Media as the Incentive or Mediator of Populism: A Research on the Media Populism Strategies and Factors of Political Power in Turkey

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Social sciences positioned populism as a strategy to secure power/strength, a genuine political way, but besides it is positioned as an ideology, which divides society into two homogenous, antagonistic groups, brings society and elites face to face. Furthermore it is defined, as an ideology that wants politics to represent the society's general will. It is accepted that media and its production "logic" provides appropriate tools for populism development. In Turkey, which is governed by neoconservative and neo-liberal power, media populism has been the most used political communication strategy in recent years. Communication strategies, when there is a need to arouse and direct interest of the public opinion and for agenda setting processes; complexity, reduction, personalization, accusation, sentimentalizing, targeting, dramatization, alienation and creation of pseudo events, are frequently used. Most of the political actors appeal to media populism when they need to lean on to the society, disseminate the charismatic leader discourse, reduce the value of the discourses belonging to opponents, prove that they are representing the common goods and benefits. This study relates to direct-indirect practices of government's populism strategies. Within this context, creating legitimacy on political power by media populism in Turkey is assumed to be the most powerful method.

Keywords: populism, media populism, political communication

Introduction

Social sciences positioned populism as a strategy to secure the power/strength, in other words as a genuine political way, but besides, it is positioned as an ideology, which divides society into two homogenous, antagonistic groups, brings society and degenerated elites face to face. Furthermore it is defined, as an ideology that wants politics to represent the society's general will. Researches refer to this concept's ideological, organizational and communicational extents, whereas it is accepted that media and its production "logic" provides appropriate tools for the development of populism. In terms of political communication, the relationship between media communication styles and populism's conditions, rules and logic is an attractive research area. The most vital questions/problems here are whether media is the tool of populism or the incentive of populism

and how politics transformed.

In contemporary world, populism is more and more present in party's political discourse while they are attempting to achieve their goals regardless of their ideological orientation or heritage. This transformation of political actors are also transforming the concept of populism from ideological level to a mean for a massive winning of votes and support in political-electoral campaigns. The growth of the relevance of global politics, state's reshuffled concepts and increased frequencies of transcendent political processes are shaping other kinds of grounds and scopes for the massive rhetoric policies in the 21st century (Latifi, 2015). Populism appears as an ideology, which shapes democracy and democracy practices of governments and in contemporary world and there is a great transformation in the democracies. These practices are now evolving into populist discourses and appeals. This transformation is basically because of governments who are seeking most of the populations/majorities consent in order to maintain their power, strength, statue and continuity. Today it is difficult to understand the concept of populism without analyzing populist rhetoric within the political discourse. In political discourse, populist rhetoric is used to manipulate and direct public opinion by an authoritarian or totalitarian leader in the attempt of keeping the control of the masses with aggressive or not-explainable policies, today it can be assumed that the new way of populism is directed by a charismatic leader who is able to mobilize both urbanized and rural masses with rational and essential promises (Tella, 1997). In this regard, this transformed populism does not refers to the ancient ambiguity that made Roman and Greek democracy anymore. This new transformed populist approach of the 21st century is pretending to position itself as a substantial element of the new political culture, which is now. This transformed conception and practices of populism are becoming more frequent in political actors-parties-leaders victory, they are calling citizens in a sophisticated way whatever this collective group is since they are going to use it for the purpose of political mobilization, legitimacy and continuity. Today's politics populism tends to mobilize masses against the existing institutions of states all around the world. All this is accompanied by a strong psychological control of a quasi democratic or quasi-authoritarian leader disguised under the clothes of the popular charismatic leader (Latifi, 2015).

Both with the transformation of populist approach throughout the political rhetoric-practices and the development of mass communication tools and media in 20th century, leaders who are seeking power and strength became dependent to media sector for their legitimacy and to spread their values-ideas. This legitimization process made both leaders and media dependent to each other and created a semiotic relationship between the two. With the media's power to build, create and spread symbols, messages, images, information and public opinion, populist approach became most preferable way to appeal to the majority of the society for actually maintaining the consent of the people. Also media, with its essential role, became the basis of the information society, symbol of the power and the tool for democratic-political and political structures to reach societies and their general aim to gain power within the society.

The main purpose of this study is questioning whether the media is the incentive or mediator of the populism by analyzing; media's development in political communication, media's relationship between political actors and finally I am going to give some brief examples from Turkey. In Turkey, which is governed by neoconservative and neo-liberal power, media populism has been the most used political communication strategy in recent years. Communication strategies, when there is a need to arouse and direct interest of the public opinion and for agenda setting processes; complexity, reduction, personalization, accusation, sentimentalizing, targeting, dramatization,

alienation and creation of pseudo events, are frequently used. Especially the front benchers of the ruling party appeal to media populism when they need to; lean on to the society, disseminate the charismatic leader discourse, reduce the value of the discourses belonging to the opponent people and organizations, prove that they are representing the common good for all and to present that their own interests and benefits as common interests.

Canovan (1999) states that “populism is a shadow cast by democracy itself” and Benjamin Arditi objects this statement by saying that “we might want to refer to populism as a specter rather than a shadow of democracy” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007). What is actually comprehensible is that, populism and democracy are inextricably linked together but in order to understand this connection, first of all populism is needed to be put forward and explained.

Populism

Populism comes from Latin word *populus* which means “people” and populism states “being close to the people”. In daily usages it is in the same meaning with the polity, which is suitable for people’s enjoyment, follows people’s mood/psychology and actually resigns itself to these moods. This concept joined into the social sciences at the end of 19th century and what roots behind in this concept is the farmers’ movement, which took place in USA. With farmers’ movement struggle to get more cheaper loans, new currency policies, referendum democracy and unity for agriculture policies and the establishment of People’s Party in 1890 rest behind of the populism concept (Keskin, 2014). In contemporary World the most prevalent discourse of this concept is European Right and Radical Right populism. However, the questions whether populism is an act or an ideology or whether it can be degraded to political discourse or to communicational form, is still unresolved. Cass Mudde (2004) and Margaret Canovan (2002) stated that the populism is an ideology, which lets other ideological contents permeability and enables the explanation of other changeable definitions. Today populism is discussed around three dimensions: ideological, communicational, and organizational dimensions.

From the beginning of 1980s, an emergence of a new populism movement began. In short notice they managed to not only organize itself in political parties but within some western democracies achieved a great success in the elections. With 1990’s, it has become a regular occurrence in Western Europe. According to Cas Mudde (2004), we are now experiencing populist Zeitgeist, in which government parties, as well as, opposition are expressing some of populist features in their discourse.

The rise of populism in most of the Western Europe is basically taken into the consideration as a voters reaction to the traditional parties failure to respond adequately to a series of phenomena such as economic and cultural globalization, the speed and direction of European integration, immigration, the decline of ideologies and class politics, exposure of elite corruption, etc. (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007). It is also the outcome of the political malaise, declining and decreasing party membership, citizen’s lack of interest and confidence in politics and politicians. This situation can also be named as the anti-political climate, which is also grown and perched by the media (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007). This “created” anti-political climate also affects citizen’s electoral behaviors, de-alignate and disillusion voters participations rather than outcomes as a searching of a new, radical, alternative parties. These new alternatives emerges in shape of populists, offers straightforward and commonly used solutions to societies who are in search of. The term populist is often used in loose, inconsistent and undefined ways to denote to “the people”, “demagogy” and “catch-all” politics or as a new types of parties whose

classification is not well defined and clear (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007). According to this basic understanding, we can give the example of an opponent political leader promises to enforce harsh laws on crime, lower taxes and gas prices, it is going to be a “populist” assurance. Populism means basically; a member of a political party claiming to represent the common people; especially often capitalized when the majority of society was in search of an alternative leader or party to get back their rights, freedom and interests.

According to Betz and Johnson (2004) populism suggests answers for some essential questions. What went wrong and lead to the populist movement in democracies? The answers of this question is actually stated above that the democracies and governments under other regimes didn’t reflect the will of the people effectively and elites of the society occupies this general will of people in an exploited way. Second question is “who we need to blame?” We need to blame the elites since they occupied the general will of people and they tried to used policies for their legitimacy and continuity. And the final question is “what is to be done in order to reverse this situation?” The answer is pretty easy, people need to gain their power back again and an alternative party or leader could only do this. Populist approach appears in that final answer for the majority of people.

People are in search of a community, where they can share their ideas freely, where a place there is warm, safe and mutual trust and the best way to achieve this community back again can be done by populism according to researchers. Paul Taggart refers this community as a populist heartland and only the populist leader or party can attempt to enhance/organize this heartland and return the sovereignty to people. Heartland presented as a place where is dreamed outside of the history and actually placed to a non-existent past. People placed at the center of this new place as the main actor of populism and the source of the reality. So clearly there is a great search and need to find back a voice of people and for that people are going to lean on to that person/party by voting. Clearly populist “one” proposes a salvation for people (Bryder, 2009). Populism and its leaders offer the people, as Francisco Panizza (2005) states in his book *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, the “promise of emancipation after a journey of sacrifice”. This journey is usually led by a charismatic leader who is portrayed as knowing clearly what the people want just like a super hero or like a person the “one” from the whole. The cornerstone of the relationship between charismatic populist leaders and the people is that while they remain one from the people, they are going have some other unique qualities, characteristics and vision mean that only they can be the liberator/hero of the people. So according to this populist ideology, unmediated relationship between people and the leader, leader who is labeling as “people’s voice” are getting in to the central part of the ideology (Pasquino, 2007).

Populism and Democracy

Democracy has changed substantially after the II World War, evolving into a dangerous and irreversible populism, says John Lukacs (2006) in his book *Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred*. With the transformative forms and styles of populism, lead to the transformed political discourse and additionally raised some important issues for the theories of the political sciences on democracy. The populist theories on democracy involve unnecessary and unrealistic assumptions about the political interest, knowledge and rationality of the ordinary citizen. The traditional conceptions of populist theories are now being replaced by more pragmatic theories based on empirical evidence about the requirements of democratic systems. Without necessarily accepting the superiority of the populist approach there are grounds for doubting the claim that a pluralistic

dispersal of political influence in a political unit can be equated with democracy. There is an essential connection and tension between democracy and populism since both of these terms roots in the people and they both indicate the supreme importance of the people.

Abraham Lincoln stated that “Government of the people, by the people for the people” in his 1863 Gettysburg Address to actually define the term democracy and this statement also helps us to understand the similarities between democracy and populism. Lincoln’s memorable statement may also help us to define three key elements of democracy. First, that it is “of” the people not only in the sense of being “over” all the people but that it provides and ensures its legitimacy from their commitment to government by consent. Second, that it is “by” the people, which means that they participate in governmental decision making processes by voting and actively participating. Third and finally, that it is “for” the people in that it calls for a realization of the common welfare and safeguard the rights of the individuals (Latifi, 2016).

Populism and democracy are sociopolitical concepts that might be considered as similar but not. Political science researchers have argued that populism often can be opposite to democracy. Populist politicians may emerge with promises of working “for the people” in opposition to the elite but on the other hand they may actually have a secret agenda to favor the elite and that can create problems for the common people. From a democratic perspective, “the people” are defined as citizens who possess rights, sovereignty and duties, that must be exercised within the limits of the law. Populist leaders may revive the people with the “promise” of returning the sovereign rule by the people. The emergence of populism can result in populist leaders achievement of more and more power. With this power they can break true democratic traditions, which actually should be protected by them. Extreme populism works against any limitations on the manifestation of the public will. Most of the populist rhetoric includes xenophobic, nationalistic and exclusionary language. The core members of this movement use the tools of democracy such as elections to strengthen their authority and eliminate dissenting/opposing voices and this can turn into a racial, ethical, national intolerance and can also create violence against outsiders and other groups in the society.

Both democracy as well as populism is ideologies involving the rule of the people by the people or representatives chosen by the people. It is an interesting distinction, because they are in some ways related but in some cases can be opposite. Democracy focuses more on the assignment of governance to the people regardless of class on the other hand; populism focuses more on the struggle between the common class and the elite class. Populism can be exercised as a means to gaining or retaining power over minorities through gaining the favor of majority stakeholders. And this may lead to ‘Tyranny by majority’, which is also Robert Dahl’s famous interpretation, a situation where the needs of the many preponderates the needs of the minority (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007). More generally, “democracy” is when the people have authority, but is usually in the form of formal institutions governed by established laws. “Populism” is not so much a form of government as it is a type of rhetoric, especially one that appeals to base motives and class differences. Populism is methodology to achieve personal political goals by manipulating general population. Democracy is form of government that allows people to govern themselves, through elected politicians and actually according to many authors it is an elusive term.

Thus populism is form of manipulation which is unlikely to lead to public benefit for example a politician would promise to improve environmental or social problems such as healthcare and then get elected but

afterwards they would have made contracts with private medical companies, which might belong to their associates. Such politician would also use “they will limit your freedoms” slogans in their strategies to get elected, even if limiting those “freedoms” is beneficial to the society.

Populism is an approach to politics. Populism sets up a struggle between the people at large and some poor class. The problem with populism is that there's often a complete lack of understanding of the issues involved in setting up process. Populism is not restricted to democracies. Venezuela, Thailand and North Korea all have populist features in their ruling; despite they are not democratic countries (Kaltwasser, 2014).

In short, Cass Mudde (2004) argues that, populism is an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism. It criticizes the exclusion of important issues from the political agenda and calls for their re-politicization. Mudde adds that populism's opponent views and irreconcilable position leads to a polarized society just like their views and its majoritarian extremism denies legitimacy to opposed views and weakens the rights of minorities. According to Rike's definition of populism, it is an aspect of political culture, a specific type of political culture connected with the way a political system ought to work (Pasquino, 2007).

Populist democracy involves direct action of large numbers of people, which often results in the circumvention of institutional channels and ad hoc invasion of individual privacy. Liberal democracy involves political action mediated by institutional rules, and therefore limitations on the use of power by majorities as well as minorities. The difference between liberal democracy and populist democracy, then, does not concern who shall have access to power (in both cases, there is representative rule); rather, it concerns how power shall be sought, the mode of access. (William Kornhauser, 1959)

Populism and Media

Many countries all over the world have witnessed the rise, fall and crumble of movements and parties that have been described as populist. Those populist actors have posed a challenge to established parties or even entered into government. Against the background of economic and political crises in different regions of the world as well as long-term changes in social structures and in the media environment, the analysis of the success of populist worldviews and politics is highly relevant. According to some researchers such as Taggart, Jagers, Walgrave, Wodak and Laclau, populism defined and analyzed as a tool and technique to gain or increase people's support (Panizza, 2005; Laclau, 2007). If we will consider that even non-populist political parties and their leaders are using propaganda tactics to get vote from the people, the question about the difference between with these strategies and populist discourses and also brings the standpoint of political communication to the agenda. From that view point and taking political communication at the center of this argument we can come to the point that the media/mass media, which is also the essential element of political communication strategies are basically coming also the essential element of populist discourses since it is highly similar with the political communication. With the power of the media leaders of parties creates emotional bonds and connections with the people, and it is also accepted that leader/parties imposes the idea that they are sharing the same interests and they have got the same faces with this newly created homogenous group.

However, there are so many questions about the role of media in political arena. Recently, field of communication and media scholars begun to investigate the communicative aspects of populism. Populism in the media aspect they begun to ask; How do the media cover populist actors and discourses? Does this coverage foster populism in the population and in the political field? Populism by the media: Do the media act as populist

actors themselves who, with their own strategies and goals, express populist worldviews? Does this form of media populism promote or substitute other populist actors? Populism against the media: Has media criticism become an integral part of populist ideologies and discourses? How can we understand and explain the distrust populists have expressed toward the mainstream media in many countries, and what are its consequences? How do people who hold a populist worldview use and evaluate the media (Kramer, 2014)?

Even the ideological aspect and communicational aspect of political act interrelated to each other they both have different meanings. In communicational aspect we face with an area full of language, staging, and symbols, both expresses the ideas and worldviews and also effects them with pragmatic usage. Theorists such as Ernesto Laclau, Lorella Cedroni and Martin Reisigl analysis this part of the populism and emphasizes populist discourses by focusing on content and style/manner. What is the most essential characteristic of populist discourse is, it is used in order to “call people, appeal people and consult to the people”. Martin Reisigl (2000) classified 10 key features of this discourse, which are schematic differentiation between “we” and “them, impressive-simplifier expression with great personalization and embodiment, rhetoric, which is based upon “refraining from talking without consideration, underestimating the opponent, looking from below to the politic actor’s and supporter’s position while observing elites, personal presentation of the politic actor, creating sensuality and dramatizing by using simplification, explanation and personalization, principle of repetition, creating a conscious instability by conflicting/inconsistent messages and finally establishment and freedom with charismatic leadership (Canovan, 1999). Now politic act’s communicational aspect is not just about language they use, it is also about the self-presentation of politic actors and their followers. Politic leaders are now introducing themselves as the main representatives of the people’s will and at the same time they are trying to establish themselves as the part of the society and leader of the society. In this respect there is a great demand for identification between leader and the people as well as a need to create a charismatic personality by imposing extraordinary qualities to the “want to be” leader.

According to populist discourse, showing oneself like “one of the people” ensures the awaking of the lower class. Various strategies become concrete with popular culture events. The image of “one of the people” can be formed by; acting like them, speaking their way of language, consuming the products they are consuming, listening the music they are listening, announcing that the one is taking pleasure form these actions and most importantly reflecting these actions and feeling of pleasure by using the media (Mazzoleni, 2007). Especially, in election periods, politicians visiting states for face-to-face communication by wearing scarfs or hats which are in the same color of the city’s football team’s colors, we can also encounter politicians watching national football games in stadiums just us other “people” and politicians becoming the honorary presidents of the football teams. According to Mazzoleni (2007) despite all of their differences, nation combined by people, acts together in such national or culture events. These events consequently become the perfect staging places for political actors who are trying to manipulate people’s ideas and decisions. Especially sports events can be counted as the perfect mixture place of popular culture and politics. By participating in these events and putting forward their similarities between people, political leaders try to deny and blur their elitism. There is a great personalization of political leader. An example from Turkey for this situation is going to be given in the next section.

Also another role of media is building a fiction or maybe we can say fantasy on speaker for people. In this fiction speaker clearly underlines “us” and “them” terms by showing himself/herself as good and opponents as

“bad” (Laclau, 2007). According to Laclau the success of identification as “us” starts mobilization against the others. Within this mobilization, people’s mind and view has blurred by degenerated political systems, discontented intellectuals and stakeholders. In that situation urgency, simplification and clarity slogans, which are highly essential for populists, holds and creates prudent solutions in a way everyone can understand (Taggart, 2004). For this comprehension, political actors will need media as the mediator for them to reach people and a charismatic leader figure who is going to be marketed through media and political communication strategies.

Another strategy for populist rhetoric inserted by the media—is usage of calculated ambivalence. Calculated ambivalence strategy works as a macro-strategy by leaving the answer to the listeners and extending different arguments and actually carried by going through Meta level and different speaking structures. More openly, it creates ambivalence/euphemism by melting different elements in same pot and the weight of understanding and calculating will be upon people. With this strategy, distinction between good and bad squeeze in discourse and evaluation, so it shape and effect people’s ideas and values by this way (Wodak, 2003). Similar to this strategy we can also talk about the production and expression of conflicting new ideas every other day. According to populist rhetoric, a discourse can only mean something for a day and in other day it will not mean anything. This is also related with Wodak’s discursive strategies. These expressions and discourses appear in mass media, reach individuals, shape their minds and then they change the discourse by staging something different. This will led to an obscurity and people start to search for something that they can rely on.

So this staging, spreading of information, images, symbols are actually led us to question the media as the most essential tool of political communication strategies. Is media an incentive or mediator of these populist discourses? The answer of this question according to this study is actually pretty easy to give. Since the semiotic relationship between media and politics accepted by most of the social scientists and researchers, media for populism becomes also the tool for this kind of discourse to capture people’s attention and for their manipulation cause populism is an political ideology and works for political actors legitimacy by catching great number of voters, associating minorities and creating a new majority. Even in a time of crisis, using media-this could also by spreading the information or hiding the information by censorship practices- is the mediator between political actors and people. I do accept that it can also be seen as the incentive of populism by supplying so many “great” advantages and providing “great” success to actors, actors who desire this power uses this manipulative tool to mediate their selves with rest of the society.

Populism in Turkey

In Turkey, which is governed by neoconservative and neo-liberal power, media populism has been the most used political communication strategy in recent years. Communication strategies, when there is a need to arouse and direct interest of the public opinion and for agenda setting processes; complexity, reduction, personalization, accusation, sentimentalizing, targeting, dramatization, alienation and creation of pseudo events, are frequently used. Especially the front benchers of the ruling party appeal to media populism when they need to; lean on to the society, disseminate the charismatic leader discourse, reduce the value of the discourses belonging to the opponent people and organizations, prove that they are representing the common good for all and to present that their own interests and benefits as common interests (Kramer, 2014). This study relates to direct or indirect censorship practices and government’s populism strategies, which are not equivalent and keep politics and media

under pressure. Within this context, creating legitimacy on political power by media populism in contemporary Turkey is assumed to be the most powerful method. In this section of the study I am going to give some brief examples and try to show some indicators from Turkey.

Populist discourse in Turkey can be also defined as binding folkloric elements, which are common for people to unite, with religious, nationalists, liberalist, socialist ideologies in order to use them against ruling power or institution. This generally carried out through charismatic leader's individual influence in underdeveloped countries (Oktay, 1994). In other words, this created charismatic leader expresses discourses in ideological features, gets popularity and gains vote from citizens. In Turkey's populism we can two periods. First period, which was between 1908-1950's, is the intellectual extent and ends with the single party period. This first period of intellectual populism is the enemy of city, village friendly, in search of national values in rural areas and reflecting the class with solidarity. Populism history of Republic of Turkey uses three main themes; economic backwardness and crisis, religious elements and exposed pressure, political pressures and legal obstacles. Second period populism has come up with a multi-party period. Populist rhetoric is integrated in our political life with Democrat Party Suleyman Demirel's statements such a "people's state", "people's parliament" and "people's government" in his last election has been the typical example of populist rhetoric. The most essential feature of political populism is that without making any distinction between people, melting them in a same pot and suggesting measures regardless of the reality has been always on the central in Turkey's political practices.

In election times, Turkey always faced with crisis either economic or diplomatic and every political party promised for some solutions. But these solutions were also had populist rhetoric. The most essential factors, which makes solution promises populist are; some election promises were against the political parties ideological foundation but this disregarded both by the people and political actors. If a part, which is in favor of neo-liberal economy will announce that they are going to provide social justice and social justice this will be an example of a populist discourse. Second populist solution promise can be a party saying that "we will fix the problem, no one can fix this problem rather than us..." for harmful social, economic and political problems. But at the end if they will forget these promises after the election it will be counted as the indicator of populism. Yet another factor is, populism convince the public to solve various periodical issues. The most critical point in this is the credibility of the leader, who is promising. If leader manages peoples believing, the realization of populism becomes even more possible. Of course in this case the leader's propaganda via using media and declaring that "I'm better than others, I am one of you" is an inevitable situation. And lastly, a party, which can be in power by votes in democratic framework, using "national will" rhetoric is the factor of populism. This declaration/rhetoric will also spread by media channels and actually for the legitimacy of their policies via populism. We can give some brief examples from Turkey for these four main factors. First of all in Turkey we can give Genç Parti Leader Cem Uzan as an example of a populist leader. In 2002 elections, his promises, from decreasing gas price (he promised that gas price is going to be 1TL) to ending unemployment reflect populism. Another example is from 12 June 2011 elections, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's promise. He created the agenda by saying that "Many families are going to get 300 TL, some families going to get 600 TL". What is populism in this statement is his agenda changing after this statement and stating, "We will distribute 600TL per person".

As I mentioned in the previous part of the study, especially, in election periods, politicians visiting states for face-to-face communication by wearing scarfs or hats which are in the same color of the city's football team's

colors, we can also encounter politicians watching national football games in stadiums just as other “people” and politicians becoming the honorary presidents of the football teams. Despite all of their differences, nation combined by people, acts together in such national or culture events. These events consequently become the perfect staging places for political actors who are trying to manipulate people’s ideas and decisions. With both social media and TV programs support, there is a great personalization of political leader. This personalization appears in TV programs as the entertainment or in the news to show the leader is living similar us, one of us. First of all, if we want to give an example from a sports event, we can give Turgut Özal’s example. Özal was the eighth president of Turkish Republic and he also served as prime minister and general president of Anavatan Party. His political rhetoric consisted of populist discourses. His populist rhetoric carries different factors than just a direct elitist populist, which states that he is the one from the people or victimized fatherliness in the mass media. Özal read comic books, listened arabesque music, read sport pages in newspapers, he became the close supporter of football, basketball, politics (each event which can create partisanship), he was addicted to video games and automobiles, he didn’t hesitate to show that he is in love with his wife, he carried out religious duties such as salaah, fasting and pilgrimage. He transferred his image, which is created by these popular culture factors, to large masses by using media. He also managed to act like that he is from the people at the opening ceremony of Fatih Bridge. He drew his car with his wife and this also appeared in both TV and Newspapers. It was understood as I mentioned above he is from the people. Turkey’s 9th president Suleyman Demirel was also highly popular with his poor background since he was always mentioning that he came from the village to the city. He used a significant hat every time he appears in the society and after his death this hat also carried the same importance, every institution, school or university wanted to exhibit these hats. Since he was always stated that he came from the village, he was also known as the shepherd. He sometimes wore shepherd clothes to show that he is like the people and he came from the people. Also another example can be given through CHP, opponent party leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. He is also well known as the one from the society, he acts like one from the society too. He goes to bazaars, he underlines that, he is living just like one of us, he goes to traditional cafés. If you will look from the internet, you can easily find so many selfies taken by the people.

Also in contemporary Turkey, president of the Republic of Turkey, one of the most charismatic leader in Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is highly known with his football skills and with his football past. Media and Erdoğan always underlined that he played football when he was younger and media published his photos. This created a pretty high acceptance and made him gain so much support as a person who is one from the people. On 31 October 2013, when he was the prime minister of Turkish Republic, Sinan Erdem Fitness Hall held the opening ceremony of 213 sport facilities and he signed football balls then threw them to the supporters who are in the stands. He also called his old teammates from Erokspor, Camialtıspor and IETT to the stage, posed for a souvenir photo and then hit the football ball. Another example can also be given from 26 July 2014. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (he was also the prime minister at that period), played in the soccer game in Fatih Terim Stadium opening. It was a exhibition game and actually played a massive role for Mr. Erdoğan. His goals and skills screened on live in TV channels. Also his team consisted of other celebrities and notable people such as Bilal Erdoğan, Acun Ilıcalı, Fatih Terim, Tanju Çolak, Tolgahan Sayışman, Rıdvan Dilmen, Kadir Topbaş, Yılmaz Erdoğan, Aziz Babuşçu and Fettah Can, who are the supports, opinion leaders, well known old football players, national team coach, actor, singer, football analyst, AKP congressman and his son.

Especially in Turkey, media serves as a great mediator, tool, assistant and transmitter for these staging, dialogues, news and information since most of the media channels are dependent on Turkish government. If we would like to take all these points and indicators into the consideration, it can be easily seen that the populist rhetoric's and practices are highly common in Turkey. They are able to use the media, political communication strategies and professionals in a advantageous way for their continuity and legitimacy. They can easily manage the media, manage people's ideas, and manipulate people according to their own interest by using populist elements in their speeches and images. But we also need to underline that, their populist discourse is mostly understood as nationalism or majoritarianism but there is a great distinction between these terms and populism.

Conclusions

Researches refer to populism's ideological, organizational and communicational extents, whereas it is accepted that media and its production "logic" provides appropriate tools for the development of populism. The most vital questions in this study are whether media is the tool of populism or the incentive of populism and how politics transformed. In contemporary world, populism is more and more present in party's political discourse while they are attempting to achieve their goals regardless of their ideological orientation or heritage. Populism appears as an ideology, which shapes democracy and democracy practices of governments and in contemporary word this can be seen as a transformation in the democracies. Most of the populations/majorities consent in order to maintain their power, strength, statue and continuity. Today the new way of populism may refer to the recurrence of the phenomena directed by a charismatic leader who is able to mobilize both urbanized and rural masses with promises of inflationary public spending, seasoned by rhetorical attacks on the power. This new transformed populist approach of the 21st century is pretending to position itself as a substantial element of the new political culture. With the transformation of populist approach throughout the political rhetoric-practices and with the development of mass communication tools and media in 20th century, leaders who are seeking power and strength became dependent to media sector for their legitimacy and to spread their values-ideas. Media, with its essential role, became the basis of the information society, symbol of the power and the tool for democratic-politic and political structures to reach societies and their general aim to gain power within the society.

Populism means basically; a member of a political party claiming to represent the common people; especially often capitalized when the majority of society was in search of an alternative leader or party to get back their rights, freedom and interests. This management of people by populist discourses, policies and statements actually starts with an anti-political climate. Effected people in this climate, start searching for an alternative party, charismatic leader who are "supporting" their minority rights, freedoms.

There is an essential connection and tension between democracy and populism since both of these terms solid roots in the people and they both indicate the supreme importance of the people. Both democracy as well as populism is ideologies involving the rule of the people by the people or representatives chosen by the people. Democracy focuses more on the assignment of governance to the people regardless of class on the other hand; populism focuses more on the struggle between the common class and the elite class. It can be said that, populism is an approach to politics by not restricted to democracies. The general problem with populism is that it pushes people towards counterproductive policies for emotional reasons. Basically, if we think it is merely a manipulation that sets people against the popular class, we call it populism.

Political communication is at the center of this argument and we can come to the point that the media/mass media, which is also the essential element of political communication strategies are basically coming also the essential element of populist discourses since it is highly similar with the political communication. With the power of the media leaders of parties creates emotional bonds and connections with the people, and it is also accepted that leader/parties imposes the idea that they are sharing the same interests and they have got the same faces with this newly created homogenous group. Now politic act's communicational aspect is not just about language they use but it is also about the self-presentation of politic actors. Politic leaders are now introducing themselves as the main representatives of the people's will and trying to establish themselves as the part of the society. Staging, spreading of information, images, symbols are actually led us to question the media as the most essential tool of political communication strategies. From that point of view I am questioning; Is media an incentive or mediator of these populist discourses? Since the semiotic relationship between media and politics accepted by most of the social scientists and researchers, media in populism becomes also the tool for this kind of discourse to capture people's attention and for their manipulation cause populism is an political ideology and works for political actors legitimacy by catching great number of voters, associating minorities and creating a new majority. I do accept that it can also be seen as the incentive of populism by supplying so many "great" advantages and providing "great" success to actors, actors who desire this power uses this manipulative tool to mediate their selves with rest of the society.

In Turkey, which is governed by neoconservative and neo-liberal power, media populism has been the most used political communication strategy in recent years. In Turkey, media have the power to select information and news for the presentation this can also show us their power and essential role in political participation as the mediator. Since personalization, accusation, sentimentalization, dramatization, alienation and target are also can be counted as the strategies of populist discourse, these practices are also important for media/mass media. In these examples given above about both old and recent Turkey, it can be easily seen that these strategies are highly apparent. Politicians acting like one from the society, wearing casual clothes, using the language and body language in a way how people use, eating dinners together, appearing in bazaars just like others, trying to get others emotional by using emotional language. There great numbers of examples, which can be given to show the populist practices in Turkey, but in this study I tried to focus on more well known and brief examples. Media is the tool of political communication and since populism can be counted as the political communication strategy, we can see that the media and its production logic is highly essential for political actors.

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