

The Role of Social Media in the Process of Development of the Socio-Political Structure of Turkish Society and Azerbaijani-Turkish Relations

Türk Toplumunun Sosyo-Politik Yapısının Gelişim Sürecinde ve Azerbaycan-Türkiye İlişkilerinde Sosyal Medyanın Rolü

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ÖZET

Sosyal ağlar, Türkiye'de gündemin belirlenmesinde, toplumsal ve siyasi kararların alınmasında, yönetim sisteminde ve daha birçok sektörde değişiklik yapılmasında etkin rol oynamaktadır. 2013 yılında İstanbul Taksim Gezi Parkı'nda başlayan olayların tüm ülkeye yayılması için sosyal medya ana iletişim aracı olarak kullanıldı. Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, 15 Haziran 2016'da bir toplumun kaderini değiştiren askeri darbe girişimini önlemek için vatandaşları sosyal medya üzerinden sokağa çıkmaya davet etti. Sosyal medya aynı zamanda ülkeler arası ilişkiler açısından da ön plana çıkıyor. Örneğin Azerbaycan ile Türkiye arasındaki tarihi dostluk ve kardeşlik ilişkilerinin yansımaları sosyal medya kullanıcılarının paylaşımlarında net bir şekilde görmek mümkün. Özellikle İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sırasında sıradan vatandaşların sosyal medya aracılığıyla gündemde olan devlet düzeyinde verdiği destek, bilgi savaşının, savaşı kazanmanın en önemli unsurlarından biri olarak görüldüğü bir dönemde özel bir önem kazanmıştır. Araştırma, sosyal medyanın yeni iletişim çerçevesindeki yerini netleştirmiş ve ardından Türkiye-Azerbaycan ilişkilerinin gelişimine yönelik olasılıkları değerlendirmiştir. Son olarak Türk toplumunun oluşumunda ve Türkiye-Azerbaycan ilişkilerinin gelişmesinde sosyal medyanın rolü örneklerle incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Sosyal Medya,
Kamuoyu,
Azerbaycan - Türkiye,
İkinci Karabağ Savaşı,

ABSTRACT

Social Networks play an effective role in setting the agenda, making social and political decisions, bringing about changes in the governance system and in many other sectors in Turkey. In 2013, social media was used as the main means of communication to spread the events that started in Taksim Gezi Park of Istanbul to the whole country. President Erdogan of Turkey, invited the citizens to go to the streets on social media to prevent a military coup attempt, that changed the fate of a society on June 15, 2016. Social media, at the same time, comes to the fore in terms of cross-country relations to the agenda of citizens. For example, it is possible to clearly see the reflection of historical friendship and fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the posts of social media users. In particular, the support provided at the state level during the Second Karabakh War by ordinary citizens on the agenda through social media has taken on special significance at a time when information warfare is seen as one of the most important elements of winning the war. The study clarifies the role of social media in communication, evaluates the prospects for the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, and studies the role of social media in the formation of Turkish society and the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations using specific examples.

Keywords:

Social Media,
Public Opinion,
Azerbaijan-Turkey,
Second Karabakh War,

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of Web 2.0 technology has brought many changes in the field of communication. Not only the communication of simple users with each other, but also the communication in the field of political diplomacy have changed and have been covered with various characteristics. So, social media has become one of the main platforms in the development of inter-country relations.

As we have discussed in this article, social media has made access to information much easier and faster due to its important features, and has allowed everyone to connect with each other by eliminating all borders in the virtual world. At the same time, it has been one of the main streams for the organization of new social movements.

Social media has also been the driving force behind changes in social, political, cultural, and economic and many other areas, both globally and nationally. Whether all this happens in a positive or negative direction causes a difference of opinion among experts, but it is a fact accepted by everyone that no return is possible.

Undoubtedly, the main driving force behind human development in the field of computing technologies has been in the direction of meeting needs. These needs have transferred society to a different sphere through the use of computers, which are universal devices that provide the creation, processing, storage and rapid exchange of digital information. The means of communication also played an exceptional role in the changes in the structure of society, which entered a new stage with the Internet. Thus, by their characteristics, the new media has turned people into more active participants and included them in a world described by the Canadian scholar Marshall McLuhan as a "*Global Village*".

Recently, in particular, the rapid spread and massification of social media use all over the world has turned it into an active stream for the formation of a democratic society. With environmental movements, peace movements, women's movements, anti-globalization movements, and other new social movements often organized through social media, the balance that the centers of "*power*" try to keep stable has begun to break.

When we evaluate in terms of countries, we see that social networks play an effective role in setting the agenda, making social and political decisions, making changes in the governance system and in many other sectors in Turkey. In 2013, social media was used as the main means of communication to spread the events that started in Taksim Gezi Park of Istanbul to the whole country. When we look at recent history, on June 15, 2016, Turkish President R.T.Erdogan invited the citizens to go to the streets on social media to prevent a military coup attempt, which changed the fate of a society.

Social media, at the same time, comes to the fore in terms of cross-country relations to the agenda of citizens. For example, it is possible to clearly see the reflection of historical friendship and fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the posts of social media users. In particular, the support provided at the state level during the Second Karabakh War by ordinary citizens on the agenda through social media has taken on special significance at a time when information warfare is seen as one of the most important elements of winning the war.

In the context of all this, this research, which aims to determine the importance of social media, is divided into three chapters. The research clarified the place of social media within the framework of new communications, and then evaluated the prospects for the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations. Finally, the role of social media in the formation of Turkish society and the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations was studied using examples.

2. NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

At the stage of social and economic development of history, societies are characterized by experts in four forms: primitive community, agriculture, industry and, most recently, information society. Primitive community society was a structure formed by primitive people to satisfy their basic needs for survival. The principle of learning within this structure is realized through the implementation of wrong or right experiences and the necessary skills are developed with the aim of being able to continue living. The economy was based on the exchange of products, and as means of production, simple, natural tools were often used by human power. Along with the discovery of grain, the agricultural revolution led to the emergence of a new society, that is, the agricultural society. People began to plant and harvest and produce more products outside of the finished

products that nature gave them. So, with the transition first to plough, and then to wooden plough farming, people made progress in the field of agriculture and increased the level of well-being. As people moved to a sedentary lifestyle, new organizations, production tools and workshops began to emerge (Arklan, 2008:68-70). The industrial society emerged as a result of the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution was realized with the application of innovations in all fields in the production field. So, in terms of technology, James Watt's discovery of the steam engine in 1765 and its use as a source of energy, Adam Smith's work "The Wealth of Nations" in 1776 in terms of economic science, the French revolution in 1789 in terms of political development, were important turning points in the realization of the industrial revolution. The mass production together with the industrial society has led to the creation of new industrial enterprises. Industrial society, with its technology, economy, social and cultural systems, having a structure that is sharply different from its predecessors, has been an unstable, continuously evolving, changing and transforming society. If the main driving force of the transition to the industrial society was the steam engine, it was replaced by computers in the information society. In the information society, material products have been replaced by informative products. Access to information, the main characteristics of which can be produced, increased, transferred, divided and shared within communication networks, has become much easier and faster (Özçağlayan, 1998:21-28).

In the information age we live in, many changes have occurred in the process of obtaining, processing and transmitting information, various systems and means of communication have appeared. When we evaluate it from the historical aspect, it is possible to say that the first big step taken in the field of communication was the discovery of the printing press. The development of printing technology has paved the way for the importance of the press, that is, newspapers, in the national and international arena. Later, the discovery of the telegraph and Morse code shortened the distances and created conditions for easier and faster communication between people. The discovery of the telephone in 1876 was an important achievement in the field of mass communication. The first radio broadcasts in the United States in 1920 and the first television broadcasts in England in 1935 gave people the opportunity to keep up with world events from the comfort of their homes. Towards the end of the 20th century, with computer technology becoming a part of people's lives, a new era of communication began. It has become possible to follow the events happening in any region of the world instantly, participate interactively in the events, join the discussions, and make comments through the Internet (Yapar Gönenç, 2004:438-439).

Internet technology first began to emerge in the early 1970s in the United States. Thus, the US government, which launched the ARPANET project in order to prevent the threat of a nuclear attack, used this project first in universities, and then in some government institutions. This technology later moved to Europe and spread under the name of the Internet, and in the 80s it became the Internet, a web technology (Erkul, 2009:97).

Web 1.0, the first version of the Web, was first created in 1989 as an effective and easy communication platform between people conducting research on "High Energy Physics" around the world. Web 1.0 with its multiple hypermedia system features allowed access to data in various formats in a compact and interactive way. Sites with a simple structure contained all the content that was broadcast. On Web 1.0 sites, connections were one-way, and users had to be content with the content being loaded by the server. Users in the position of mere visitors could only read the contents, could not comment, contribute or share. Access to stable information was provided by links (Şengöz, 2015:28).

Innovations and developments in technology led to the emergence of a new Web 2.0 network in 2004 in response to the changing needs and desires of web users. Web 2.0 has a structure in which new content is created by users and their participation in the web is ensured, relying on the cooperation and exchange of information between individuals (Özel, 2016:273-274). Together with Web 2.0, the transition to two-way and simultaneous exchange of information in the digital world was laid. Individuals' access to information on the Internet has become easier, faster and virtually free. With the help of Web 2.0, all Internet users can create and share content, this in turn has led to the beginning of a more shared and interactive era, where information is less subject to censorship, different opinions and thoughts are included, everyone can get the content they want (Özkuyuncu, 2007:62).

Web 2.0 has also been the main driving force behind new media. Thus, the concept of new media, which began to be used in research conducted in the field of information and communication in the 1970s, expanded and reached different dimensions in the 1990s together with the rapidly spreading computer and Internet technology (Dilmen, 2007:114). Characterized by Poster as the II Media period, the new media has come to the fore with its interactivity, unlike traditional media (I Media period) where users have a passive mass characteristic.

According to the poster, the new media has a democratic character, free from state intervention, based on bilateral and multilateral relations.

New media is a means of communication that can constantly evolve. Along with it, borders disappeared, the number of channels through which information could be exchanged increased, various meetings and thoughts that were not reflected in traditional media found a place on new media platforms, which created the conditions for the emergence of polyphony.

New media is a digital representation (the stream is composed of codes), that is, mathematical symbols and algorithms. Thus, all the data in the new stream can be counted and programmed, it contains 5 main features, namely modularity (combination of data with separate characteristics), automaticity (the content can be produced without the user), variability (the emergence of existing data in different forms as an addition to digital representation and modularity) and coding (representing the social and computer layer of new media).

Social media, which is part of the new media, has played an active role in transforming the monologues in the traditional media into dialogues. Through social media, users relearned the concept of freedom, had a stream where they could share their thoughts and opinions and participate in discussions (Özata, 2013:15).

There have been many different studies done on what social media is. Therefore, there are differing definitions of social media. It is possible to group these definitions as follows;

1. Social media is a technological medium in which content in different formats is shared in an extremely easy way;
2. Social media is a new media that provides users with a wide range of content production opportunities;
3. Social media is an application that brings the two-way concepts of sources and receivers mentioned in classic communication models;
4. Social media is a stream that includes content produced by other media and is shared according to the interests and wishes of users;
5. Social media is a stream through which institutions can connect with consumers, customers, employees, employees, fans and stakeholders in the fastest and most efficient way (Özkoyuncu, 2017:63).

Despite being defined in different ways, it is an undeniable fact that social media provides a discussion platform where people can share their ideas in an unrestricted and free way, just like the agora in Ancient Greece (Ersöz, 2005:123). For some, social media is an escape from socialization, a channel that only observes what is happening from the position of the viewer, while for others it is a channel that acts as a manifestation of the desire for socialization, to be appreciated in groups, should be respected (Çalışkan ve Mencik, 2015:258).

Social media encourages users to create and share engaging content. The fact that social media platforms are open to users and feedback makes it easy to improve. Also, the fact that social media allows the creation of a two-way, interactive communication, unlike traditional media, plays an effective role in the creation of different groups and societies (Akıncı Vural and Bat, 2010:3351-3352).

Michael Frunchter explains social media with 5 C's. Therefore, social media consists of 5 C's: conversation, commenting, contribution, community and collaboration. Here, conversation shows that social media is based on mutual respect. Commenting means that the content shared on social media is open to all kinds of criticism and comments. Contribution indicates that addition to new ideas is provided in addition to the comments made. Community (group) characterizes the need for community in social media, just as we need the groups we create in our normal, real life. Collaboration refers to the cooperation necessary for the social media to continue its existence (Çalışkan, 2005:257-258).

3. DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJANI-TURKEY RELATIONS

The history of mutual cooperation, friendship and fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey is not new. Although the fact that the first official relations between the two countries began on June 4, 1918, it can be seen that in previous years there was mutual support. Thus, the "*Baku Muslim Charity Society*" operating under the auspices of Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev provided very important assistance to the Ottoman Empire, which was experiencing difficult times during the First World War. At the same time, a large-scale aid mobilization was organized in Anatolia under the name "*Brotherly Help*", especially to protect children, women and the elderly who were orphaned as a result of Armenian oppression (Avşar, 2007:11).

Although the Ottoman Empire was in a deplorable state and was on the verge of collapse, it sent the Caucasian Islamic Army to help the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, which had declared independence, to liberate Baku and its adjacent territories from occupation. In response to this, the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, which is still one year old and struggling to continue its existence, tried to provide financial and moral assistance to Anatolia in order to support the National Struggle in Turkey (Avşar, 2007:14).

With the fall of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic and the establishment of the USSR in December 1922, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan developed in the prism of the Soviets during those times. The desire of the USSR to build a "*Soviet nation*" had a negative impact on the traditional and cultural ties of Azerbaijan, along with many peoples, and the policy of alienation from national and spiritual values, such as the destruction of material wealth, the language and alphabet were changed. In the 1970s, with the transition to a period of softening in the USSR, the relations with Turkey became more intense. Thus, on April 18, 1972, the two sides adopted a declaration based on the principles of bilateral relations and good neighborliness. Soviet-Turkish relations, which entered a new stage in the 1980s, were confirmed by the signed 10-year program for the long-term development of trade, economic, scientific and technical relations. Under the supervision of the Soviet leadership, exchanges in the field of culture and art between Turkey and Azerbaijan have been restarted (Cahangirli, 2006:19; Önen, 2021:924).

After the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan, one of the states that regained its independence, faced many problems. The most important of them was the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Although Turkey at first considered this issue an internal affair of the USSR, after the collapse of the union, it took a position with Azerbaijan in connection with the occupation of the lands of Azerbaijan by Armenia (SAM, 2017:125). Turkey was the only state that supported Azerbaijan in the international world and influenced international organizations to bring the issue to the agenda. However, Turkey did not provide military support to Azerbaijan against the Armenian occupation. Aslanli stated the main reasons for this: Azerbaijan has never officially asked for military support from Turkey; Turkey being pressured by Western countries not to support Azerbaijan; lack of strong opportunities and political will in Turkey at that time; the fact that Turkey still sees the Soviet Union as a source of danger (SAM, 2011:20). It was an important step for Turkey to cut its official diplomatic relations with Armenia in this period, i.e. in 1993, and close its land borders. Thus, in the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, Armenia's relinquishment of land claims from Turkey and its approach to discussing the "Armenian Genocide" along with the return of occupied lands of Azerbaijan to Armenia was one of the three expectations from Turkey's point of view (Oğuz, 2010:80).

In general, from the point of view of the development of the Karabakh problem, it can be said that the three governments that came to power in Azerbaijan after gaining independence used various strategies. So, during Ayaz Mutallibov's time, the goal of rapprochement with Russia and other CIS countries was pursued. The Elchibay government directly aimed at integration with Turkey and the West. However, during Heydar Aliyev's time, this policy was put an end to and efforts were made to implement a "policy of proportionality" between the West, Russia and the East (Yılmaz, 2010:25-26).

Turkey's policy in relation to Azerbaijan and South Caucasus as a whole has undoubtedly been formed within the framework of certain interests. First of all, it is necessary to emphasize that the South Caucasus has 4 main importances for Turkey. The first of them is the geographical location of the region. That is, the states here have borders with Turkey. Secondly, there is a large population from the region who settled in Turkey. Thirdly, relations with Central Asia, which are important from Turkey's point of view, both as strategic and as ethnic ties, are carried out through this region. The fourth is that the oil pipelines going to the West come to Turkey through this region, and therefore the region has a strategic importance for the West (Erdoğan ve Akçiçek, 2019:38-39). The collapse of the USSR opened trade and energy routes to the Caspian Basin for Turkey. As a result, close geographical relations between Turkey and the countries of Central Asia and the Caspian littoral were formed, and it created conditions for it to enter the struggle for geopolitical power by using the abundance of power in the region (SAM, 2017:17).

Since Turkey is well aware of the importance of Azerbaijan to strengthen its position in the South Caucasus, after the collapse of the USSR, the relations between the two countries began to be established not on the basis of purely ethnic factors, as in previous times, but on the mutual interests of two independent states based on international norms of coexistence. Since the first years of independence, Turkey has been a reliable ally in the export of energy resources of Azerbaijan to the foreign market. At that time, Turkey, which entered a new stage of economic development and whose population was growing rapidly, faced difficulties in conducting a free foreign policy due to the lack of gas and energy resources. From this point of view, it was an important event

that both Turkey's energy needs were met by Azerbaijan and that it became a transit country in the field of energy (SAM, 2017:17). The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which started operating in 2006, brought a strategic dimension to the bilateral ties and brought Turkey-Azerbaijan cooperation to the regional and global level. In particular, since this period, a more realistic policy has been implemented between Turkey and Azerbaijan, great importance is attached to the expansion of relations in the field of energy, transport and communications (Aydın, 2018:49).

Today we can say that the Azerbaijani-Turkish relations have developed and are comprehensive in the military-political, economic, cultural and other various fields.

Military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey began in the first half of the 20th century with the establishment of the Caucasian Islamic Army. After the collapse of the USSR, the first efforts to establish military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey were made during the time of the first president of Azerbaijan, Ayaz Mutallibov. In the "Cooperation and Solidarity" agreement signed between the two countries along with the election of Abulfaz Elchibey as president, military cooperation was valued as one of the important dimensions and 200 students were sent to Turkey to study in military schools. During the reign of Heydar Aliyev, the military relations between the two countries were further developed and deepened with the signing of the "*Agreement on Military Education, Technical and Scientific Cooperation*". The military relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey have been one of the most important issues of negotiations and cooperation of the "*Azerbaijan-Turkey High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council*" established in 2010 under the co-chairmanship of the presidents. In the new period, joint military exercises in bilateral and trilateral formats, cooperation in the defense industry and the creation of joint law enforcement forces have been added to Azerbaijani-Turkish military ties (Caferov, t.y.). Starting from 2020, the transition stage of the Azerbaijani army to the Turkish army model has been started. In the "*Declaration on Alliance*" signed in Shusha on June 15, 2021, it was emphasized that they will work together to build and modernize the Armed Forces of the two brotherly countries in accordance with modern requirements.

In socio-cultural relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, other ministries, including the Ministries of Education, Culture, and Foreign Affairs, have undertaken important responsibilities. TURKSOY was established with the aim of establishing mutual friendly relations between the countries whose language is Turkish and exploring the common Turkish heritage and Turkish cultural values. Also, TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) implemented and continues to implement the Administrative structures development program in Azerbaijan, entrepreneurship, small and medium-scale industry development programs in Eurasian countries, Tourism and service sector development programs, Social cooperation programs, and Educational and cultural cooperation programs (Gürler, 2015:123-125).

The economic relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are developing rapidly. In the field of economic cooperation, in 1992, under the leadership of Turkey, the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), which includes Azerbaijan, Albania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and Greece, helped to ensure the development of mutual economic, technical and social relations between the countries (Gürler, 2015:146-147). Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, TANAP and TAP are examples of huge regional projects in which Azerbaijan and Turkey are partners. These projects continue to play an important role in strengthening economic integration and energy security in the region (Bağırzade, 2014:4). At the same time, Turkey and Azerbaijan are working in close cooperation and solidarity with regional and international organizations such as the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries, the UN, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

In the field of establishing and developing multilateral relations between the Turkish states, the high-level meetings of heads of state proposed by Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel in 1992 occupy a special place. Summits play a unique role in fulfilling the upcoming tasks in the field of strengthening the state independence of the Turkish states, building democratic and rule-of-law states, establishing political principles, and further strengthening relations between the Turkish states and their peoples (Hüseynova, 2007:24).

It is possible to see that the mutual relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have intensified in recent times, especially after the victory in the Second Karabakh War. The "*Shusha Declaration*" signed between the heads of the two countries in Shusha city, Azerbaijan on June 15, 2021, emphasized the importance of combining the opportunities and potential of both countries in the political, economic, defense, culture, humanitarian, health, education, social, youth and sports fields. The declaration includes such issues as the strengthening of stability and security in the Caucasus region, the restoration of all relations in the field of economy and transport, the

normalization of relations between the states of the region and the continuation of efforts to ensure long-term peace, the development of international relations based on peace, friendship and good neighborliness through stability and prosperity at the regional and international level, as well as making joint efforts to resolve conflicts, regional and global security and stability issues, joint efforts to rebuild and modernize the armed forces of the two brotherly countries in accordance with the requirements of the time, taking into account their national and international obligations, encouraging the implementation of joint projects with the aim of developing joint capabilities by sharing technologies in the field of sea, air and space and making positive contributions to the development of mutual defense industry technologies, further development of transit-transport potential in Turkey-Azerbaijan sections of international transport corridors by using smart transport systems technologies, further expansion of cooperation between the parties in the fields of information, communication and social diplomacy in accordance with the "*Memorandum of Understanding on strategic cooperation in the field of media between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan*" signed on December 10, 2020, taking into account the possibilities of the Turkey-Azerbaijani Media Platform, conducting frequent meetings and information exchange between the relevant institutions of the two countries and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in this context, by providing the necessary state support and deepening the close relations between the countries' peoples based on common values in humanitarian, social security, science, education, health, culture, youth and sports fields and for this purpose, the implementation of joint continuous measures by the relevant institutions of the two countries (CNN Türk, 2022).

4. SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PROCESS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJAN-TURKEY RELATIONS IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF TURKISH SOCIETY

In order to determine the role played by social media in the development of the socio-political structure of the Turkish society, the concept of social structure explained by Spencer means the structure of various societies, social phenomena, social developments, social relations and the rules on these topics. According to the famous sociologist Ginsberg, social structure consists of the main groups and institutions that make up society. Therefore, population, environment and settlement, economy, social classes, education, politics, law, family and religion are the main elements included in the social structure. The social structure, which is the totality and basis of organized relations in society, shapes the behavior of members of society. When assessed in this context, the study showed that collectivist values and norms prevail in Turkish society, and people have a high tendency to avoid uncertainty (Sungur, 2014:40).

The political structure of Turkey has continued in different forms since the Ottoman era and has undergone many changes. In the Ottoman Empire, which was an absolutist monarchy of military and theocratic nature based on timar and service orders, the political order was set as a parliamentary system in 1876 with the announcement of the "*Kanun-u Esasi*" (Basic Law). The new Turkish state, which emerged after the national struggle, made some changes in the constitution. The President and the Council of Ministers are given the task of managing the country within the framework of the general rules established by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The military revolutions of the 1960s and 1980s led to many changes in the sovereignty of the legislative and executive powers. After the referendum held on April 16, 2017, Turkey switched to a presidential system of government. In this system, executive powers and duties are exercised and exercised by the president in accordance with the constitution and laws.

It is possible to observe that Turkey's socio-political structure has experienced various changes over time, and that there is no stable situation. In particular, the realization of military revolutions with certain intervals in the political arena has caused the democracy to falter. However, the new media, together with the two-way, interactive communication opportunities it has, have created certain behaviors in public behavior

During and after the military revolutions, in response to the restriction of freedom of thought and expression, increasing pressure on traditional means of communication, the new media provided serious opportunities for individuals in terms of political participation and democracy (Dündar, 2018:104-105).

According to Lawrence Grossman, thanks to technology, we have entered the third era of great democracy, and "*digital republics*" have already appeared. With the help of the Internet, the conditions of public life have changed for the better; citizens' sense of freedom and responsibility has expanded. The development of cyberspace has given rise to new political applications. As the first steps of digital democracy, e-governance applications have gained more power. Local administrations, governments and political parties try to showcase their activities on social media platforms in addition to their websites. This helps to strengthen the social

relations of those institutions with citizens. In terms of political parties, social media is used as the main means of communication to inform citizens of the activities, proposals and projects that will be implemented before the election. Social media offers a wide range of opportunities, especially for freelance candidates who have limited exposure to traditional media. Thus, these candidates have equal opportunity with other candidates in terms of self-expression by addressing a wider audience than traditional media. At the same time, through social media, ordinary citizens can express their opinions about such proposals and projects and inform the candidates of the issues they see as missing (Ersöz, 2005:125; Bostancı, 2014:33).

New media has an important role, especially in times of political crisis, as well as in the stage of making serious decisions. Therefore, political figures, structures or various organizations try to actively use social media in particular. The low cost of social networks, high interactivity and ease of access are among the factors that encourage political participation of users. Individuals who do not physically share the same streams try to influence decision-making mechanisms with the groups or societies they create through social media (Dündar, 2018:105).

The presence of social media has generally changed the form of political speech and increased political activism. The communication between the political structure and the people, which existed in the past from less to more, has changed suddenly and from time to time. It also caused the emergence and spread of new social movements. If we present it with the example of Turkey, the events of "Gezi Park" that started in May 2013 are of great importance in terms of the influence of social media on the political structure. At the first phase, the protests related to environmental protection continued with demands for political change. Although the protest began on a small scale, due to the intervention of the police and the silence of the traditional media on the events, the protesters turned to social media. Those who participated and supported the movement started sharing the news about the actions through social media, especially on Facebook and Twitter. News, videos and photos shared on various social media platforms played an important role in spreading the events.

During the military coup attempt on July 15, 2016, which is one of the most critical events in the political life of Turkey, social media revealed the resistance of the people? Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's connection to CNN Turk via Facetime was a major turning point in the resistance to the coup. President Erdoğan's appeal to the people to go to the squares and airports, the citizens uniting against the coup by calling on social media, combining all the possibilities of the new and traditional media to take the streets, were the techniques and methods used for the first time in coups in Turkey. People have used social media effectively. The dissemination of images of soldiers surrendering or being detained by civilians has demoralized the rebels. Also, some commanders shared images of "I surrendered, you surrender too" through social media, which ensured the surrender of a large number of rebels (Dündar, 2018:82-108).

The summation of all this confirms the conclusion that social media is a new and effective way of various new movements, cultural sharing and multivocality. But according to some experts, social media is a tool that increases the control of the system over people. As an example, it is shown that during the events in Syria, the revolutionaries tried to use the opportunities of both traditional and new media in their struggle to overthrow Bashar Assad's regime, and when international journalists were banned from entering the country, they established contact with the countries of world through social media. However, the current government has used all these means as a way to track revolutionaries. The government later blocked access to social media. Although the conflict continued, all communication had stopped, and the revolutionaries had lost a lot of power. As they tried to advance using new digital tools like Skype, the regime tried to take advantage of these new communication tools. Thus, social networks, on the one hand, have contributed to democracy, and on the other hand, they have identified certain restrictions (Davis, 2016:5-6).

An indisputable fact is the effective influence of social media on various elements of the social structure. In general, everyone knows that the media is an important tool not only in the production of cultural products, but also in the dissemination, teaching and preservation of culture. From this point of view, the impact of social media on intercultural interaction can be considered in three contexts (intercultural relations, adaptation to different cultures and intercultural conflict). Social media provides the development of intercultural relations, creating an opportunity for the elements that are carriers of culture to spread faster among the young masses. Also, social media acts as a stream for people of different cultures to understand each other and creates conditions for intercultural adaptation. In addition, cultural differences between people lead to the emergence of representations in social media, which is observed as a misunderstanding in intercultural communication (Uluç ve Yarcı, 2017:96-97).

One of the main components of the social structure is the family, which changes according to the social, economic, and cultural changes in the society and ensures the continuity of humanity according to a certain social order (Gürler, 2015:75). In the history of Turkey, this factor appears in different forms. In the first years of the republic's existence, the traditional large or patriarchal family system, in which the population mainly lived in rural areas, began to diversify from the 1950s. Along with the acceleration of industrialization, urbanization also developed, and as a result internal migration increased. Thanks to the development of communication and transport facilities, not only in the city, but also in rural areas, the public yard has undergone major changes, and the traditional and closed structure has undergone changes. So, social media, being one of the new means of communication, has affected the structure of the family along with its positive aspects as well as its negative aspects. Individuals of increasingly smaller nuclear families spend most of their time on social media and try to make friends from there, which has led to a decrease in intra-family communication, an increase in the number of divorces and an increase in single-parent families, and the weakening of social relations such as friendship and neighborhood (Karaaslan, 2020). According to some researchers, social media are at the opposite pole with the religious and moral values of society. According to them, social media, which takes on the task of entertaining people's free time, appeals to primitive needs and impulses and creates negative emotions such as hatred, sexuality, anger, arrogance and greed. Social media, which is an ideal outlet for illicit relationships, is cited as the major reason for the breakdown of families and the increase in divorces. Thus, it is noted that one out of every four people in the divorce stage in Turkey is the reason for the divorce because of social media and messaging on the Internet.

Social networks are also one of the tools that play an effective role in the development of the education system, which is one of the main elements of the social structure. The use of computers and the Internet in the educational process has created an opportunity to meet the necessary needs and increase diversity in the education system. According to the results obtained by Özen et al., who conducted research among students in Turkey (2018), social media have brought distance learning students closer to each other and created conditions for speaking a common language. As a result of research, it was also determined that students intensively share course content and notes through social media, help each other by sharing course-related information through social media, and get help from their teachers and friends by communicating with social media when they have problems in their classes.

Social media play a key role not only in the socio-political structure of Turkish society, but also in foreign policy in the context of digital diplomacy. So, back in the 1950s, studies began to be carried out on the importance of the media in shaping the thoughts and ideas of individuals about foreign policy. According to the results of some studies, in order for citizens to show interest in foreign policy issues, having sufficient information about the topic, the importance of the topic, and the position of the political parties they support on the topic were evaluated as the main elements. Therefore, it is possible to say that the attitudes of individuals in Turkey regarding foreign policy are formed from the aspect of these criteria (Hatipoğlu et al., 2016:179).

Apart from the framework of mutual cooperation in Turkey's foreign policy, Azerbaijan, where historical friendship and fraternal relations exist, has a special importance. These relations are reflected both at the official level and in the social media posts of the citizens of both countries. First of all, let's note that the effective use of social media at the official level not only provides the public with a fast, international news flow, but also provides unlimited communication opportunities for diplomats, foreign ministries, governments, heads of government and political leaders to express their views. Social media helps build understanding between foreign policy decision makers and the public (Sadioğlu, 2018:58).

When we evaluate the social media in the perspective of the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, it can be noted that there was a special activity during the Second Karabakh War. Thus, during the 44-day war between September 27 and November 11, 2020, different posts were made, campaigns were launched and messages of support were written on social media showing that the people of Turkey are with Azerbaijan. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev's announcement of the names of territories liberated from occupation on his Twitter page, presidential assistant Hikmet Hajiyev's assessment of the progress of the war on his social media accounts and his comments were also closely monitored by Turkey (Hasanov, 2020). Joint reaction messages from Turkey's art world, such as "*I love Azerbaijan*" (Aydan Şener), "*Azerbaijan and Turkey are brothers*" (Ebru Gündeş), "*Turkey is always with Azerbaijan*" (Oktay Kaynarca), "*I strongly condemn the attack of Armenia. We are with you, Azerbaijan*" (Mehmet Bozdağ), "*The brother will pay the bill that touches the country*" (Sinan Akçil) broadcasted from Turkey's art world through social media (Sabah Gazetesi, 2020). The posts of the Turkish Ministry of National Defense and government officials, as well as Selchuk Bayraktar, the

manufacturer of UAVs, who played a decisive role in the war, played an exceptional role in the formation of public opinion about the incidents in Turkey.

The people of Turkey emphasized that Azerbaijan is the right party in their social media accounts and condemned Armenia's targeting of peaceful residential areas of Azerbaijan and loss of lives of peaceful citizens. Armenia's attacks on civilians and violation of the law of war, reports and images from the scene of the incident, were covered in traditional media with live broadcasts, and were also shared on social media and delivered to a wide audience.

Moreover, social media has been one of the main enablers of communication between people who have mutually migrated between the two countries. People have benefited from social media both in terms of keeping in touch with their families and psychological adjustment. Social media helped those people socially adapt to the society they just entered and facilitated the migration process (Naghiyeva, 2019:68-69).

5. CONCLUSION

Social media, which are included in people's lives together with new communication technologies, have an important role for democracy and the development of society, as can be seen from the events of the Arab Spring or July 15. Social media has a very central position in the realization of some political goals, in mobilizing the masses by gaining supporters for revolutions, and at the same time in organizing of non-governmental organizations. The potential of social media to promote democracy in various forms of stems from the fact that it provides users with a stream to express their opinions freely.

If we evaluate in the context of the article, we will see that social media has a high impact on the socio-political structure of Turkish society. In Turkey, which is not very stable from a political point of view and where military revolutions are experienced at certain intervals, unlike traditional media, social media appears as a platform where freedom of speech and expression is realized more. In particular, the fact that people came together and fought for democracy on the day of the July 15 military coup attempt and after that, through social media, once again highlights its importance in this period.

When we evaluate the role of social media not only within the country but also in crosscountry relations in the light of Azerbaijan-Turkey cooperation, we can witness that there are elements that stimulate the development of bilateral relations here as well.

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