

Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article

# Social Media Uses of Political Party Provincial Presidency Except Election Period: The Example of Giresun Province

## Seçim Dönemi Dışında Siyasi Parti İl Başkanlıklarının Sosyal Medya Kullanımları: Giresun İli Örneği

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### Abstract

The developments in new communication technologies in recent years have made it possible to exist in political communication outside the election period. Social networks that emerged with Web 2.0 are important channels for providing and managing this communication. Social networks used by political actors such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are also of great importance in the continuity of political communication. Political parties already carry out this communication facility through the official accounts of the party headquarters. At the local level, the task of maintaining active communication with citizens falls on the provincial presidencies of political parties. Being visible in new communication environments, creating an agenda and ensuring the continuity of political communication, especially the young population, brings it with the advantage of winning.

In this study, the use of social media by the Provincial Presidency of the Justice and Development Party, the Republican People's Party, the Nationalist Movement Party and the İYİ Party of the parties that entered the last local elections in Giresun Province, outside the election period, were evaluated using the content analysis method within the framework of the theory of gatekeeping, which was transformed by the emergence of digital technologies.

**Keywords:** Political communication, Mass media, Gatekeeping Model, Social Media.

### Öz

Son yıllarda yeni iletişim teknolojilerinde yaşanan gelişmeler siyasal iletişimde seçim dönemi dışında da var olmayı mümkün kılmaktadır. Web 2.0 ile ortaya çıkan sosyal ağlar bu iletişimi sağlamak ve yönetmek adına önemli mecralardır. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram gibi siyasi aktörlerin de kullandığı sosyal ağlar siyasal iletişimin sürekliliğinde de büyük önem arz etmektedir. Siyasi partiler bu iletişim olanağını parti genel merkezinin resmi hesapları üzerinden zaten gerçekleştirmektedir. Yerel düzlemde ise vatandaşla iletişimini aktif tutma görevi siyasi partilerin il başkanlıklarına düşmektedir. Yeni iletişim ortamlarında görünür olmak, gündem oluşturmak ve siyasal iletişiminin sürekliliğini sağlamak, özellikle genç nüfusu kazanma avantajını da beraberinde getirmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, Giresun İlinde son yerel seçime girmiş partilerin Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve İYİ Parti İl Başkanlıklarının seçim dönemi dışında sosyal medya kullanımları, dijital teknolojiler ile dönüşüme uğrayan eşik bekçiliği kuramı çerçevesinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Siyasal iletişim, Kitle iletişim araçları, Eşik Bekçiliği Modeli, Sosyal Medya.



## Introduction

Political communication, which we can define as the role of communication in politics, delivers messages to target audiences using communication techniques and methods. This process, which began with rhetoric in ancient Greece, has evolved into the technicalization of politics with the development and dissemination of mass media. Communication technologies that make it easier to reach the masses make it possible not only to provide political communication, but also to maintain this communication.

Political communication is handled in two processes: the election period and the non-election period. Nowadays, new communication channels have been added to political communication activities in which high-budget campaigns are organized only during election periods using traditional methods. Social media platforms based on the Internet-connected web 2.0 Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram occupy the first places worldwide. In this context, the new communication channels that have emerged prioritize the continuation of political communication activities not only during the election period, but also outside the election period. In particular, thanks to mobile communication technologies, the ability to access political information, political actors and participate in political life anywhere at any time makes this situation mandatory for political actors. Through communication technologies to be able to appear at any moment to speak, or written communication the ability to communicate both citizens and political actors begin to take a more active role in their political causes. Social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which are the tools of new communication technologies that are used extensively in politics as well as traditional media, are an important communication tool between the voter and the politician supported by the voters (Altunbaş, 2014, p. 55). Effective use of communication technologies by political actors provides a great advantage for the healthy conduct of political communication activities that exist not only during election periods, but also outside the election period. In particular, both citizens and political actors who have the opportunity for horizontal communication through new communication technologies, who can be interactive, who are exempt from geographical limitations, continue their political communication outside the election period.

Studies examining how political communication activities are carried out through social media platforms mainly cover election periods. The studies especially focus on political campaigns carried out on social media platforms, leader image, political participation, political marketing and political advertising. Studies carried out in these areas mostly include heads of state, political parties and local governments, which are political actors. The new communication channels that emerged with the developing technologies not only make it possible to exist outside the election period, but also expand the communication network. Provincial presidencies, which cannot find much space in the mainstream media, are also included in this expanding communication process. Provincial presidencies, which are the visible face of the political parties on a provincial basis, have an important role in establishing and maintaining communication between the headquarters and the citizens. It is thought that the study will contribute to the field, since studies on the use of social media by provincial presidencies, which have an important role as a political actor, are not widespread. The universe of the research consists of the provincial presidencies of the political parties in Turkey. As a sample, in the province of Giresun, who entered the local elections on March 31, 2019; Provincial Presidency of AK Party, CHP, MHP and İYİ Party were determined. The study was limited to the most used social media networks, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In the application part of the study, the official accounts of the Justice and Development Party, Republican People's Party, Nationalist Movement Party and IYI Party Provincial Presidency, which entered the 2019 Local Elections in Giresun, on social media platforms were examined. The study was limited to the social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The first November 2019 and 30 November 2019, the data obtained cover the shares made in these media. The researcher provided access to the shares made from the social media official accounts of the party provincial presidencies on 01.12.2019, and the data were tabulated and evaluated using the content analysis method.

In the conceptual framework of the study, political communication, mass media, social media, gatekeeping model and the relations of these concepts with each other are discussed. The study is handled within the framework of the gatekeeping model, which is one of the mainstream theories that has been transformed in the context of new communication technologies. In the application part of the study; Social platforms of Giresun Provincial Directorates of AK Party, CHP, MHP and IYI Party were analyzed by content analysis method. In the conclusion part of the study, suggestions that emerged in line with the analyzes are included.

### **Related Works**

Studies on the use of social media in politics generally focus on the use of social media by political parties and leaders. In one of these studies, in which the social media usage levels of political parties in Turkey were compared, it was determined that AK Party, MHP and CHP actively use their social media accounts. (Dilber, 2018). In another study, the use of social media by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Binali Yıldırım, Devlet Bahçeli and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in forming public opinion during the 16 April 2017 constitutional referendum process was examined. In this study, it was concluded that political parties and leaders did not use social media effectively during the campaign process (Doğan, 2019). Another study examining the posts made by the 26th Term Deputies of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on Twitter, it was seen that Twitter was used extensively and mostly party and parliamentary studies were included in the posts (Doğan & Alptekin, 2018). In another study, Toy (2021) found that the AK Party and CHP leaders used Twitter intensively and proactively in their campaigns in the local elections held on March 31, 2019. Emrah (2018) discussing the propaganda processes in social media, found that political parties in Turkey used Twitter in line with their own ideologies in the 2017 referendum during the propaganda process. Kutlu (2019), examining the Instagram accounts of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, concluded that they use this platform as one-way as traditional communication tools. In a different study (Akdal, 2020), in which the practicalities of using Facebook were investigated by the candidates in the 23 June 2019 Istanbul local elections, it was determined that more photos and video content were included. Addressing the mass media and social media in political participation, Silsüpür (2021) suggests using social media to influence and keep the voters excited, both during and outside the election period. In a study examining the use of Instagram for political marketing by mukhtar candidates in the 31 March 2019 local elections, it was concluded that female candidates and candidates aged 45-79 do not use this platform widely (İnanç, Bozdemir , & Doğan , 2020).

There are also studies on the use of social media in political communication in foreign literature. In a study dealing with Hungarian politicians, it was reported that the images used on Facebook and Instagram in political communication were generally used to personalize communication (Farkas & Bene, 2021), while in another study dealing

with the use of social media by German political parties on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube, social media was used a facilitating way for participation and democracy (Stieglitz, Brockmann, & Dang, 2012). In a study conducted in Nigeria on political advertising, it was concluded that the approach to political communication was moved to a negative dimension by making hate speech and fake reporting on social media (Oparaugo, 2021). Changes in the way European parties use it within the party and how Instagram is adopted (Larsson, 2021), Norwegian politicians use Facebook as a tool for marketing and Twitter for dialogue (Enli & Skogerbo, 2013), in the 2012 Presidential elections Barack Obama's use of Facebook as a top-down promotional tool (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015) confirmed by the studies.

### **Political Communication**

Political communication is a field consisting of the combination of communication and political science. The first applications of the discipline "political communication", which appeared at the junction of these two branches of science, date back to Ancient Greece. The concept of "political communication", which was born and developed in the United States after the Second World War and began to be used in Western European Countries since the 1960s, can be expressed in the most general sense as the role of communication in politics. According to Aziz (2014, p. 19) political contact; it defines the specific ideological goals of political actors as the use of types and techniques of communication to make certain groups, masses accepted into countries or blocs, turn them into actions, put them into practice. Çankaya (2015, p. 13) deals with political communication in a wide spectrum, from propaganda to gossip, from top-down relations to the functioning of power institutions, from the activities of pressure groups to public relations, from the press, from news "creation" to TV panel discussions, from brainwashing to political advertising evaluates the activities in this context.

Political communication is a de facto situation that must be maintained for both the ruling party and the opposition parties even after the election period. While the ruling parties are trying to convince their voters that they have made a good choice, the opposition parties are also trying to convince the public by comparing how well they would have made the choice if they were elected in the next election with the performance of the government (Yavaşgel, 2004, p. 147).

Political communication is handled in two processes: the election period and the non-election period. Studies in the field of political communication mainly cover the election period. During the election period; campaigns, political ads, voting behavior, party leaders use social media, the issues in which they share the most in social media, newspaper ads and content analysis of topics such as between the studies available in the literature. However, political communication, which also exists outside of election periods, delivers messages to target audiences using communication technologies and has a separate importance outside the election period.

The head of state, government, political parties, local administrations, pressure groups, non-governmental organizations (Aziz, 2014, pp. 19-37) which are among the actors of political communication, communicate with citizens through the media. Every individual with a political identity who has served in various units in political parties is considered a political actor. In this context, the provincial decencies of political parties serve as the main bridge of communication to be established between the headquarters and the citizen of their provinces.

In the process of political communication functioning for political purposes, the choice of the appropriate channel for messages sent to the target audience is an important factor. Social media networks that have emerged together with mainstream media and new media today should be used correctly and effectively so that messages can be delivered to the target audience as intended. Because when the methods and techniques of political communication are used correctly, the reception, effectiveness and permanence of messages in the desired way by all segments of society is also ensured (Özkan, 2004, p. 43). These platforms, which are used by political parties and provincial presidencies to deliver their messages to the young population, should be used especially actively to make an impact. In order to better understand this process, it would be appropriate to mention the use of mass media in political communication.

### **Political Communication and Mass Media**

Mass parties, candidates, leaders and other political actors communicate their messages to the public through the media. From the point of view of the history of communication, written, audio, visual media are used in political communication, and over time, he has become a political communication actor himself. Mc Nair (2003, p. 5) considers him as a political actor by positioning the media at the center when ranking political actors. The use of mass media, which plays a big role in the dissemination and distribution of messages, in political communication is undoubtedly not a new phenomenon. Newspapers, telephones, radio, television are used in political communication applications all over the world, especially in America. The development of telegraph, telephone, motion picture in the lates of 19th century, radio, television, fax machine, videocassettes, satellite communication and computer and communication technologies in the 20th century caused a transformation in political communication. Radio in the 1920s, television in the 1950s began to be used in American political campaigns, and in the 1952 Eisenhower campaign, advertising spots were used on television for the first time. In 1960, John Kennedy used his own election polling specialist, while in 1972, George MCGovern led the mass mail directly. In 1980, Jimmy Carter tried to address his voters using the tele-conference method, Ronald Reagan used satellite broadcasting at his rallies in 1984, and messages were transmitted to voters via videotapes in 1988. In 1992, former California Governor Edward G. Brown answered questions using the 800 phone number. In 1996, it was aimed that candidates could now be visible on the Internet (Trent & FriedenberG, 2008, pp. 13-14). Thus, the speed of political communication, which also provides the opportunity to convey their messages to a wider audience, has also increased. Nowadays, Internet-based social media platforms contribute to political communication with the target audience by eliminating fast, cost-free and geographical limitations. Of the new communication technologies, the Internet, in particular, is becoming the most important tool that can ensure public participation in discussions about politics outside the election period (Karaçor, 2009, p. 130). In addition, it offers a freer space for political communication-based activities such as obtaining political information, participating in political processes, following world and country politics moment by moment, creating a political agenda compared to mainstream media. Pre-political knowledge creation, distribution, and detection that is interpreted as a process of political communication, as opposed to a simple data exchange, emerging communication technologies to manage an effective method to control this process with you. In this context, it is necessary to take an active role in this transformation in political communication by using communication technologies and these technologies more effectively. Because social media is one of the important platforms that provide this transformation in political communication.

## **The Use of Social Media in Political Communication**

The new communication media emerging today, where information is spread more and more by computers and other technological means, are called new media. Unlike traditional media, new media is defined as a form of communication in which fast, long distances do not create obstacles and there is a large memory capacity, unlike traditional media (Aktan, 2017, pp. 49-50). The social networks that have emerged with the release of web 2.0, known as the literacy network of new media, enable the management and decoupling of interacting global crowds.

Boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 211) social networking sites, individuals within a system of limited public or semi-public profile, create a list of users to add other they share a connection, made by others in the system that allows you to switch between them to view a list of links to web-based services is defined as. With its features such as participation, openness, chat, community, connectivity and collaboration, social media offers the opportunity to receive bi-directional and faster feedback than traditional media. Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2006 and Instagram in 2010 were included in these media, where access was provided easily and cost-free without depending on time and place. In this way, individuals can access alternative media content through these social networks, as well as produce their own content and deliver it to others.

Daşlı lists the features of social media as follows: Social media is user-based, community-oriented and provides the establishment of social relations (Daşlı, 2019, p. 244). In this way, in social media, where people from different languages, religions and ethnicities come together, individuals find the opportunity to share their own content and express themselves by commenting on other users' content. Social media, which brings people with different ideas together online, also allows them to get information from the community pages opened on any subject.

According to Bostancı (2014, p. 88), social media is becoming a new means of politicization for citizens and is turning into a means by which they can express themselves. Thus, the new political communication is based on social media and gives a new dimension to political communication. In particular, the global and mass circulation of messages leads to a widespread distribution of roles at the point of media content production, as well as to an increase in effectiveness in intervening in the political sphere. As seen in Gezi Park and the Arab Spring events, social networks also paved the way for online organizations and bringing this to offline spaces. Therefore, social networks are not only places where ideas are formed and spread, but also places where social events begin to organize (Karakoç & Taydaş, 2015, p. 120).

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which are the next generation of communication media on social media, are low-cost platforms that allow both mass and interpersonal communication, provide a two-way communication process with the possibility of mass and individual messaging. The use of these platforms in political communication is a good example of Barack Obama's political campaign in 2008, especially using the Facebook social network, and winning the American Presidential election by providing effective use. Barack Obama has reached 2 million Facebook members with this election campaign, which especially evaluates the interest of the young population in social networks well. In order to capture the young population, it is important to prefer the new communication channels they use and to use them actively in order to increase the target audience in political communication.

Along with traditional media, social media has become the main platforms of political campaigns to gain the support of potential voters, to raise funds for political parties and for other political purposes. The innovative and comprehensive use of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and MySpace in the 2008 and 2012 US presidential campaigns has been a turning point for modern political communication (Oparaugo, 2021, p. 18). According to Gilardi, Gessler, Kubli & Müller (2021, p. 5), social media is a suitable channel for political communication. It expands the number and types of actors that can potentially shape the agenda. Political actors can reach a wider audience by using social media compared to traditional media. In this context, it is necessary to mention the gatekeeping theory, which is thought to be weakened in social media.

### **Gatekeeping Model**

In the Gatekeeping model, which is one of the mainstream media theories, the gatekeepers are emphasized as the people who determine the media messages. Gatekeeping; It refers to the control over the selection, display, presentation, timing, storage, repetition of any kind of information during the encoding of the message or message components (Donuhue, Tichenor, & Olien , 1972, p. 53).

Gatekeepers are people who make decisions in the first stage of the news production process. They make the selection of the news that will be delivered to the audience through the channel (Yaylagül, 2014, p. 83) The gatekeepers, who are usually news editors, decide the order of a news and how long it will be news. Thus, they contribute to determining the agenda of the society. The concept of gatekeeper, which controls the flow of information and helps the advancement of information, covers the construction process of social reality by the news media as well as the decision-making process.

With the emergence of digital platforms, it is seen that the power of traditional gatekeepers weakens. Due to the nature of social media platforms, users who can produce content and circulate the content they produce can act as the gatekeeper of their own media. This productivity also means that ordinary people who are not media professionals become gatekeepers. This can be interpreted in a way that new communication technologies allow each individual to open their own door besides the doors (threshold) kept by professional guards (Narmanlıoğlu, 2016, p. 159).

According to Hermida (Hermida, 2010), social media technologies such as Twitter are part of a series of Internet technologies that undermine the gatekeeper that ensures news mediation. In this context, the gatekeeper theory, which has been transformed with the developing technologies, offers political actors a more free space to communicate with their target audiences in new communication channels. According to Shoemaker and Vos (2009, p. 7) increasing audience interaction with digital media has added a new dimension to gatekeeping. Thus, users have become secondary gatekeepers.

On the other hand, the new media environment provides unlimited sources of political information, weakening the idea that there are separate doors through which political information passes. This means that if there are no doors, there can be no gatekeepers (Williams & Delli Carpini, 2000, pp. 61-62).

In this study, the use of social media by provincial presidencies as a political actor is discussed within the framework of the gatekeeping theory, which has been transformed by technological developments.

## Method

In the study, the content analysis method, which is often used in the field of social sciences, was used. Content analysis is a research method used especially in the social sciences and a research technique used in accordance with this method. Content analysis has gained importance in communication studies with the spread of mass media, especially in social sciences (Aziz, 1990, p. 105). The content analysis method provides the possibility of interpretation on the basis of the data obtained using statistical data. The use of statistical data also ensures that the researcher can comment systematically and objectively (Koçak & Arun, 2006, p. 24).

The use of social media in political communication has been increasing in recent years, when election studies have been conducted through new media together with traditional media. As a political actor, it is known that political parties turn to social media and use this medium frequently during election campaigns. However, political communication activities also have a great importance and influence outside the election period. Local political components of political parties, which are among the political actors, have more duties. In this context, the determination of whether the social media accounts of the provincial presidencies of the parties are active after the last local elections in Giresun province has been determined as a problematic issue of the study.

The universe of the research consists of the provincial presidencies of the political parties in Turkey. As a sample, the Provincial Presidencies of the AK Party, CHP, MHP and İYİ Party that participated in local elections of March 31, 2019 in the Province of Giresun were determined. The study was limited to the social networks Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Between the dates the first November 2019 and 30 November 2019, the data obtained in the study covers the shares made in these media. The researcher provided access to the shares made from the official social media accounts of the Party Provincial Presidencies on the first december of 2019. The data obtained were tabulated and evaluated using the content analysis method.

The aim of the study is to define the status of the accounts opened by the provincial presidencies of the parties other than the official accounts of the social media platforms of the headquarters, their activity outside the election. In this context, in order to examine the activity and effectiveness of the official accounts opened in the study, answers to the following questions are sought:

- What are the addresses of the Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) of the Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties?
- What is the number of followers of the Giresun Provincial Directorates of Political Parties on social media accounts?
- What are the dates when the social media accounts of the Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties were last shared?
- How many shares have Political Parties made from the social media accounts of Giresun Provincial presidencies?
- What are the social media sharing categories and contents of the Giresun Provincial presidencies of Political Parties?

In the study, the questions that were converted into categories using the content analysis method were examined in tables in order to reach the answers to the questions. Meaningful results are tried to be achieved by analyzing the data contained in the tables

and making cross-comparisons. The conceptual framework of the study on political communication, mass media and social media applications was drawn and social media accounts were examined. The study is important in terms of revealing the practices of using provincial presidencies, official social media accounts, which are a political actor.

## Findings

Between their posts between November 1, 2019 and November 30, 2019 were examined. The official accounts of the Provincial Presidencies of the AK Party, CHP, MHP and IYI Party on popular social media platforms, which entered the 2019 Local Elections in Giresun, were examined in the study. The data obtained in the study were prepared as regards the official accounts of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social media, which were accessed by the researcher on the first December of 2019.

**Table 1.** Social Media Addresses of Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<b>AK Party</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/akgiresun28">https://www.facebook.com/akgiresun28</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/giresunakparti">https://www.instagram.com/giresunakparti</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/akgiresun">https://twitter.com/akgiresun</a>
<b>CHP</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CHP-Giresun">https://www.facebook.com/CHP-Giresun</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/chpgiresun/">https://www.instagram.com/chpgiresun/</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/chp28giresun">https://twitter.com/chp28giresun</a>
<b>MHP</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MHPGiresun28">https://www.facebook.com/MHPGiresun28</a>	None	<a href="https://twitter.com/MhpGiresun">https://twitter.com/MhpGiresun</a>
<b>IYI Party</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/iygiresun">https://www.facebook.com/pg/iygiresun</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/iygiresun">https://www.instagram.com/iygiresun</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/iypartigiresun">https://twitter.com/iypartigiresun</a>

AK Party, CHP, MHP and IYI Party Provincial Directorates have official accounts on the most used social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Among the Party Provincial Presidencies, only the MHP Giresun Provincial Presidency does not have an Instagram account.

**Table 2.** Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties Social Media Accounts Follower Numbers

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<b>AK Party</b>	7367 Likes	696 Followers	1737 Followers
	7404 Followers	13 Followed	70 Followed
<b>CHP</b>	1420 Likes	798 Followers	335 Followers
	1437 Followers	163 Followed	83 Followed
<b>MHP</b>	3553 Likes	None	1144 Followers
	3576 Followers		1212 Followed
<b>IYI Party</b>	2569 Likes	886 Followers	91 Followers
	2634 Followers	30 Followed	10 Followed

When we examine the social media accounts opened by the Provincial Directorates of the Political Party, the AK Party Provincial Presidency ranks first with 7404 followers, while the MHP Provincial Presidency ranks second with 3576 followers, the CHP Provincial Presidency ranks third with 1437 followers, and IYI with 2634 followers. The party is in fourth place. In the first place in the Instagram accounts is the IYI Party Provincial Presidency with 886 followers, the second place is the CHP Provincial Presidency with 798 followers, and the third place is the AK Party Provincial Presidency with 696 followers. MHP Provincial Directorate does not have an Instagram account. When looking at Twitter accounts, AK Party Provincial Presidency ranks first with 1737 followers, MHP Provincial Presidency ranks second with 1212 followers, CHP Provincial Presidency

ranks third with 335 followers and fourth IYI Party Provincial Presidency ranks with 91 followers.

**Table 3.** *Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties Dates When Social Media Accounts Were Last Shared*

	Last Shared Date		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<b>AK PARTY</b>	30 November 2019	30 November 2019	30 November 2019
<b>CHP</b>	23 June 2018	17 April 2018	23 June 2018
<b>MHP</b>	9 July 2019	-	25 November 2019
<b>IYI PARTY</b>	30 November 2019	24 May 2019	13 January 2018

In Table 3, the activity status of the parties was observed by taking into account the official social accounts of the provincial presidencies of the political parties and the dates when they last shared on December 01, 2019 in Table 3. It has been determined that the AK Party Provincial Presidency is active by sharing on all three popular social media platforms. July November 25, 2019 on Twitter and July 9, 2019 on Facebook. MHP Provincial Directorate does not have an Instagram account. January May 2019, November 30, 2019 on Facebook, May 24, 2019 on Instagram and January 13, 2018 on Twitter, it has been seen that the IYI Party Provincial Presidency has been sharing the most recent shares. June April June 23, 2018 on Facebook, April 17, 2018 on Instagram and June 23, 2018 on Twitter, considering the most recent shares made by the CHP Provincial Presidency, it is seen that he shared on Facebook.

Considering the most recent shares of the AK Party Provincial Presidency, it ranks first by making up-to-date shares on all three platforms, while the MHP Provincial Presidency, which shares more up-to-date on Twitter, and the IYI Party Provincial Presidency, which shares actively on Facebook, are in second place. The last place is occupied by the CHP Provincial Presidency, which does not have a current share on all three platforms.

**Table 4.** *The Social Media Accounts of Giresun Provincial Presidencies of Political Parties Number of Shares*

	Number of Shares Made		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<b>AK PARTY</b>	78	39	92
<b>CHP</b>	0	0	0
<b>MHP</b>	0	None	10
<b>IYI PARTY</b>	26	0	0

When the official social media accounts of Giresun Provincial Presidencies are examined, the general distribution of the number of shares made is as follows. In Facebook shares, the AK Party Provincial Presidency is in the first place with 78 shares, and the IYI Party Provincial Presidency is in the second place with 26 shares. The pages of the CHP Provincial Presidency and MHP Provincial Presidencies have not been shared. In Twitter shares, the AK Party Provincial Presidency is in the first place with 92 shares, and the MHP Provincial Presidency is in the second place with 10 Shares. The CHP Provincial Presidency and the IYI Party Provincial Presidency do not have Twitter sharing. With 39 shares on Instagram, only the AK Party Provincial Presidency was shared, while other parties did not use this platform. The content analysis of the shares of the provincial presidencies of the parties is shown through tables by creating categories.

**Table 5.** *AK Party Giresun Provincial Presidency Shares Content Analysis*

Sharing content	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Total
Provincial visits	26	6	16	<b>48</b>
Chairman sharing	8	8	13	<b>29</b>
Sharing party dignitaries	6	2	19	<b>27</b>
Consultation meetings of mayors	6	5	10	<b>21</b>
Important day shares	6	5	9	<b>20</b>
Regular weekly meetings	4	4	5	<b>13</b>
Non-provincial visits	4	2	5	<b>11</b>
Social message sharing	4	2	5	<b>11</b>
Messages of violence against women	3	2	2	<b>7</b>
Wedding, engagement, circumcision, funeral, etc.	4	1	2	<b>7</b>
Messages from the head of the province	4	0	2	<b>6</b>
Sports content sharing	2	1	2	<b>5</b>
Sharing news of martyrs	1	0	1	<b>2</b>
Religious content sharing	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
Total	78	39	92	<b>209</b>
Video sharing	4	2	11	<b>18</b>

Looking at the shares of the AK Party Provincial Presidency, the platform where they share the most shares appears to be Twitter with 92 shares. The second place is occupied by Facebook with 78 shares, and the third place is occupied by Instagram with 39 shares. When you look at the number of videos in the shares, the same ranking stands out. With 11 video shares, Twitter is in the first place, Facebook is in the second place with 4 video shares, and Instagram is in the third place with 2 video shares. The ratios of video sharing to all sharing numbers are as follows. When looking at Twitter shares, the video rate is 11%, on Facebook it is 5%, on Instagram it is 5%. The content of the sharing includes more in-province visits on all three platforms.

**Table 6.** *MHP Giresun Provincial Presidency Shares Content Analysis*

Sharing content	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Chairman sharing	0	0	1
Important day sharing	0	0	1
Important person commemorations for the party	0	0	2
Party related shares	0	0	2
Messages from the Head of the Province	0	0	3
Social message sharing	0	0	1
Total	0	0	10
Video sharing	0	0	1

When we look at the shares of the Provincial Presidency of the Nationalist Movement Party on social networking sites made between the specified dates, it dec that only messages are shared on Twitter. The last post was made on Facebook on July 9, 2019, and there have been no postings after that date. Of the 10 shares made on Twitter, 9 were shared as text and photos, and one was shared as a video. The overall share rate of video sharing is 10%. The messages of the head of the province are more included in the shares.

**Table 7.** *IYI Party Giresun Provincial Presidency Shares Content Analysis*

Sharing content	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Sharing party dignitaries	11	0	0
Chairman sharing	8	0	0
General agenda	3	0	0
Party related shares	2	0	0
Important day sharing	1	0	0
Message of condolence	1	0	0
Total	26	0	0
Video sharing	8	0	0

When Facebook social media of IYI Party Provincial Presidency is examined, it is determined that there were no shares made on Instagram and Twitter between the specified dates, and only shares were made on Dec Facebook page. January May 24, 2019 was the last time Instagram was shared, and January 13, 2018 was the last time Twitter was shared. There are no shares after these dates. Of the 26 shares made on Facebook, 18 contain text and photos, and 8 contain videos. The ratio of video sharing to public shares is 30%. More content related to party dignitaries is included in the shares.

The official accounts of the Republican People's Party Provincial Presidency on three different social media platforms have not been shared between the specified dates. Dec. June 23, 2018 on Facebook, April 17, 2018 on Instagram and June 23, 2018 on Twitter are the most recent dates that the CHP Provincial Presidency has shared. In this sense, the CHP Provincial Presidency does not actively use social media networks. The shares are made from the social media accounts of the women's branches of the CHP and the youth branches.

### Conclusion

In addition to the shares made by the parties from their headquarters accounts in the country's politics, the shares made on a provincial basis in local politics also have an impact. Citizens who watch the news that interests the whole country from the mainstream media are also curious about the news in the province they live in and visit the social media accounts of local political actors. In traditional political communication practices, we can now follow provincial representatives for 24 hours /7 days who we can see only at rally times, party leaders or ministers visiting the city, and we can see their shares about what they have done where and when.

In the study conducted in Giresun, the official Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts of the AK Party, CHP, MHP and IYI Party Provincial Presidencies, which are the 4 parties that participated in the local elections in Giresun, were examined.

As a result of the review, the AK Party Provincial Presidency is the most active dec the dates specified on all three platforms. The MHP and the IYI Party Provincial Presidency come in second place. The CHP Provincial Presidency has never shared it. Not only on the specified dates, but also when looking at the dates of the most recent shares, the Ak Party Provincial Chairmanship is in the first place, the IYI Party Provincial Chairmanship is in the second place, and the MHP Provincial Chairmanship is in the third place. Looking at the most recent share dates, the CHP Provincial Presidency is in last place with the share dated 2018.

The AK Party Provincial Presidency has shared almost the same content on all three social media platforms, and the shares have been mostly dominated by the party-party leader. The shares made up of articles, photos and videos. The video sharing rate is low compared to the general sharing distribution with 8%.

“Party leader” sharing is seen as one of the only platforms where the MHP Provincial Presidency shares Twitter sharing content. There are only 10 shares in the december0-day period studied. One of these 10 shares is a video, and its rate is 10% in the general distribution.

Facebook, the only platform, stands out in the IYI Party Provincial Presidency shares. In the content of the shares made on Facebook, the excess of the shares of the party leader Meral Aksener and the leading representatives of the party attracts attention.

The video sharing count of the IYI party provincial presidency, whose video rate in the shares is 30%, is higher than the video rate of the AK Party Provincial Presidency in the Facebook shares. It has been determined that the CHP Giresun Provincial Presidency has an account on three platforms and although there is a significant number of followers, there is no sharing.

The parties have different accounts that they share on a provincial basis (Women’s Branches, Youth Branches, Central District Presidencies, etc.) may be. However, the AK Party’s Provincial Presidency on all platforms is separate from its official accounts, from other accounts (Women’s Branches, Youth Branches, Central District Presidencies, etc.) it is seen that it shares separately.

In the mainstream media, the task of the gatekeepers, who control the flow of information from the media to the public, has been weakened by new communication technologies and the opportunities they provide. In the traditional media, the content caught on the gatekeepers can be circulated uncontrollably by the users in the new media order. Users who undertake the task of gatekeepers on social media platforms can determine the order, duration and content elements of the content they produce. Thus, by managing their own media, they have the chance to determine the agenda of the society.

This advantage provided by social media platforms is more evident during election periods. Active use of digital platforms outside the election period will both manage the agenda and strengthen communication with the citizens. Provincial presidencies, one of these political actors, should strengthen communication with citizens and manage the agenda by sharing on a provincial basis, apart from the content produced by the party headquarters.

Posting political messages on social media networks outside the election period creates a great advantage. When the social media platforms of Giresun Provincial Directorates are examined in terms of whether they use this advantage or not, it is seen that they have active accounts on all three social media platforms. However, during the date of the study, it was the AK Party provincial presidency that used these platforms effectively. Thus, they determined their agenda by managing their own media.

At election time or at a non-election time, people can now see how active the pages of the political actors they follow are. Only during the election period, the strategy of being on the political scene has been left behind with the developing communication technologies and the communication channels it provides.

In the light of the data obtained within the scope of the research, it is possible to say the following;

Social media accounts of provincial presidencies should be actively used for a sustainable political communication outside the election period.

By actively using social media platforms, the bond established between the party headquarters and the citizens can be strengthened.

Provincial presidencies should expand their target audience by sharing more provincial-based activities and services on their social media accounts.

In order to expand the target audience, all social media networks should be active.

- Considering how active the young population is in internet-based social media networks, these platforms should be used more actively on a provincial basis to convey political information.
- Considering that the new generation watches and follows videos containing moving images more, it will be advantageous to increase the rate of video in the shares made.
- Since the size of the research population limits the study, the use of social media platforms by other provincial presidencies can be examined comparatively in other studies.

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# Seim Dönemi Dışında Siyasi Parti İl Başkanlıklarının Sosyal Medya Kullanımları: Giresun İli Örneđi

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

Antik Yunan’da retorik ve propaganda ile başlayan siyasal iletişim uygulamaları, kitle iletişim araçlarının gelişmesi ve yaygınlaşması ile kitlelere ulaşmayı kolaylaştırmıştır. İletişim teknolojilerinde yaşanan gelişmeler sadece siyasal iletişimin sağlanmasını değil, bu iletişimin sürdürülmesini de olanaklı hale getirmiştir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’ de doğup gelişen ve 1960’lı yıllardan itibaren Batı Avrupa Ülkelerinde kullanılmaya başlayan “Siyasal iletişim” kavramı en genel anlamıyla iletişimin siyasetteki rolü olarak ifade edilmektedir. Siyasal bilgilerin yaratılması, dağıtılması ve algılanması süreci olarak yorumlanan siyasal iletişim, basit bir veri alışverişi olmaktan çıkarak, gelişen iletişim teknolojileri ile bu süreci kontrol etmek, yönetmek etkili bir yöntem olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Seim döneminde iktidara ortak olmak isteyen siyasi aktörler siyasi faaliyetlerini iletişim teknolojilerini kullanarak yürütmektedirler. Siyasal iletişim, seim dönemi ve seim dönemi dışı olmak üzere iki süreçte ele alınmaktadır. Kitle partileri, adaylar, liderler ve diğer siyasi aktörler, mesajlarını medya aracılığıyla kamuoyuna ulaştırmaktadırlar. İletişim tarihi açısından bakıldığında yazılı, işitsel, görsel medya siyasal iletişimde kullanılırken zaman içerisinde kendisi de bir siyasal iletişim aktörü olmuştur. Son yıllarda yeni iletişim teknolojilerinde yaşanan gelişmeler siyasal iletişimde seim dönemi dışında da var olmayı mümkün kılmaktadır. Web 2.0 teknolojisi ile ortaya çıkan sosyal ağlar bu iletişimi sağlamak ve yönetmek adına önemli mecralardır. Katılımcılık, açıklık, sohbet, toplum, bağlantılık ve iş birliği gibi özellikleri ile sosyal medya geleneksel medyaya oranla çift yönlü ve daha hızlı geri bildirim alma olanağı sunmaktadır. Erişiminin zaman ve mekâna bağlı olmadan kolay ve maliyetsiz sağlandığı bu mecralara, 2004 yılında Facebook, 2006 yılında Twitter ve 2010 yılında Instagram dahil olmuştur. Özellikle genç nüfusun sosyal ağlara olan ilgisini iyi değerlendiren Barack Obama’nın 2008 ABD Başkanlık seçimlerinde yürüttüğü siyasal kampanya bu platformlara dikkat çekmiştir. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram gibi siyasi aktörlerin de kullandığı sosyal ağlar siyasal iletişimin sürekliliğini sağlamada büyük önem arz etmektedir. Özellikle mobil iletişim teknolojileri sayesinde her an her yerde siyasal bilgiye, siyasal aktörlere ulaşabilme ve siyasal hayata katılma bu durumu siyasi aktörler açısından zorunlu kılmaktadır. Çünkü yeni iletişim teknolojileri aracılığı ile yatay iletişim olanağı bulan, interaktif olabilen, coğrafi sınırlılıklardan muaf olan hem vatandaş hem siyasi aktörler seim dönemi dışında da siyasal iletişimlerine devam etmektedirler.

Bu çalışmada Giresun’da 2019 Yerel Seçimine giren Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve İYİ Parti İl Başkanlıklarının sosyal medya platformlarındaki resmi hesapları incelenmiştir. Çalışma da sosyal ağlar Facebook, Twitter ve Instagram ile sınırlandırılmış, elde edilen veriler 1 Kasım 2019 ile 30 Kasım 2019 tarihleri arasında bu mecralarda yapılan paylaşımları kapsamaktadır. Parti il başkanlıkları sosyal medya resmi hesaplarından yapılan paylaşımlara araştırmacı

tarafından 01.12.2019 tarihinde erişim sağlanmış, veriler tablolaştırılarak dijital teknolojilerin ortaya çıkması ile dönüşüme uğrayan eşik bekçiliği kuramı çerçevesinde içerik analizi yöntemi ile değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışmada genel merkez sosyal medya platformları resmi hesapları dışında partilerin il başkanlıklarının açmış oldukları hesapların seçim dışı bir dönemde aktiflik durumlarını tanımlanmaktadır.

AK Parti, CHP, MHP ve İYİ Parti İl Başkanlıklarının en çok kullanılan sosyal medya siteleri olan Facebook, Instagram ve Twitter sosyal ağ platformlarında resmi hesapları bulunmaktadır. Parti İl Başkanlıkları arasında sadece MHP Giresun İl Başkanlığı'nın Instagram hesabı bulunmamaktadır.

İnceleme sonucunda, üç platformda da belirtilen tarihler arasında en aktif olan AK Parti İl Başkanlığıdır. İkinci sırada MHP ve İYİ Parti İl Başkanlığı gelmektedir. CHP İl Başkanlığı ise hiç paylaşım yapmamıştır. Sadece belirtilen tarihlerde değil en son yapılan paylaşımların tarihlerine bakıldığında da Ak Parti İl Başkanlığı ilk sırada, İYİ Parti İl Başkanlığı ikinci, MHP İl Başkanlığı ise üçüncü sırada yer almaktadır. En son yapılan paylaşım tarihlerine bakıldığında CHP İl Başkanlığı 2018 tarihli paylaşım ile son sırada yer almaktadır.

AK Parti İl Başkanlığı her üç sosyal medya platformunda hemen hemen aynı içeriklerde paylaşım yapmış ve paylaşımlar daha çok parti- parti lideri ağırlıklı olmuştur. MHP İl Başkanlığı'nın paylaşım yaptığı tek platform olan Twitter paylaşım içeriklerinde "parti lideri" paylaşımı bir adet olarak görülmektedir. İYİ Parti İl Başkanlığı paylaşımlarında tek platform olan Facebook göze çarpmaktadır. Facebook'ta yapılan paylaşımların içeriklerinde parti lideri Meral Akşener ile partinin ileri gelen temsilcilerinin paylaşımlarının fazlalığı dikkat çekmektedir. CHP Giresun İl Başkanlığının üç platformda hesabı olması ve kayda değer de bir takipçi sayısı olmasına rağmen paylaşım yapılmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Ana akım medyada, medyadan halka bilgi akışını kontrol eden eşik bekçilerinin görevi yeni iletişim teknolojileri ve sağladığı olanaklar ile zayıflamıştır. Geleneksel medyada eşik bekçilerine takılan içerikler yeni medya düzeninde kullanıcılar tarafından kontrolsüz bir şekilde dolaşıma sokulabilmektedir. Sosyal medya platformlarında eşik bekçilerinin görevini üstlenen kullanıcılar ürettikleri içeriklerin sırasını, süresini, içerik unsurlarını kendileri belirleyebilmektedirler. Böylece kendi medyalarını yöneterek toplumun gündemini belirleme şansını yakalamaktadırlar.

Sosyal medya platformlarının sağladığı bu avantaj daha çok seçim dönemlerinde kendini göstermektedir. Dijital platformların seçim dönemi dışında aktif kullanılması hem gündemi yönetmeyi sağlayacak hem de vatandaş ile iletişimi güçlendirecektir. Bu siyasi aktörlerden biri olan il başkanlıkları parti genel merkezlerinin ürettiği içerik dışında da il bazında paylaşımlar yaparak vatandaş ile iletişimi güçlendirmeli ve gündemi yönetmelidirler.

Sadece seçim döneminde siyaset sahnesinde olma stratejisi, gelişen iletişim teknolojileri ve sağladığı iletişim mecraları ile artık geride kalmıştır. Bu yüzden özellikle genç nüfusun internet tabanlı sosyal medya ağlarında ne kadar aktif oldukları göz önüne alınırsa bu kitleye ulaşmak için il bazında da bu platformların daha aktif kullanılması gerekmektedir.

Yeni neslin hareketli görüntüler içeren videoları daha fazla izledikleri ve takip ettikleri düşünülürse yapılan paylaşımlarda video oranının artırılması avantaj sağlayacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Siyasal iletişim, Kitle iletişim araçları, Eşik Bekçiliği Modeli, Sosyal Medya

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In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile **çıkar çatışması** bulunmamaktadır.

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