceFor Ankara	11.05.2023	6.9K	29K	2.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656618896340688898">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656618896340688898</a>
73	Magnificent Pursaklar! Thank you Pursaklar!	11.05.2023	7.4K	35K	3.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656636283903459329">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656636283903459329</a>
74	We're in Mamak - Altındağ. #TheRightChoiceFor Ankara	11.05.2023	6.1K	24K	1.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656643418926518273">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656643418926518273</a>
75	Magnificent Mamak, magnificent Altındağ! Teşekkürler!	11.05.2023	7.5K	33K	2.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656655480876572673">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656655480876572673</a>
76	We're in Sincan. #TheRightChoiceFor Ankara	11.05.2023	6.7K	28K	2.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656672136428408832">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1656672136428408832</a>

77	Magnificent Sincan! Teşekkürler Sincan!	11.05.2023	7.4K	37K	5.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656696324501151744">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656696324501151744</a>
78	Our meeting where we sincerely answered the questions on the minds of our youth...	11.05.2023	11K	47K	5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656721513008050176">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656721513008050176</a>
79	Ankara was particularly vibrant today with its beautiful districts like Pursaklar, Altındağ, Mamak, and Sincan. What else can we do if not fall in love with this nation?	11.05.2023	8.9K	38K	4.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656752536148144141">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656752536148144141</a>
80	Our love and struggle are for our dear nation. We don't pick fights with anyone on our behalf, and when it comes to our nation, we don't recognize anyone else. We take it upon ourselves to run for the sake of our beloved nation with all our might and devotion. We only develop projects, produce works, engage in politics of the heart, and strive to win hearts. No matter what traps are set before us, we never give up serving our country. We never refrain from	12.05.2023	13K	52K	11.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656907905021493248">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656907905021493248</a>

<p>expanding our country and cities, our bread, with investments. Regardless of the attacks we face, we never cast a shadow on the will of the people and our democracy. When necessary, as we did on the night of July 15th, we stand up for our independence and future at the expense of our lives. Because we exist for this nation, which we proudly belong to and serve. We exist to serve over 85 million people with love, without any discrimination. In pursuit of this goal, we have faced many betrayals, overcome many hardships, and engaged in many struggles for existence in the past 21 years. We have laid the groundwork for the Turkey Century in every field, and we are ready. InshaAllah, with May 14th, we will begin the construction of the Turkey Century. We will achieve this, as we have for the past 21 years, with your unwavering support and sincere prayers. Despite the attempts of those who sow</p>					
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	seeds of discord among us, we will uphold our brotherhood. We will UNITE. We will BE BIG. We will BE ALIVE. We will BE BROTHERS. TOGETHER, WE WILL BE TURKEY!					
81	Can someone who caused the deaths of 51 Kurdish brothers in Diyarbakır walk the streets freely?	12.05.2023	7.6K	29K	3.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656954887408697345">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656954887408697345</a>
82	In Turkey, journalists are not being imprisoned as claimed. Most of the individuals in question are in prison for various crimes.	12.05.2023	5.6K	21K	4.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656983865804615680">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656983865804615680</a>
83	We are inaugurating the Istanbul Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha Mosque.	12.05.2023	7.4K	34K	1.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656988102009712643">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656988102009712643</a>
84	May the Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha Mosque, which we inaugurated today, bring blessings to Istanbul and our country.	12.05.2023	8.1K	33K	4.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656995134742106112">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1656995134742106112</a>
85	We are in Sultangazi. #TheRightChoiceForIstanbul	12.05.2023	6.8K	29K	1.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1657001039571169283">https://twitter.com/RT Erdogan/status/1657001039571169283</a>

86	Magnificent Sultangazi! Thank you Sultangazi!	12.05.2023	6.6K	33K	2.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657014229755363328">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657014229755363328</a>
87	We have consistently encouraged the Kızılay, especially to become more active in tent production. When it comes to tents, the Kızılay should not have the slightest problem or issue.	12.05.2023	5.7K	22K	3.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657019043163824128">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657019043163824128</a>
88	We are in Bahçelievler. #TheRightChoiceForIstanbul	12.05.2023	6.5K	29K	1.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657029259452461060">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657029259452461060</a>
89	Magnificent Bahçelievler! Thank you Bahçelievler!	12.05.2023	7K	35K	2.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657042996632723458">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657042996632723458</a>
90	We cannot describe the language we use against extremist movements targeting our families and society as divisive. This threat is directed at all of our futures.	12.05.2023	6.7K	25K	3.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657049241922174977">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657049241922174977</a>
91	We have built over 100,000 houses in northern Syria. Voluntary returns to these areas have also begun. Forcing people who have sought refuge with us out the	12.05.2023	6.4K	25K	4.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657056791447113728">https://twitter.com/RTERdogan/status/1657056791447113728</a>

	door is not in line with our humanitarian, moral, and civilizational values. However, we will, of course, take necessary action against those who cause trouble.					
92	The 3rd Turkey Youth Summit	12.05.2023	7.8K	31K	2.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657091880373346345">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657091880373346345</a>
93	I congratulate our young people who contribute to the strong future of our country and who have been awarded this year in the fields of culture, art, science, sports, and technology. May the 3rd Turkey Youth Summit, which we held in a magnificent atmosphere, bring blessings.	12.05.2023	7.7K	33K	3.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657105971708059648">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657105971708059648</a>
94	Election Special Broadcast	12.05.2023	9.9K	40K	3.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657111545678123008">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657111545678123008</a>
95	Election Special Broadcast – 2	12.05.2023	7.5K	34K	3.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657122158118686753">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657122158118686753</a>
96	Dear people,	13.05.2023	19K	86K	10.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com">https://twitter.com</a>

<p>Since our youth, we have been actively involved in politics, standing before you now. In our 40 years of political life, 21 of which have been in power, we have always upheld democracy and national will. Despite the injustices we faced since 1994, we have upheld justice and acted with fairness. We have embraced all 85 million of our citizens, without alienating anyone. We have not interfered in the lifestyles or ways of life of any of our citizens. We have expanded the rights and freedoms of all segments of our society. Before us, there were bans on headscarves and clothing styles in this country; we abolished them. There was unfair application of quotas in our high schools; we ended it. People could not freely or comfortably practice their beliefs; we changed that. Terrorist organizations were suffocating our citizens; we crushed them. Our democracy was stumbling along slowly and difficultly; we strengthened it.</p>					<p>/RTERdo gan/statu s/165727 0333135 544321</p>
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	<p>The state used to look down on its citizens; we introduced a new understanding. Foreign countries were constantly trying to meddle in our affairs, dictate terms to us; we said stop. Of course, in this struggle, we encountered many obstacles, pressures, threats, coercion, conspiracies, and smear campaigns. Attempts were made to block our democracy initiatives, and our lives were threatened with coup attempts. But we stood firm without flinching, and we have brought our country to a freer, more prosperous, more peaceful, and economically stronger position than it was 21 years ago. Since 2002, we have only engaged in politics of service, politics of accomplishment, and politics of brotherhood. God willing, after May 14th, we will continue to work passionately for all of Turkey.</p>					
97	<p>We are in Ümraniye. #TheRightChoiceForIstanbulIsAKParty</p>	13.05.2023	7.7K	39K	2.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/165731">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/165731</a>

						0031837 102080
98	Magnificent Ümraniye! Thank you Ümraniye!	13.05.2023	7.7K	45K	3.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657324840355782656">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657324840355782656</a>
99	We are in Sancaktepe. #TheRightChoiceForIstanbulIsAKParty	13.05.2023	7.1K	35K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657334358116630528">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657334358116630528</a>
100	Magnificent Sancaktepe! Thank you Sancaktepe!	13.05.2023	6.5K	34K	2.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657347484023136257">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657347484023136257</a>
101	We will unite with those who want all the gains of our homeland to continue in the Century of Turkey on May 14th!	13.05.2023	11K	47K	5.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657358780810813440">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657358780810813440</a>
102	We are in Beyoğlu. #TheRightChoiceForIstanbulIsAKParty	13.05.2023	7.6K	41K	3.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657369360669745158">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657369360669745158</a>
103	Magnificent Kasımpaşa! Thank you Beyoğlu!	13.05.2023	7.9K	46K	5.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657382364861939716">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657382364861939716</a>
104	My love, İstanbul...	13.05.2023	19K	103K	13M	<a href="https://twitter.com">https://twitter.com</a>

						/RTERdo gan/statu s/165739 0250799 296517
105	Dear esteemed comrades! Tomorrow, I kindly request that you all start your day early and be present at the ballot box by 06:30 at the latest. To my fellow polling station officials, you are well aware that the ballot box is sacred, and elections are won at the ballot box. I wish each of you ease during your time at the ballot box. May Allah be our helper and supporter.	13.05.2023	26K	144K	18.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657400115542327297">https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657400115542327297</a>
106	I congratulate all mothers, especially the mothers of martyrs, who are the epitome of unconditional love, compassion, and mercy, on #MothersDay. May Allah have mercy on all mothers who have passed away.	14.05.2023	11K	82K	13.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657657066108997634">https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657657066108997634</a>
107	Dear comrades and fellow citizens... The voting process across our country has been successfully completed, thankfully, in a manner befitting our democracy. Now, as always, it's time to hold onto the ballot boxes tightly. Let's	14.05.2023	25K	160K	37.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657747656523800581">https://twitter.com/RTERdo gan/status/1657747656523800581</a>

	continue to protect the will of our nation until the results are finalized!..					
108	The fact that the May 14th elections took place as a great democracy festival with tranquility and calmness is an expression of the democratic maturity Turkey possesses. While the elections have unfolded in such a positive and democratic atmosphere, rushing to announce results hastily while the vote counting is still ongoing would amount to the usurpation of the national will. We are pleased that the ongoing vote counting reflects the continued trust of our people. I kindly request all my fellow comrades in this cause to remain at the ballot boxes until the results are officially finalized, regardless of the outcome. I congratulate and express my gratitude to all citizens who participated in the elections and contributed to the campaign in the name of democracy.	14.05.2023	25K	16.3K	47.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657823950469038082">https://twitter.com/RTErdogan/status/1657823950469038082</a>

**APPENDIX B. NATION ALLIANCE CANDIDATE KEMAL  
KILIÇDAROĞLU'S X POSTS BETWEEN 06.05.2023 - 14.05.2023**

	Tweet Text	Date	Retweets	Likes	Views	Link
1	People with Disabilities and Their Families.	06.05.2023	12K	85k	6.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654599804712898566">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654599804712898566</a>
2	Public Meeting   Erzincan #Let'sGo	06.05.2023	4.8K	44K	2.5K	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654786664315916288">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654786664315916288</a>
3	The Constitutional Right of Earthquake Victims.	06.05.2023	8.5K	62K	2.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654836049414062080">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654836049414062080</a>
4	Public Meeting   İstanbul #Let'sGo	06.05.2023	8.9K	67K	3.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654852954950893570">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654852954950893570</a>
5	Tonight at 11:00 PM, I will announce our most strategic and magnificent project here. You will hear about our project that will change our position in the world order and elevate Turkey to the highest level. Come, I'm waiting!	06.05.2023	12K	112K	6.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654908213161078784">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654908213161078784</a>
6	Mafias, militants, SADAT members, gangs, and troublemakers have come together, threatening Turkey. Young one, you will bury them in the garbage bin of	06.05.2023	23K	145K	9.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654928737492774912">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654928737492774912</a>

	history in the first round, and then Bay Kemal will send them all where they belong. I promise you!					
7	Neither West nor East, this is the Turkish Way.	06.05.2023	29K	166K	23.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654939104495255552">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654939104495255552</a>
8	They plundered our citizens in the stock market. Small investors were subjected to an unprecedented operation. I'm very sorry, I tried to warn. Some didn't listen to me, some mocked. Bless their hearts. We will collect what was stolen from the manipulators. On May 15th, I will issue an investigation order for the stock market.	07.05.2023	11K	81K	7.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654963121679745025">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1654963121679745025</a>
9	Public Meeting   Kırşehir #Let'sGo	07.05.2023	4.2K	38K	1.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655137717402107904">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655137717402107904</a>
10	Public Meeting   Kırıkkale #Let'sGo	07.05.2023	3.9K	36K	1.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655166240267333632">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655166240267333632</a>
11	You saw what the AK Party Mayor of Erzurum did. We have to surpass this	07.05.2023	14K	113K	7.7K	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655</a>

	threshold, youngsters. They can't stop my son, Mayor Ekrem, with this. These things don't affect him; they just bounce off.					198655622 553601
12	AK Party has used Cemre Demirel as material for its rally. Demirel is young and youngsters can sometimes be impulsive. It's normal. My request is that no one should say anything bad to her on social media. Those who exploit young people should be ashamed of themselves. Those who criticize or support me are all dear to me.	07.05.2023	12K	138K	20.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655210176171917313">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655210176171917313</a>
13	Public Meeting   Antalya #Let'sGo	07.05.2023	4.3K	42K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655231978558615553">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655231978558615553</a>
14	Erzurum incidents.	07.05.2023	42K	225K	22M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655244041162747904">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655244041162747904</a>
15	Public Meeting   Antalya #Let'sGo	07.05.2023	4.6K	46K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655250587410366466">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655250587410366466</a>
16	It sounds like you're mentioning a visit to İyi Party leader	08.05.2023	8.5K	112K	5.3K	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/</a>

	Meral Akşener's family. You're expressing gratitude for their hospitality and mentioning plans to have such gatherings more frequently. Additionally, you're urging people not to pay attention to those who try to stir up trouble, emphasizing the collective effort to bring prosperity to the country.					status/1655318239377780736
17	You're emphasizing the importance of continuing to work for Turkey's future despite potential obstacles from paramilitary groups. You also mention addressing Turkey's most pressing issue with a revolutionary project related to education.	08.05.2023	15K	101K	6.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655482760335613957">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655482760335613957</a>
18	I extend my condolences to the family of our soldier Oğuzhan Kabayel, who was martyred in the traffic accident in Nevşehir. May Allah grant him mercy and patience. May our nation endure this loss!	08.05.2023	2.8K	43K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655502737532940289">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655502737532940289</a>
19	I used my time on TRT to be the voice of what TRT censored.	08.05.2023	16K	130K	6.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655</a>

						522592390 799360
20	Public Meeting   Adana #Let'sGo	08.05.2023	5.3K	47K	2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655581387934642176">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655581387934642176</a>
21	Mr. Kemal's Board - Part 8 Let them wallow in their wickedness, we will mind our own business. Turkey has some of the world's best doctors and healthcare professionals. Geographically, we are also in an advantageous position. We will further expand our country in health and care tourism worldwide. I talked about Health Cities.	08.05.2023	11K	78K	3.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655633713663823872">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655633713663823872</a>
22	I'm a guest on the "Special Interview" program on NTV with journalists Seda Öğretir and Ahmed Arpat.	08.05.2023	4.6K	37K	2.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655649623669895169">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655649623669895169</a>
23	We take pride in sharing life. Now, take this photo and put it on your banners. Dear young conservative women, those who have been propagandizing for months that 'you will lose your gains' have sold all your rights for 3-5 votes. Bay	08.05.2023	17K	169K	15.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655672350983987209">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655672350983987209</a>

	Kemal would never touch your gains!					
24	Public Meeting   Bolu #Let'sGo	09.05.2023	4K	37K	1.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655879808537206785">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655879808537206785</a>
25	Public Meeting   Düzce #Let'sGo	09.05.2023	3.4K	32K	1.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655909043670749184">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655909043670749184</a>
26	Come back, my children, return, young people. This country needs you. Your dreams are my goals.	09.05.2023	23K	191K	10.9M	<a href="https://x.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655933708359041024">https://x.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655933708359041024</a>
27	Public Meeting   Sakarya #Let'sGo	09.05.2023	3.8K	37K	1.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655944505835790337">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655944505835790337</a>
28	Mr. Kemal's Agenda-9 We don't have time to spare for fights. To compete with the world, we need a strong internet network. Not some makeshift “half-baked” system, but fully high-speed communication systems will be established all over Turkey. I explained the Digital Infrastructure.	09.05.2023	11K	79K	3.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655973527353163785">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1655973527353163785</a>
29	Let's Finish It in the First Round.	09.05.2023	27K	169K	12.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/</a>

						status/1656012946542145537
30	Public Meeting   Aydın #Let'sGo	10.05.2023	4.6K	42K	2.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656254402846654465">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656254402846654465</a>
31	Together, we will hopefully rescue the treasury from the shameless and the thieves.	10.05.2023	13K	117K	6.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656295212862324737">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656295212862324737</a>
32	Public Meeting   Kütahya #Let'sGo	10.05.2023	3.8K	38K	2.1M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656300051021574144">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656300051021574144</a>
33	I won't even look at the tears in your eyes, stock market manipulators. I swear by God, I won't.!	10.05.2023	15K	154K	8.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656330196713193472">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656330196713193472</a>
34	United we stand...	10.05.2023	12K	104K	9.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656343362167767042">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656343362167767042</a>
35	Answering questions from journalists Merdan Yanardağ and Evren Özalkuş on Tele-1 TV.	10.05.2023	4.1K	34K	2.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656359994005295105">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656359994005295105</a>
36	Mr. Kemal's Plan - 10: We have prepared ourselves in every way to govern the Turkish state. They spent all their energy on	10.05.2023	11K	80K	4.2K	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656381088388861958">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656381088388861958</a>

	conflict and slander, while we worked on the future. We are ready to take Turkey to the world league. It's time to implement what we've worked on. This time, I explained our Vision Leap.					
37	I'm a guest on İsmail Küçükkaya's program "Yeni Bir Sabah" on Halk TV.	11.05.2023	4.6K	44K	2.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656544598741876736">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656544598741876736</a>
38	She's our atomic ant. With the energy and determination of young people like her, we will win.	11.05.2023	9.4K	109K	10.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656596173153501188">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656596173153501188</a>
39	Public Meeting   Sivas #Let'sGo	11.05.2023	4.7K	44K	3.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656600864390541312">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656600864390541312</a>
40	My call still stands. Let's set aside past grievances and animosities. We invite Mr. İnce to the table of Turkey. Please, let him come. ...	11.05.2023	32K	275K	20.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656640005098418178">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656640005098418178</a>
41	Public Meeting   Bursa #Let'sGo	11.05.2023	5.5K	55K	3.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656665580609638402">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656665580609638402</a>
42	The Euro has fallen. The stock market has soared. Just wait	11.05.2023	24K	235K	9.8M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/</a>

	until Mr. Kemal comes on May 15th, you'll see what happens. We will enrich this country!					status/1656691624188039170
43	Dear Russian Friends, The montages, conspiracies, Deep Fake content, and tapes spread in this country yesterday, you are behind them. If you want the continuation of our friendship after May 15, keep your hands off the Turkish state. We still favor cooperation and friendship.	11.05.2023	43K	250K	39.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1656705796208574468">https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1656705796208574468</a>
44	Дорогие русские друзья, Вы стоите за монтажами, заговорами, контентом Deep Fake и записями, которые вчера были разоблачены в этой стране. Если вы хотите продолжения нашей дружбы после 15 мая, держите руки подальше от турецкого государства. Мы по-прежнему выступаем за сотрудничество и дружбу.	11.05.2023	12K	84K	7.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1656705798557384727">https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1656705798557384727</a>
45	Truths.	11.05.2023	23K	159K	10.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/">https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/</a>

						status/1656753132204879886
46	#MothersWillDecide	12.05.2023	13K	99K	7.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656775848282714113">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656775848282714113</a>
47	I am addressing the youth. There is someone shamelessly spreading black propaganda with edited content. The threshold is right here. If Halep is there, Arşın is here.	12.05.2023	24K	173K	11.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656915099540508672">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656915099540508672</a>
48	Mr. Kemal never turns back from the path he has taken. For our nation, with our nation. May God be our helper.	12.05.2023	53K	240K	22M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656960304889167873">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656960304889167873</a>
49	Public Meeting   Samsun #Let'sGo	12.05.2023	5.5K	56K	3.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656983630621843465">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1656983630621843465</a>
50	Public Meeting   Ankara #Let'sGo	12.05.2023	8.4K	77K	4.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657030921307013127">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657030921307013127</a>
51	I'm a guest on the "Leaders on FOX" program on FOX TV.	12.05.2023	8.6K	85K	5.2M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657093531721428992">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657093531721428992</a>
52	Can I give you one more promise? While we govern	12.05.2023	29K	289K	10.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/</a>

	this country, you will never see all channels broadcasting the same content again. We promise democracy, democracy. Democracy is a very beautiful, very wonderful thing, do you know...					status/1657122943518793730
53	Let's meet here at 01:00 tonight, young people. Tomorrow is Saturday, don't sleep, nothing will happen :)	12.05.2023	17K	239K	18.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657126311515635713">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657126311515635713</a>
54	Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.	13.05.2023	45K	290K	22.5M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657143718720200706">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657143718720200706</a>
55	This is not what we believe in. This language is AK Party's. In our time, whoever, wherever, however they want to practice their art, it's not for us to interfere. Friends, please understand why we are here. We will not fight with artists; the world is our arena for competition. Let's understand it now!	13.05.2023	13K	173K	18.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657326503909048320">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657326503909048320</a>
56	To the heroes who will be at the ballot boxes...	13.05.2023	16K	130K	6.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657332389020827649">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657332389020827649</a>

57	Those who dare, win. We learned that from our Atatürk. We're at Anıtkabir with the youth.	13.05.2023	13K	146K	7.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657342398182330368">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657342398182330368</a>
58	Oh, kids, now I heard your voices, I regret missing you. I'm so excited, really excited!	13.05.2023	25K	281K	19.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657363010866880512">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657363010866880512</a>
59	At 7:00 PM here, I will announce Bay Kemal's most ambitious Project.	13.05.2023	13K	190K	17.7M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657401560811356161">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657401560811356161</a>
60	Democracy is Mr. Kemal's most ambitious project, young people. Because democracy and freedom are the best gifts that can be given to the youth as a revolution.	13.05.2023	34K	277K	17.6M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657416838836375552">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657416838836375552</a>
61	Press Release.	14.05.2023	9.5K	119K	10.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657666257846681604">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657666257846681604</a>
62	We voted together with my wife, Selvi Hanım. May it be beneficial for our country and our nation.	14.05.2023	14K	316K	17M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657693258997170177">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657693258997170177</a>
63	I want to address our democracy heroes. Never leave the ballot boxes until the signed final ballot report is delivered, no matter what	14.05.2023	57K	452K	25.4M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657762084275249152">https://twitter.com/kilicdaroglu/status/1657762084275249152</a>

	happens. The full and accurate expression of the will of the people depends on your determination. You will see that it will be worth your exhaustion.					
64	We're in the lead.	14.05.2023	183K	1.1M	148.3M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1657791290833096708">https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1657791290833096708</a>
65	The scheme that started with 60% has now dropped below 50%. Poll observers and officials in the election boards should never leave their positions. We will not sleep tonight, my people. I warn the Supreme Election Council (YSK), you must ensure the integrity of data entry in the provinces.	14.05.2023	80K	593K	28.9M	<a href="https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1657825940553052161">https://twitter.com/kilicdarogluk/status/1657825940553052161</a>

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