

The Internet for University Youth A Political Source and Tool for Self-expression

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effects of the Internet on university youth's political participation and answer these questions: Does the Internet make them feel safer? Are there any differences on using the Internet as a political tool and source due to their socio-political, economical, demographical and educational differences between them? Is there any relationship between political knowledge and using the Internet? Are there any relationships between political participation and using the Internet? In order to answer these questions, a survey research was conducted on a group of students in Dokuz Eylül University prior to the July, 2007 General Election in Türkiye. We collected a sample of Public Administration students and a control group of Econometrics, from Business and Administration Faculty, to compare social and mathematical based educations' effects on political behaviours. According to SPSS analysis result; Public Administration students use the Internet less often than Econometrics' students do and they tend to visit political web pages such as political forums, political parties' etc; to read, to forward and to discuss political e-mails; and to feel safer in the Internet speaking about political issues more than Econometrics students do. Male students are more likely than females to visit those web pages, and to read, to forward and to discuss political e-mails; and feel safer in the Internet speaking about political issues. The results shows us that the Internet using differs from gender and education type. Both of the variables affect use of the Internet as political source and tool as expression.

Key Words: Political participation, Political source, the Internet, Political Information, University Youth

INTRODUCTION

According to the recently studies, new information technologies were supposed to bring new participation to the political systems, and thus new technologies would develop democracies. Since only ¼ of world population can access the Internet, and since there are huge socio-economical differences between different parts of the world, we can not say that the Internet is the expected cure for representative democracies in our age.

However, the rates of using the Internet are increasing speedily. In order to understand the future, we need to focus on youth's behaviours. In order to understand the future's democracy related to new technologies, we need to focus youth's political behaviours and their response to those technological developments. But first of all, we need to understand under what circumstances, new technologies become a hope for democracy, and why. The first chapter is focused on modern democracy crises and reasons for that. The second chapter is focused on new technologies; especially the Internet and we are questioning whether it is bringing opportunities or threats for political life. The third chapter is focused on the survey and its results. The study's main hypothesis is that the internet is a primarily political source and self-expression tool for university youth due to income level, education and gender. We tried to test the hypothesis via asking several questions such as: Does the increase in Internet use by university youth subsequently increase their political awareness? Is there a direct link to using the Internet for political purposes with mathematics based education and social science based education? Is there a difference between different income groups' Internet users in the manner of political e-mails?

OLD AND NEW DEMOCRACIES: THE PROBLEM

During the period of antique democracy, as a result of limited political participation and limited population, direct democracy had been possible. The citizens were able to discuss political issues and decide by themselves in the public sphere. However, democracy in mass societies with expanded voting rights has necessitated representative democracies with some tools of direct democracy, such as referendums. In mass societies citizens live like atoms, with lack of the capacity of moving together, of discussing political issues and, of deciding for the best for themselves most of time.

Meanwhile, political parties, and media have been considered as solving elements of representative democracies which let citizens express their political ideas, have opportunities for political communication and participation. On the other hand, as political scientists have pointed out, modern democracies have been dealing with a crisis of public arena and political participation, especially for the last two or three decades. The increasing violent protests against political powers, low rates of participation in voting and low levels of political awareness even in well-developed countries are the most important symptoms of that crisis.

The crisis of modern democracy has been fed by new capitalism conditions. The new capitalism conditions are based on technology and finance, and require that the state leaves the areas in which it has economic activities, and also regulates those areas to be shared by the capital. In the era of new capitalism, the state is taken as the guarantor and the regulator of the system. The state was given the role of considering the finance's priorities. These priorities can be clearly observed in the arrangements about media. The most important problem as a result of the process of liberation is deprivation and poverty. As Reagan said in 1981, "... *government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem*"¹, but over the last 20 years, today it is not as he meant. Today, the world and modern democracy have to face with the problems and find the solutions for the result of his ideas.

For example, Heintz claims that American democracy finds itself caught in a vicious circle of barriers prevent robust civic engagement which leads to government that is more attentive to special interests than the common interest, putting the middle class increasingly at risk, and thereby undermining the culture of democracy that is the basis for civic participation and good governance in the first place (Heintz, 2006: 3). Today's political life is mostly a result of yesterdays' political socializations. When we talk about the crises for the culture of democracy, we should focus on the process and agents of political life.

Political Socialization, Participation and Information Agents and

Political socialization is a lifetime process by which the political culture and subcultures are transmitted from one generation to another. In this process, individuals learn and –mostly- copy the established political attitudes, behaviors, opinions, ideas, and reactions. The major political socialization agents have been shorted as family and friends, school and school, political parties, non-governmental organizations, religion organizations, events and the last but not least important, media. Gender, age and race are some of the most important variables of political socialization process. Each of those agents has a changeable effect on development of political attitudes and behaviours due to socio-economic and demographic factors, due to current politics, international conjunctures (Greenberg, 2009:77). The culture of democracy and civic participation is supposed to be taught to the next generations, but the last three decades, youth people are less interested in politics and participations. According to a recent research, youth's political knowledge is low in the western world (Milner, 2007). More over, As Laidi explains, 'individualisation of preferences and choices, facilitated by technological development, which allows us to increase individual traceability, could lead to social atomization' (Laidi, 2002; 7). Youth people are dealing with both a being part of 'social atomisation' and a part of 'virtual socialization'. This is something very new which we don't know really what will bring in our lives in the next decades

In any case, this observation about less politics is a clue about what kind of future we will have; less and less political participations, weaker and weaker culture of democracy, and more democracy crises at the end.

¹ This phrase was quoted from the part of the speech as; 'The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we, as Americans, have the capacity now, as we have had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom. In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price'. 'First Inaugural Address of Ronald Reagan, Tuesday, January 20, 1981, West Front, U.S. Capitol. The Senate's Web Page, , <http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/factsandfirsts/index.cfm>, (20.03.2010)

Since the political system can not observe the potential and existing problems, it can not offer solutions. If family members has no special interest in politics, as most of family members don't, there are a few chances to get youths are interested in political issues, motive them to express themselves and get involve with political participations.

Political participation and socialization of youth

Family, friends, teachers, religion, race, gender, age, geography, media and etc.: These agents and many others affect individual's political views and attitudes throughout the rest of their lives. Duverger claims that the purpose of socialization of youth is supposed to be transferring culture and the underlying values of authority, power, and hierarchy. (Duverger, 1998:105) Since the legitimacy of political power is based on the consent of the individuals, Duverger concluded that the major aim of the political socialization is to maintain the current legitimacy of the system.

In this process, more effectively than the other age groups of people, youths can use the opportunity of becoming aware of politics due to their socio-economical status, education and several other variables. Since youths are more questioning than accepting everything as it is given, they are bigger chance for democratic development of the political system. This chance could be taken through several agencies: political parties-organization, school-education, and media-communication.

However political party affiliations are getting weaker day by day in the era of personalization of politics. Since "the left" and "the right" have been displaced and mixed, political parties and party programs can not have a long-term followers anymore. The parties' leaders' discourse are radically changeable which let party followers be changeable too. Under these circumstances youth can have party affiliation in a very certain conjuncture, due to personal interests or short term gains. Short term gains make individuals be interested in politics and participation in that period. Another recent research shows that '...engaging in community-oriented activities as a child or teenager was positively associated with non-voting political behaviour, but not with voting' (Whitely, 2005:4). This result also shows that how party affiliation is weak but Whitely claims that young adults are politically involved, but in a different manner than older Canadians (Whitely, 2005:6). New researches will be explorative this new form of politically involving.

On the other hand, as democracy is a culture in which individuals need to catch up with current political developments, and feel necessary to participate spontaneously and effectively. In this respect, education has a vital role in this cultural transmission to youths. The more social contented lecturer they have, the more they are aware of political life and issues. But education is heavily related to other socio-demographic agents, such as income, religions, race, and etc. Still, we need to find out how new technologies let them create an alternative ways of political expression and source.

Media and new technologies

Media is an important political socialization tool. Especially the television media have been a "relatively" money-free tool, it have been used by large masses. Even not on purpose for politics directly, this consumption of media tool by large masses have had a strong effect on political life in years, across the world. Media has been used to teach what to wear, what to think, whom to vote, whom to listen and etc. It still does those today, but with different techniques and technologies. By new technologies, media became ubiquitous which let media have much more direct affects on life, especially political ones. Media has been evaluated by the new information tools' development. By that evaluation, media is more available for people and freer from place and time. Before that evaluation, even a print newspaper which was not available is now reachable from many newspapers, in different languages, and political views along with televisions via the Internet. It seems that the parallel line between the development of democracy and expression of public opinion has been connected to the development of media tools from the very beginning of modern democracy. The more opportunities for media there are, public opinion is supposed to have the more opportunities to reach political information and to express itself to make pressure over political life. However, it doesn't mean that assumption is supposed to be reality in everywhere determinedly. Besides, every high technological development brings along with it voluntary captivity such as controllability.

The New Technologies, the Internet: A Hope?

Democratic participation opportunities and tools in modern democracies have re-shaped the public sphere.

By developments of the new information technologies, democracy has been expected as more participatory. Technological revolution also has positive aspects in terms of democracy such as it offers access to alternative information sources and to create opportunities in terms of minimizing the constraints of time and place for self-expression. In this process the new technologies have become a core of modern youth life. A life without the Internet has become almost impossible for them. Requesting a personal computer (or a netbook) has become a matter of having a good point from an exam or even not that hard for some parents and teenagers. But this opportunity is not free from socio-demographic variables either. Having a personal computer with the Internet is a matter of economic opportunities and also technological development of the society, of the city, of the country. Besides, individualism of needs creates spaces between common-needs of peoples. Collective interests creates a political power but creating spaces between those, creates lonely and weak peoples. In this respect, we can clearly see that new technologies, especially the Internet contains the risk of increasing the differentiation of political participation and expression which arising from economic inequalities. In order to prevent that, at least some levels of using the Internet are supposed to be free by anyone, like most of the old media tools still are.

On the other hand, the transformation of the Internet and new information technologies, was evaluated as a tool to get rid of representative government in the early 1990s with a very early-bird hope which developed by Naisbitt, (Naisbitt, 1991:60). Another positive statement is about increasing political participation opportunities by the new information tools. Street claims that increasing those will let representative democracies develop (Street, 1992:157). Pool asserts that the new information tools can restrict central political and communicational control and power, in order to develop democracies (Pool, 1990:168).

However, the Internet is available for only ¼ of world population, according to the survey in 2009. The more developed the technologies, the more censorship tools are built. Some countries, such as North Korea, Saudi Arabia, are called as “black holes” for the Internet. According to a report about Fiji, there is no direct ban on the internet but, the military has access to monitor the Internet traffic and even arrest some people for using the Internet for political certain purposes.² As Fiji example shows us, the Internet has its own advantages and disadvantages, new solutions and new problems, tools for both freedom and censorship, for both democratic and anti-democratic tendencies. For example, in America the bill which is proposed by Senator Lieberman and Collins suggests to give extra powers to Federal Government for cybernet-emergency situations to seize control of or even shut down portions of the Internet (McCullah, 2010). As Bennett points out ‘the future of electronic democracy is extremely opened to both the best and the worst probable. The direction of electronic communication can be influenced by public discourse about what should be done with new technologies. A communication system with democratic values can be established only if critical citizens ask for public discussion about their communicational environment.’ (Bennett, 2000:426)

States have been aware of this information tools advantages in management for a long time. For example, a report was presented to former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing in 1978, named “The computerization of society” and prepared by Nora and Minc.³ (Nora & Minc, 1980) The report includes a summer of the effect of computerization on the society, a research about telecommunication and a French plan related to those two.

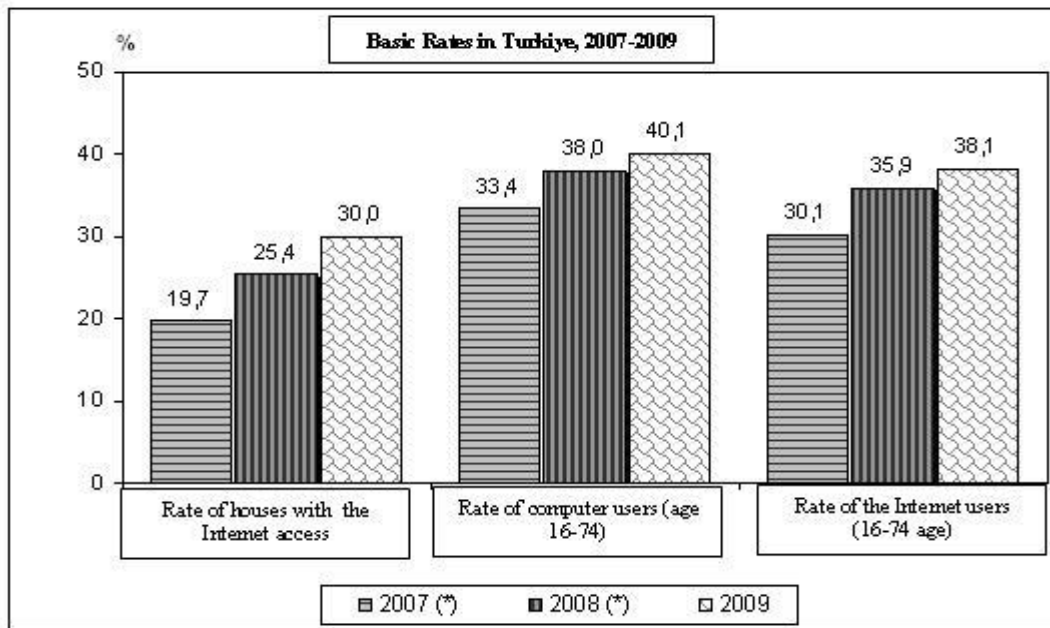
² ‘The military attempted to censor or shut down a number of antigovernment blogs that appeared after the coup, and the Public Service Commission warned civil servants against accessing or taking part in antigovernment Web sites... In May the RFMF announced that it was following three individuals alleged to be involved with antigovernment blogs. Also in May, a businessman accused by the military of involvement with such a blog was detained by RFMF personnel at an army camp, where he was verbally and physically abused. Several other individuals suspected of maintaining blogs or posting on blogs were threatened or intimidated. Two senior civil servants accused of contributing to a blog were suspended from duty and subjected to disciplinary action. At least two persons were arrested for allegedly authoring or forwarding e-mail messages critical of the interim government.’ (Fiji Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, 2008)

³ This report was asked to be prepared in the second era of electronic democracy, teledemocracy 1970-80. Vedel claims that the second era of electronic democracy failed to achieve its goals of enlarging the public space of politics: ‘Nonetheless, this period of experimentation was successful in generating active interest for the democratic potentials offered by ICTs, which set the stage for the third age of electronic democracy’ (Vedel, 2006:2, 4).

According to the report, by cheapening of computers and computerization of the society in timing advance, information and computer will be available for large masses by which eventually will bring wide-spread democracy (Nora & Minc, 1980:7).

Despite the unavoidable influence of the Internet over life, making a democratic difference in a society is depended on the condition of that the accessibility of the internet must be balanced in terms of prevalence. The survey of ICT Usage in Households by Turkey Statistical Institute in 2007 conducted that about 20% of households have access to the Internet. This proportion increased to 30% in 2009 according to the research in 2009. Back in 2007, according to data, the proportion of people who never used the Internet in rural Turkiye, was 80%, in urban Turkiye was 59%. 3G technology adds a new dimension to this case, which the Internet becomes available for larger proportion of the population and more flexible to be used. However, considering that 67% of the population in Turkey does not ever use the Internet, it is too early to expect a lasting and permanent democratic effect of the media via the Internet (TÜİK, 2007, 2009). The figure below can help to see the development of the Internet in Turkiye.

FIGURE 1.
Basic computer and the Internet rates in Turkiye, 2007-2009



During the period of 2000-2007 the rates of users of the Internet raised 199.5 percent in Europe, although the rates of Turkish users had risen 700 percent in Turkiye. Those rates tell us not only there are huge difference between the Western World and the Middle East but also the Internet has distributed very quickly. The figure above summarizes the changing of the using computer and accessing to the Internet in the last 3 years. However, even though the Internet is available, not many people can really afford it regularly. According a report of China, ‘there are a number of important distortions in the Internet modernization process that impede the effectiveness of the Internet as a tool for political expression.

First, as revealed by the latest official statistics, a pronounced “digital divide” exists in China. Internet usage continues to be dominated by an extremely narrow sliver of the national demographic, primarily young, highly educated, urban men’ (Chase and Mulvenon, 2002:5).

Even when some of them can access the Internet, people are interested in cultural and political issues only after basic needs as Maslow pointed out similarly (Maslow, 1943: 333). In considering youth people needs, even they have free access for the Internet; we can assume that that their main purposes are different from politics. A recent research about some Turkish web page with a wide contents for youths conducted that first aim of the webpage was looking for a friend (Güzel, 2007:196). But in some levels of accessing in the Internet with some other variables (especially education and income) we can expect youth use the Internet as political source and tool for self-expression.

As Güzel points out in his research, the Internet offers an expression area which has no authority and a chance to be identity-free (Güzel, 2007:199). Youth people are tend to cover themselves but Güzel conducted in his research that the Internet is more likely to be a part of consuming culture (especially consuming new technologies) than make youths free. In order to build and spread the culture of democracy, we should investigate under what circumstances youths use the Internet as a tool for political issues, and an opportunity to improve democracy and participation.

THE SURVEY: AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE REALITY

In order to understand university youth’s using the Internet as political source and self-expression tool, we applied a survey before the general and presidential elections in 2007, in Turkiye. The survey was targeted to Dokuz Eylul University, Business and Administration Faculty, Public Administration Department’s and Econometrics Department’s students. Since some of the cells are smaller than 5, we are not able to statistical tests but, we will see the general tendencies by making crosstabs in SPSS program. Table 3.1. summarizes the list of the participant in the manner of their education department and monthly income group. 44,5 per cent of the Public Administration department’s students are female, meanwhile, 58,7 per cent of the Econometrics department’s students are female, Those different rates and the cells with smaller than 5 numbers restricts the results of the research. Another obstacle about research is topic itself. Questions related to political issues are not easy to ask in Turkiye, like in many places. People are afraid to do not know something when they are asked, but also they are not willing to answer questions related to their political attitudes.

TABLE 1.
Table of Participants

Education		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Public Adm.	119	49
	Econometrics	121	51
Total		240	100,0
Income ⁴		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	29	13
	2	95	36
	3	70	30
	4	42	17
	5	4	4
Total		240	100,0

As we can see from the table above, the two departments’ students’ population are almost equal. However, the most of the students have monthly incomes between 250-500 Euros. So, we will compare the rates of the variables’ group cells, instead of the numbers.

Research Findings

Research findings collected and analysed via focusing on gender, income and educational differences, within crosstabs on SPSS.

In order to understand the online political behaviours of the students, first of all we need to see their political awareness differences. Table 3.2 shows us the differences due to gender and education. As we can see from the table, Public Administration department students are more aware about political issues than Econometric students are, and also male students of both of the departments are more aware than females ones are.

⁴ (Approximately values for monthly income)1: Under 250 €, 2: 250-500 €, 3:500-1000 €, 4: 1000-2500 €, 5: More than 2500 €. Minimum wages in Turkiye (for full time adult employee, taxes and social security included): Approximately 360€.

TABLE 2
Level of Political Awareness

Education		Level of Political Awareness ⁵					Total	
Gender		0	1	2	3	4		
Public Adm.	Woman	Count	4	18	23	8	0	53
		% of Gen.	7,5%	34,0 %	43,4 %	15,1%	,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	3,4%	15,1%	19,3%	6,7%	,0%	44,5%
	Man	Count	0	9	27	29	1	66
		% of Gen.	,0%	13,6%	40,9 %	43,9 %	1,5%	100,0%
		% of Total	,0%	7,6%	22,7%	24,4%	,8%	55,5%
	Count	4	27	50	37	1	119	
	% of Total	3,4%	22,7 %	42,0 %	31,1 %	,8%	100,0%	
Econometrics	Woman	Count	12	32	25	2	0	71
		% of Gen.	16,9%	45,1 %	35,2 %	2,8%	,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	9,9%	26,4%	20,7%	1,7%	,0%	58,7%
	Man	Count	2	7	27	13	1	50
		% of Gen.	4,0%	14,0%	54,0 %	26,0 %	2,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	1,7%	5,8%	22,3%	10,7%	,8%	41,3%
	Count	14	39	52	15	1	121	
	% of Total	11,6%	32,2 %	43,0 %	12,4%	,8%	100,0%	

The difference between those two departments is mainly a result of that Public Administration department has “political and social science” based lectures. The students are supposed to read in more social contexts, and so, they are more interested and aware of socio-political issues. In turn, they are more tending to use different opportunities to get more information and express their political opinion as well. On the other hand, opportunities are not free from economy. In our case, average monthly income and using opportunities for the Internet are very connected.⁶ The Table 3.3. Summarizes the different group of students’ average of monthly incomes.

According to the table 3, most of Public Administration department students are interested in political contented e-mails, and they share them, use them as political expression, having a better income has a positive effect on those. On the other hand, Econometric department students are not really deep interested in political contented e-mails, and having a better income has no radical effect in those attitudes. For both groups of educations, very low incomers use the internet as political tool (in the manner of e-mail with political contents)

⁵ 0 (The least political awareness) – 4 (The most political awareness)

⁶ The monthly cost of the Internet with average speed and limited to 4 GB is approximately 5-15€ in Turkiye. The Internet as unlimited usage and speed at 8 Mbps or more costs approximately 50-60 € for a month. These costs do not include the first investment costs.

TABLE 3. Education, Income Level and Political E-Mails

Education		Reading, Forwarding Political E-Mails					Total	
Income level (1=The lowest, 5=The highest)		Removing without reading	Only reading and then removing	Reading and keeping	Reading and forwarding	Reading forwarding discussing		
Public Administration Department	1	Count % within Income % of Total	1 8,3% ,9%	3 25,0% 2,7%	3 25,0% 2,7%	4 33,3% 3,5%	1 8,3% ,9%	12 100,0% 10,6%
	2	Count % within Income % of Total	4 7,5% 3,5%	19 35,8% 16,8%	10 18,9% 8,8%	11 20,8% 9,7%	9 17,0% 8,0%	53 100,0% 46,9%
	3	Count % within Income % of Total	6 17,1% 5,3%	10 28,6% 8,8%	8 22,9% 7,1%	8 22,9% 7,1%	3 8,6% 2,7%	35 100,0% 31,0%
	4	Count % within Income % of Total	0 ,0% ,0%	5 38,5% 4,4%	4 30,8% 3,5%	3 23,1% 2,7%	1 7,7% ,9%	13 100,0% 11,5%
	Count % of Total		11 9,7%	37 32,7%	25 22,1%	26 23,0%	14 12,4%	113 100,0%
	1		Count % within Income % of Total	2 13,3% 1,7%	7 46,7% 5,8%	2 13,3% 1,7%	3 20,0% 2,5%	1 6,7% ,8%
Econometrics Department	2	Count % within Income % of Total	3 7,5% 2,5%	23 57,5% 19,2%	4 10,0% 3,3%	5 12,5% 4,2%	5 12,5% 4,2%	40 100,0% 33,3%
	3	Count % within Income % of Total	5 15,6% 4,2%	8 25,0% 6,7%	8 25,0% 6,7%	9 28,1% 7,5%	2 6,3% 1,7%	32 100,0% 26,7%
	4	Count % within Income % of Total	2 6,9% 1,7%	15 51,7% 12,5%	1 3,4% ,8%	8 27,6% 6,7%	3 10,3% 2,5%	29 100,0% 24,2%
	5	Count % within Income % of Total	0 ,0% ,0%	2 50,0% 1,7%	0 ,0% ,0%	1 25,0% ,8%	1 25,0% ,8%	4 100,0% 3,3%
	Count % of Total		12 10,0%	55 45,8%	15 12,5%	26 21,7%	12 10,0%	120 100,0%

TABLE 4. Education, Using the Internet & Political Web Pages

Education		Visiting Political Web Pages, Forums		Total
		Yes	No	
Using the Internet ⁷ (0:Never-4:Over 6 hours)				
Public Adm.	1 Count	14	17	31
	% within Using	45,2%	54,8%	100,0%
	2 Count	13	8	21
	% within Using	61,9%	38,1%	100,0%
	3 Count	4	2	6
	% within Using	66,7%	33,3%	100,0%
	4 Count	2	2	4
% within Using	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%	
T. Count	33	29	62	
% within Using	53,2%	46,8%	100,0%	
Econometrics	1 Count	2	15	17
	% within Using	11,8%	88,2%	100,0%
	2 Count	3	12	15
	% within Using	20,0%	80,0%	100,0%
	3 Count	1	8	9
	% within Using	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
	4 Count	5	4	9
% within Using	55,6%	44,4%	100,0%	
T. Count	11	39	50	
% within Using	22,0%	78,0%	100,0%	

Table 3.4 shows us how differs the Internet using habits due to education based social or mathematical. As we can see from the table, there are some Public Administration students who never used the Internet. Compared to the Public Administration department’s students, Econometric department’s ones are much more interested in the using the Internet. But as we know from the earlier tables, the two of department students’ incomes are different too. Having time-limited access to the Internet is available from the university facilities. But more than 2 hours in the Internet requires private conditions. This table tells us Econometric department students can have more access to the internet by their conditions. However, the table shows that the more hours on the Internet doesn’t mean the more politically usage of it. Public Administration department students are interested in political web pages meanwhile most of the students of Econometrics department are not.

The Internet as political source

Table 3.5 shows us how university students do rank the Internet as political source due to gender and educational differences. When we compare different department students, we can see from the table that the Internet is ranked as more prior source by Public Administration department students than by Econometrics’ ones. This difference is related to that Public Administration department students are more interested in politics and their educational process make them more aware about political issues which let them promote using the Internet as political source. When we focus on gender differences, we can observe that Public Administration department male students rank the Internet as more prior source compared to by female students.

⁷ 0= Never, 1=Less than 2 hours, 2=2-4 hours, 3=4-6hours and, 4= Over 6 hours

TABLE 5: The Internet as Political Source

Education Internet Using		The Internet as Political Source (Rank)						Total	
		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.		
Public Administration	1	Count	2	11	14	13	4	2	46
		% within Using	4,3%	23,9%	30,4%	28,3%	8,7%	4,3%	100,0%
		% of Total	2,2%	12,0%	15,2%	14,1%	4,3%	2,2%	50,0%
	2	Count	3	11	7	6			27
		% within Using	11,1%	40,7%	25,9%	22,2%			100,0%
		% of Total	3,3%	12,0%	7,6%	6,5%			29,3%
	3	Count	4	5	1				10
		% within Using	40,0%	50,0%	10,0%				100,0%
		% of Total	4,3%	5,4%	1,1%				10,9%
	4	Count	6	1	2				9
	% within Using	66,7%	11,1%	22,2%				100,0%	
	% of Total	6,5%	1,1%	2,2%				9,8%	
	Count	15	28	24	19	4	2	92	
	% of Total	16,3%	30,4%	26,1%	20,7%	4,3%	2,2%	100,0%	
Econometrics	1	Count	3	9	9	8	2	1	32
		% within Using	9,4%	28,1%	28,1%	25,0%	6,3%	3,1%	100,0%
		% of Total	2,9%	8,8%	8,8%	7,8%	2,0%	1,0%	31,4%
	2	Count	5	7	9	10	4		35
		% within Using	14,3%	20,0%	25,7%	28,6%	11,4%		100,0%
		% of Total	4,9%	6,9%	8,8%	9,8%	3,9%		34,3%
	3	Count	7	6	7	2			22
		% within Using	31,8%	27,3%	31,8%	9,1%			100,0%
		% of Total	6,9%	5,9%	6,9%	2,0%			21,6%
	4	Count	6	2	3	2			13
	% within Using	46,2%	15,4%	23,1%	15,4%			100,0%	
	% of Total	5,9%	2,0%	2,9%	2,0%			12,7%	
	Count	21	24	28	22	6	1	102	
	% of Total	20,6%	23,5%	27,5%	21,6%	5,9%	1,0%	100,0%	

As we can clearly see from the table above, the Internet is the more used by Public Administration students, it becomes the prior political source for them. We can observe similar results from Econometric department students' using the Internet as political source but it is not clear as much as Public Administration department students' results show. Again, this must be related with the content of the lectures. In short we can say that using the Internet for a couple of hours effects on using the Internet for political source. But this affect can be meaningful when the basic interest for politics is there too. Also, the eclectic structure of the Internet content allows to users to discover and learn new things and create new interests. Long term using the Internet can allow university youth to develop political interests as well. Connected web pages make people come cross with some unplanned topics and pages. This has both good and bad sides. Good part of it is as it was explained above. But bad part is explained as that it breaks concentrations and breaks the skills for reading long pages. Ass Carrs explains in his recently research the problem is that skimming is becoming our dominant mode of thought (Carrs, 2010). This is also harm for a democratic system which requires individuals aware of issues and follows and reads long and detailed social issues.

The Internet and feeling secure or insecure

Feeling secure about political participation is essential in a democratic society. In opposite way, feeling insecure is not something matching with democratic freedom of speech.

When we look at the table, we can clearly observe that the students are not feeling secure about talking political and expressing themselves in the Internet. This problem is a very important obstacle in the manner of the expected positive affect of the Internet in solving problems of the culture of democracy.

TABLE 6: Feeling safer in the Internet

Education		Feeling safer in the online political talks					Total	
Gender		Never	Very rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always		
Public Administration	Woman	Count	17	13	18	3	1	52
		% within Gender	32,7%	25,0%	34,6%	5,8%	1,9%	100,0%
		% of Total	15,0%	11,5%	15,9%	2,7%	,9%	46,0%
	Man	Count	19	13	14	7	8	61
		% within Gender	31,1%	21,3%	23,0%	11,5%	13,1%	100,0%
		% of Total	16,8%	11,5%	12,4%	6,2%	7,1%	54,0%
Public Administration	Total	Count	36	26	32	10	9	113
		% of Total	31,9%	23,0%	28,3%	8,8%	8,0%	100,0%
Econometrics	Woman	Count	37	15	13	3	2	70
		% within Gender	52,9%	21,4%	18,6%	4,3%	2,9%	100,0%
		% of Total	30,8%	12,5%	10,8%	2,5%	1,7%	58,3%
	Man	Count	24	16	6	2	2	50
		% within Gender	48,0%	32,0%	12,0%	4,0%	4,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	20,0%	13,3%	5,0%	1,7%	1,7%	41,7%
Econometrics	Total	Count	61	31	19	5	4	120
		% of Total	50,8%	25,8%	15,8%	4,2%	3,3%	100,0%

The problem with feeling insecure is supposed to be solved by government. Government should provide citizens' security with guarantying their freedom of speech which is not only speaking up freely but also reaching any kind of information between legal restrictions. However, at least in Turkiye, news about "phone-tapping of some peoples" by governmental institutions has become a part of everyday news. This kind of news and developments make people feel insecure to participate in politics neither in real life nor (and especially) in virtual life, since the later one is much easier to follow and record. This issue tells new technologies are basically serving for government more than democratization of the process. This result brings the most important question; is democracy is a tool or an aim for governments for management of public?

CONCLUSION

Attending an university is an important period of life by which shaping world view and political views. When they are graduated, they usually know their political positions, or they know to whom never vote or give support. In our age, there are more waver voters, more undecided peoples, especially between youths. Political decisions are made by elimination techniques, instead becoming a supporter of some ideas, and political programs, plans. The Internet can be used as political education and informational tool not only for university youth but also, for teenagers, and for elders. But as we know from political sociology researches, political participation requires political knowledge, and it requires political interest to become real. As we have seen from this research, being interested in politics can be increased by political knowledge. We can not expect the university youth's effective online participation unless they are not motivated enough. Meanwhile university youth are lucky group of youths in general in the respect of opportunities in accessing the Internet, and using it effectively. As Ananny pointed out, '... consideration needs to be given to how young people's online literacy skills are combining with their new media practices not just to engage with traditional political institutions but to *create new publics*' (Ananny, 2007).

Although these new kind of *publics* are another research topic, but still we can observe from this research that the university youths are hesitating in political issues. So, expecting their using the Internet for improving democracy is not seem to be a realistic in short term. But on the other hand, a detailed new public research may help understand the borders of the university youth's new political expressions forms and decode them. The Internet for the university youth in the manner of political purposes has an open future. But the risk of television is more real for the Internet. Television is a strong media tool but also a tool for wasting time. University youths can easily be lost in that unlimited fun source. Researching and learning about serious issues can hardly compete with irresistible attraction of unlimited fun.

Even politically interested individuals still need money to keep being online and expressing their political opinions. In this respect, we can not talk about freedom or political online expression that has no money to survive as a freeman. Innis claims that communication has a vital role in organizing and effective management of large areas (Innis, 2007:27). In our digital age, communication has even more a vital role in democratic cultures, and political life. Although the wide variety of forms of online and real political participation exists, in this research we focused on several forms of online political participations and expressions in order to compare income, gender and educational differences.

The increasing of information sources and concentration of property creates a kind of simulation of democracy (Yumlu, 1995:13). That simulation not only convinces individuals to believe in that they are free but also captures them on the basis of thought. In this respect, the common motto of contemporary corporations, “think globally, and act locally” has been applied properly in reality by media cartels. Those companies in the name of pluralism, feeds political information needs of consumers in a very limited political strategies through in a very variety of media tools such as television, newspapers, web page, the Internet, news agents Receivers can assume those information are taken/chosen by their chose and decide, as a result of democratic process of public opinion. This is even more dangerous for a democratic life. When there is a tyrant, political reaction should be taken. But new technologies have been used as Big Brothers globally in the name of ‘global security’. Freedom has become a part of being watched and controlled willingly. This is a risk for new kind of totalitarianism. As Virillio points out, we need to discover hidden face of new technologies, before that face reveals itself in spite of us (Virillio, 1997:40). Because no-one knows who should be the watch-dog of the watch-dog of all of us.

Instead of taking technologically transformations as a rescuer of democracies, the existing facilities should be available for anyone, equally. We need democratization of current channels for political purposes. Other new developments information and communication tools could help democracies only when people have their own freedom of speech and also freedom of being different. As any other real democracy requires well balanced economy and the equal distribution of sources in the society, electronic democracy will even more require those.

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