

# An Evaluation of the Use of Public Relations in Politics in the Context of Social Media

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**Abstract:** In this study, the historical adventure of public relations and the definition of public relations will be briefly mentioned. In fact, public relations which have existed since the first period when people lived together in collective form, gained a special name in the last century and started to be seen as a separate function. Researches and experiences show that public relations has a big and important place in today's modern life. In the following part of the study, it will be emphasized the interdisciplinary feature of public relations, and then it will be tried to be examined especially with respect to politics and political science. Public relations, by nature, is associated with many disciplines. Advertising, marketing, public administration and similar fields have organic relations with public relations. Public relations, which has emerged in almost every part of daily life and has started to show its effect in all areas of life, also has an effect on daily political activities. Individuals or communities that are actively involved in politics use the techniques and methods of continuous public relations, even if they are not aware of it. In the last part of the study, it will be mentioned how actors in political life can use the public relations function effectively by using new media tools. Persons or institutions that want to be successful in politics must benefit from social media and social media supported public relations activities accordingly.

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Politics, Social Media, Internet, Advertising

## 1. Introduction

For a clearer understanding of the concept of public relations, it is useful to take a brief look at the concepts of public and relationship. According to the Turkish Language Association, the people are defined as features the same community of people living in the same country, who have the same cultural characteristics "(TDK, 2018). But the word. People shape need to be addressed and defined in a different way in terms of public relations. In terms of public relations, the public has a slightly different structure, and from the practical point of view, public relations are not all people, but a particular group or more than one group. Public relations activities are carried out mainly for these groups. Public relations experts have to communicate with different types of target groups, each of which has its own specific needs

and requires different types of communication tools and methods (Baytekin, 2014, pp. 161–162). Communication tools and methods for groups that may be active in political life and the integration of these tools and methods with new media will be discussed in the following sections.

## **2. Public Relations as an Indispensable Function of Social Life**

With Public relations practices are the applications that have existed since the day when the concepts of governing–managed. Although its origins are very old, it is seen that public relations is perceived today in very new periods. The rulers who wanted to show that they were working in the public interest in the past, have realized public relations activities even if they are not conscious and systematic in order to hold power. Regardless of the form of administration, all governments need the support of the public. It should be kept in mind that this is because the success of power depends on the support of the people (Baytekin, 2014, pp. 162–163). Public relations experts need to use different communication tools and techniques in a coordinated way in order to reach their target groups as effectively and effectively as possible. (Okay and Okay, 2002, p. 19) Basically, public relations studies investigate and identify the situation, the problem and the target groups; determines the strategy, plans the schedule, budget and creates a program: implements; monitors and evaluates the program being implemented (Baytekin, 2014, p. 167).

Broadly speaking, public relations includes efforts to establish, strengthen and protect the relationship between an organization and its target audience. All these can be affected by economic, political, social and technological developments, and the task of the public relations specialist is to inform the organizations that they serve by helping them to regulate and harmonize their systems. In order to reach the goals set in accordance with the public relations strategy, the internal and external target groups that are interested or interested in identifying are defined as the studies carried out in the name of positive leave and the importance of feedback as the whole of the studies (Özodaşık, 2012, p. 11).

While the shift of social life into an authoritarian orientation leads to the effectiveness of propaganda, public relations activities dominate the communication platforms during the periods when the agenda is hardened and the legitimacy of power is sought in democratic channels. In fact, propagandize distorted information ', public relations' image structuring 'and la information spinning la emerges as. While the information and guidance style of the state was understood through propaganda in its essence, it was seen that public relations started to serve the image management of private property with the strengthening of capitalist market economy and becoming an equivalent actor in the relations of companies

with the state. Political propaganda activities nowadays show similarities to the functioning of the public relations industry, the campaigns are fed with new news and slogans, and the tactical changes continue. (Tellan, 2009, pp. 24–25)

On the basis of public relations, there is a two-way communication flow; With the transmitted message, the evocations and reactions aroused by the message also gain importance. (26) z In this context, public relations, separated from propaganda, prefer persuasion rather than 'coercion' and imposition 'in their practices. Public relations work requires a comprehensive strategy, since public relations work is based on the principle of progressing with confident steps instead of in hasty and therefore public relations agencies are trying to simplify their organization, operation and presentation styles to the sector they serve. While operating the system with an active orientation in the propaganda, public relations persuasion techniques are supported by the system. Thus, the social power focuses, besides creating a system that controls and directs every aspect of everyday life, develops techniques to legitimize the system and constantly update these techniques (Tellan, 2009, p. 26–27).

The way to communicate with the target audience is through information. First of all, it is necessary to determine which masses are targeted and then what kind of information these masses need. Considering the use of push-pull message strategies in the Internet environment, the user will take the information that is required for him / herself and the desired information. Then an organization should do this strategy is to use the right (Sayımer, 2008, p. 86). Within the framework of public relations studies, the aim is to establish good relations with the target group and to contribute to the increase in the reputation of the target group. In this context, on the basis of the open system approach, the enterprises have to be open to the information coming from their environment and to transfer the information about them to the relevant target groups. It should be noted that the two-way communication supported by the feedback process has an impact on reputation and prestige (Baytekin, 2014, pp. 163–164). It is an undeniable fact that an honest and qualified communication approach is valued for reputation management.

Public relations activities are not only needed by the private sector but also by public institutions. Both the private sector and the public sector need to have a positive impact on the target audience. It is important to accept the truth as the basic principle in the process of creating persuasion strategies, reflecting the facts to the target audience during the public relations studies aiming at the change in behavior in the target group, which includes bi-directional and persuasive communication (Baytekin, 2014, p. 164). Sustaining the positive effect created should be one of the aims.

Public relations are accepted as an increasing function in our country. In past years, public relations under different names were carried out in public institutions. Press office, press consultancy, broadcasting branch, propaganda, press–broadcast and public relations, promotion branch, information branch, press and public relations department, public relations and publishing bureau, public relations and press relations and statistical directorate, such as carrying different names, but in essence there were offices and apartments in public relations (Budak & Budak, 2014, p. 53).

Today, public relations specialists are employed in all private and public organizations of our country's universities and hospitals. As mass media becomes more widespread and democratization tendencies can be said by everyone to think, it is clear that public relations will become increasingly important function (Budak & Budak, 2014, p. 56). As the value is understood, it is obvious that pejorative and condescending assessments about public relations will decrease.

## **2. The Role of Public Relations in Politics**

Propagated by public relations, propaganda also uses mass media, such as advertising, and its purpose is to develop an idea, an idea, a person, and so on. to introduce and to accept the public. Propaganda transmits one–way information from a source to a destination. However, it is imperative to know the responses of the information sent by the various communication sources on the target audience in public relations. For this reason, public relations is a function that values the bidirectional information flow. Adır Public relations must disseminate accurate and reliable information. One of the most important features expected from a public relations specialist is honesty. Propaganda can emit exaggerated, diverted and misleading information. The message sent to the propaganda is dogmatic. Public relations should always be open to discussion. Ir In public relations, face–to–face communication is often necessary to gain community. Due to the dogmatic nature of propaganda, the most appropriate media will be mass media. This is the reason why mass media are indispensable for the propagator. The propagandist wants to keep the mass media to monopolize the mass media because it can reach the mass media, it is antidemocratic and it is separate from public relations (Budak & Budak, 2014, p. 12).

Public relations covers a wider area than public opinion. Even public opinion is often seen as an instrument of public relations. Another public relations definition, which is more recent, sees this function more as a definition communication planning. Ur Public opinion occurs when individuals in society are informed about a particular topic. Knowledge about the

subject of individuals to develop one or other opinion or attitude; 'Public reaction'. The community can be informed in many ways. However, the medium of publicity is the most important tool for publicity. Contrary to common belief, those who manage mass media cannot or cannot determine public opinion only within the framework of their own orientations. Because they are not the only tools used to create public opinion, and the mass media are not only the function of public opinion, but they can also receive the support of other intermediaries and instruments, and moreover they follow the sensitivity points that concern the society (Budak & Budak, 2014, p. 25).

After the elections are held at regular intervals in the democratic order, the power cannot be transferred to the winning group and the political activities no longer stand. It is imperative that governments remain in contact with those who are permanently administered in a mutual response–reaction process. Even in totalitarian regimes, it is necessary to develop contacts between administrations representing interests and interests (Budak & Budak, 2014, p. 30).

Propaganda and public relations are activities that aim to reach certain "goals ulaş as activity. A planned communication process is dominant in both. Propaganda and public relations, which are different in terms of their style of organization, the way they work, their working areas and their interaction styles, have similarities in terms of the techniques they use and the mass media they use (Tellan, 2009, p. 24).

In particular, in the political arena, propaganda activities are carried out in order to raise public opinion, i) a simple presentation of the subject and general expression, ii) frequent repetition of few ideas, iii) the spreading of new ideas based on the values and attitudes existing in society, iv) the groups in society; v) attempts to influence in the direction of certain ideas; and v) the injustice of opposing ideas. (Tellan, 2009, p. 23)

Political parties are political groups that have a continuous and stable organization that tries to maintain or maintain control of the state mechanism through the support of the people (Budak and Budak, 2014, p. 31).

Public relations activity is a two–way communication process carried out by political parties in order to obtain support on target groups. Being bi–directional, it is aimed to shape policies in this direction by paying attention to the expectations of the public and their demands and complaints as well as introducing policies to the public and creating images (Özsoy, 2004, p. 51).

Everyone within the organizational structure of political parties is a herkes political actor Siy. All kinds of communication by political parties are within the scope of political communication. The communication activities carried out during the election periods represent the highest point in terms of parties (Aziz, 2014, p. 22). In particular, in the political arena, propaganda activities are carried out in order to raise public opinion, i) a simple presentation of the subject and general expression, ii) frequent repetition of few ideas, iii) the spreading of new ideas based on the values and attitudes existing in society, iv) the groups in society; v) attempts to influence in the direction of certain ideas; and v) the injustice of opposing ideas. (Tellan, 2009, p. 23) As it is understood, although there are similar aspects, public relations activities carried out in the political sense and propaganda are not exactly the same.

Historically, political communication can lead to the existence of people and the emergence of communication. As a requirement of social and political relations, the rulers carried out methods of persuading those who were governed in order to demonstrate their success and preserve their existence. The intensity of political communication was in parallel with the spread of mass media (Sandıkçioğlu, 2012, p. 3).

Political public relations arose from the need of politicians to resist other people's inclinations to resist the implications of political methods (Oktay, 2002, p. 76).

Public relations a management function that helps in achieving organizational goals, defining philosophy and facilitating organizational change. Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create harmony between organizational objectives and social expectations. Public relations practitioners develop, implement and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding between all the units and the camps of an organization (Baskin et al., 1997, p. 5).

Public relations an administrative function that aims to create and maintain ties based on communication, understanding, cooperation and acceptance between an organization and the audience with which this organization speaks (Solmaz, 2008, p. 145).

Public relations is an application made in the context of the information obtained because of the emergence of information society has gained importance in almost all areas and has become a popular application (Canöz, 2008, p. 342).

The Internet has different uses. In the field of public relations, the use of the Internet in the web sites, electronic mail, intranet, extranet, online databases, blog, network, discussion groups and chat (Minister, 2008, p. 373).

The role played by professional advisers in the political campaigns of previous periods has become even more technical with the use of the Internet. It is seen that political parties used this media continuously in order to transfer their activities and opinions to the public. , The fact that the developing communication technologies are used professionally in the election campaigns in the political arena as well as in other sectors has enabled the political parties to focus their attention on this area intensively, effectively and efficiently. The parties consider the use of the Internet as an obligation to be able to communicate effectively with the masses outside the election periods. For this purpose, they use their websites frequently to create a better and mutual communication environment with their voters (Karlı and Değirmencioğlu, 2011, p. 142).

The main subject of politics is human. When politics is considered as a process developed by man for human beings, the thoughts and roles of individuals in politics appear to be an undeniable reality. The use of new techniques to enable political actors to be more active in politics is also an expression of this situation. Political communication is one of these techniques (Okur Çakıcı ve Çalışır, 2016, p. 955).

Political communication is a concept closely related to democracy when considered in its scientific aspect. Political communication has begun with the granting of universal suffrage to the masses and has reached its present meaning with the development of mass communication technologies. The concept of political communication and its application was developed and developed in the post-World War II United States and was widely used in Western European countries in the 1960s (Özkan, 2004, p. 38).

In the implementation of political communication, the processes of preparing, sending, receiving and distributing messages that will have a direct and meaningful effect on politics are seen. These messages may be sent and sent by politicians, journalists, representatives of interest groups, private or public identities, organized or unorganized individuals. The key point is that the message in question has a significant effect on thoughts, beliefs, behaviors and groups (Karlı and Değirmencioğlu, 2011, p. 145).

Nowadays, it is seen that in industrial and information societies, political parties have transferred their image management to professional counselors in the election periods during the election periods. With the professionalization of political communication, it was

the job of professionals to organize relations with media organizations and how to make use of technical developments; In addition, the candidates are being designed as a packaged product that will come before the public (Karlı and Değirmencioğlu, 2011, p. 147).

The concept of political communication based on the ability of mutual agreement in the political arena; it points to the scientific and artistic aspects of the political and communication components on which this concept is based (Bitirim Okmeydan, 2018, p. 4223).

Political communication occurs through the merger of communication concepts which are defined as a dialectical process with common symbols formed in politics and society, which express that the different sectors of the society and the power focuses that seek to achieve power are provided on a common ground (Oktay, 2002, p. 7).

Political communication; the political leaders and the parties through the media to transfer themselves to the public, by recognizing their current and potential voters, to meet their expectations, to convince them to create a change of attitude and behavior in the desired direction in the target groups during the election periods, they can be expressed as systematic studies they have carried out (Bitirim Okmeydan, 2018, p. 4224).

It emphasizes the necessity of communicating with the target masses and emphasizes the importance of using public relations for political purposes and interests (Bitirim Okmeydan, 2018, p. 4225).

Digital change based on technological innovations and rapid developments in information communication technologies, as well as in every field of life, are reflected in the political arena and lead to a new, radical and uninterrupted transformation in the fields of political communication. As stated earlier, one of the main aims of political public relations is to establish a healthy communication between political parties and political leaders and the media, and thus to ensure that the works and ideologies of these political actors are announced to the public and to achieve and sustain recognition, support and legitimacy in their favor. For this reason, the media has always been one of the most important and important elements in political public relations and it has taken its place among the main actors of the political process (Bitirim Okmeydan, 2018, p. 4226).

Social media, due to the properties owned, that Turkey and the world by leading political parties and every day more preferred and will make a difference in the way we can say that attempting to use. M The use of social media as an online discussion platform allows bi-



directional communication between politicians and target audiences, permits target audiences to question political actors, allowing them to seek democratic rights and gives transparency to the process of political communication (Bitirim Okmeydan, 2018, p. 4227).

### **3. A New Tool for Using Public Relations in Politics: Social Media**

Social media, which is a digital platform with simultaneous information sharing, refers to environments where there is no limit to sharing and communication. Therefore, it is also important for the positioning of brands and institutions. Social media consists of content, so content management in social media is an important issue. It is important for organizations to take their place and presence in different networks in accordance with corporate identity, to measure interaction rates, to interact with users, to use social media management tools and to allocate promotional budget to make a difference and to provide awareness (Özgen, 2014a, p. 193).

Social media has the most basic characteristics of being independent of time and place, it is effective and bidirectional communication and information can be distributed in viral ways; It is open to manipulation and disinformation as well as internet based environments where the real information is not covered. Social media environments differ from traditional media with respect to their characteristics, dynamics and behavior patterns. Social media now create their own media, create their own agenda, provide information flow, can be updated at any time, because of the interactive environment because they differ from traditional media environments and therefore create different behavior (Özgen, 2014b, p. 113). Traditional media environments and social media environments are different environments. Therefore, they should be used in different ways, for creating different contents and for different target groups. Reputation management is one of the objectives of the public relations discipline and long-term communication investments are based on building this trust and prestige. However, due to the variability, speed, updating of social media, and areas open to manipulation, it may be necessary for the strategies to become more compulsory fields. (Özgen, 2014b, p. 124)

An organization must have a regular relationship with the media. Print media are seen as the most fundamental resource for establishing a fast, reliable and continuous communication with society. Electronic communication is an inexpensive tool that quickly transmits important corporate news to target groups. What is important for a management team to create a successful media communication program was to benefit from all communication tools in a coordinated manner (Okay and Okay, 2002, p. 19).

Social media is an environment that should be evaluated from many different perspectives because it is an environment independent from the power / power balance. In particular, it should be taken into consideration that social networking networks and capital-driven advertising and all promotional activities are also targeted for political purposes / propaganda (Özgen, 2014b, p. 125). Public relations is a management function which establishes and maintains mutual benefit relations between the various publics and the various publics that the success or failure of an organization depends upon them (Cutlip and Center, 1994, p. 6). It is an important way for organizations to create their own virtual communities and thus to make a difference in their communication and to strengthen their communication. Although social media environments have been discussed in terms of their advantages so far, it can create an environment for social media crises considering unfair competition conditions and malicious people (Özgen, 2014a, p. 194).

We see that public relations employees use the words of relations with the media and relations with the media from time to time. Sometimes we see that both terms are used to cover each other. The term. Relations with media refers to the relationship of print media, news agencies, radio, television and other video production companies operating in local, regional and national or international fields, for public or private interest purposes. (Okay and Okay, 2002, pp. 20–21)

The Internet is seen as a new tool of political socialization. With the increase of new communication technologies, awareness of public issues can be strengthened. With the widespread use of the Internet, internet and especially web sites, provide information about the political process and provide active connection between the political process (Akar, 2011, p. 173).

Media relations have a central role in the implementation of public relations because the media has a function that controls the flow of information to other target groups within a social system. The task of relations with the media is one of the traditional tasks of the public relations expert. It is among the duties of the public relations specialist to maintain media relations, to place press releases, and to understand what media will see as news values about the organization. (Okay and Okay, 2002, pp. 22–23)

With the interactive communication environment developed by the Internet, the function of establishing relations with public relations has gained more importance. Organizations have had the opportunity to establish and develop relations with all social stakeholders on the internet. The meaning of interactive public relations is not limited to creating flashy websites or sending journalists to press releases via e-mail. Although these methods constitute part

of the work, interactive public relations is the maximum use of the internet as a two-way communication channel between an organization and key clients. The ability of the Internet to facilitate interactivity makes it the most basic means of conversation between individuals. Most media provide an email address to reporters. Blogs have comment boxes. Websites offer e-mail messages or instant live conversations. With these developments, the term participatory journalism has been used in the media. There is a web-based alternative media with blogs and individual participation and commentary. Media democracy, which drives the media to be more responsible towards the reader, and which makes the reader more powerful in the media, is developing. It should not be considered that interactive public relations will eliminate the traditional public relations. Along with the thousands of new media sources, traditional newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations are still being monitored. Therefore, public relations practitioners will continue their valuable works such as writing press bulletins and high-level executive speeches, developing brand-building strategies and planning crisis communication (Sayimer, 2008, p. 82).

Social media environments are the environments where institutions can use their culture, images and identities in the right strategy, they can spread rapidly, tell their brands and even manage their relations with the media. In these environments, feedback is easily received and new strategies can be created quickly through feedback received. It is important for each institution to create its own social media environments and to produce meaningful content, and to establish an intimate communication with its target audience. In addition to creating all the strategies of the institutions on existing social media environments, the application of their own environments and their strategies through these environments will provide a difference in terms of their target groups (Özgen, 2014a, p. 194).

Mobile communication; In terms of reaching the customer, the target audience is reached by means of mobile phones, mobile computers and similar devices suitable for remote and wireless communication; It can be defined as conducting all kinds of communication studies related to institutions, products, services, ideas, actions and persons. Mobile communication; It is possible to use the corporate image in order to create the corporate image, to create awareness, to disseminate an idea and opinion, to design intent, to increase sales, to update consumer information, to engage in efforts to increase loyalty (Özgen, 2014a, p. 196).

Some features that distinguish mobile communication from other communication methods can be summarized as follows (Özgen, 2014a, pp. 196–197);

- Mobile communication is not mass but individual;
- In mobile communication, the response to the message, product and advertising is taken in a shorter time,
- Less costly than other communication methods,
- The interaction with the target group is higher,
- Campaigns can be made for different target groups,
- Access to the Target Person is easier.

Another great benefit of the Internet for political parties; the breaking of journalism in media monopolies. As it is known, the media vehicles, which are monopolized by the big capital institutions, have a monopoly on the news; sometimes it gives some details of the news, sometimes it publishes the news a few days later, sometimes it does not publish the news or offers a negative news. However, the news about the internet seems to be broken. Internet news sites and portals can be updated several times during the day. Political parties, who learn that this work will be done cheaply and without any problem, from the Internet sites of television channels, newspapers, magazines and news portals etc. they publish the news they receive from the channels on their own sites (Aktaş, 2004, p. 287).

#### **4. Conclusion**

As a result, when the development process of public relations is examined, an improvement is observed as in other disciplines. This development has affected and continues to affect other disciplines in which public relations are related. The public relations function, which has been used since its inception, has been thought to be focused on marketing and advertising in the early days and it has been used in order to improve the relations of companies and companies with their customers and thus to make more profit.

In the future, it was realized that only commercial approaches could not limit public relations, and that public relations activities in public administration and politics were important. Particularly, political actors have realized that they can leave a positive impression in society by using the functions of honesty such as public relations instead of one way and misleading activities like propaganda. The use of public relations in politics constitutes a win-win situation in this sense. The fact that there is a two-way communication in public relations enables the parties to evaluate their return to the actions taken. Thus, political actors have the opportunity to pursue a developing and evolving strategy rather than a policy strategy that is not considered and developed.

The development which deeply affects the use of public relations in politics and in a sense necessitates this partnership is the social media, which we can call the new media, to become a social life and to become an indispensable part of daily life in a short period of time. Emerging technology and communication opportunities have led to the emergence of social media. The activities carried out on mass media through social media have gradually started to change. Individuals and communities of these individuals, who are more comfortable and free than ever, have been able to learn what they deem useful for them. These developments have affected commercial life as well as political life and political elections. For all these reasons, it is inevitable for political actors to use new media tools in their public relations activities. The value of public relations activities using social media is better understood every day. The most important example of this is the existence of social media accounts of almost all political actors, whether individual or corporate, and the active use of these accounts.

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