Does social media reduce 'corporate media influence' on journalism? The Case of Turkish Media

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Abstract

McChesney described one of the biggest problem of journalism as "the journalists have any power to be autonomous from owners and advertisers" (2008:58). Most of media market have been dominated by a few media companies, furthermore a few media conglomerates who had expanded with merger and acquisitions transactions control the biggest part of the global media and entertainment industry. This concentration of media power and penetration of commercial interest in the news media has been seen as affecting the mode of news, profession of journalism and outputs, and consequently, diversity and democracy itself. research aims to examine the potential of social media to create autonomous spaces for journalists working under the commercial pressure of their corporation. In order to analyze this new kind of news area for journalism, three different qualitative methods are used in different steps of research. First, social media utterances of popular journalists were observed to reveal their journalistic intention and they were also evaluated using two case studies about social events which had been tweeted multiple times for many Turkish users (trending topics) in Twitter's agenda. After diversifying the sample, different types of journalists' social media experiments, including their responsibility to corporations, were examined by qualitative methods including in-depth interviews. Our findings show that although interactions between the journalists and audience observably changed, Twitter, as with other social networks, didn't diminish the influence of corporate interests on journalism in Turkish media organisations.

Keywords: corporate media, journalism, social media, Twitter, diversity

IN the past three decades, the media has been transformed because of new communication technologies and deregulation policies. A few media conglomerates have expanded with merger and acquisitions transactions to control the largest proportion of the global media and entertainment industries
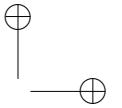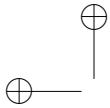
(Bagdikian 2004, McChesney 1999). This concentration of media power and penetration of commercial interest in the news media which has been referred to as 'the corporate media' by McChesney (2008), has been seen as affecting the mode of news, profession of journalism and outputs, and consequently, diversity and democracy itself (McChesney 2008, Almiron 2010). The ideal of a free marketplace of ideas has transformed advocacy of owner's political and economic position for journalists. When public interests have been defeated by business interests, the autonomy granted professional journalists and the editorial independence has been destroyed (Rowse 2000, Chesney 2004, Baker 2007, Almiron 2010). In Turkey, along with the increasing of concentration of the media industry, there have been a correspondingly strong rise in unsecured employment problems in the media sector (Sözeri & Güney 2011).

On the other hand, the new technologies have offered new opportunities to journalistic practices and modes of news production. The citizen journalism projects, "pro-am" (professional-amateur) actors and crowdsourcings have become sources of information and home to a wealth of independent media alternatively the mainstream media (Croteau & Hoynes 2006). US media activist Dan Gillmor believed that the social network itself would be a medium for everyone's voice and that the power of controlling the information is no longer in the hands of mainstream media or governments (Gillmor 2004). Despite the criticisms that this kind of plurality doesn't provide automatically diversity of viewpoints (Hindman 2007, Dwyer 2006) and there is not a new solution coming with new media technologies in terms of control of media power (Lievrouw 2004, Chesney 2006, Almiron 2010), it is clear that the new technologies limit the gatekeepers impact of traditional media on the accessing the information.

Nowadays, social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Myspace among others have also involved producing and sharing of information. Especially, Twitter is described as a media for breaking news in a manner close to omnipresent CCTV for collective intelligence (Kwak et al. 2010). A lot of breaking news disperses on Twitter faster than other types of media. The biggest media companies like "CNN", "New York Times", "Time" reach millions of people via Twitter. Not only the companies, but also the journalists and the columnists are also very popular; they have millions of followers who follow them during the day to read their coverage of events. By the Turk-

ish Statistical Institute, accessing social network sites and accessing online news have increasingly become two of the major reasons for internet users to go online in recent years (TUIK Data, 2004-2010). Although there isn't any research which focuses on specifically purposes of uses and gratifications of Turkish users, some other research shows that Twitter in particular is used for information needs rather than for satisfying social needs (Johnson, Yang, 2009). Most favourites reporters and columnist have been followed by one fourth of Turkish users, some of them are more popular than even their companies as of the August 2011.
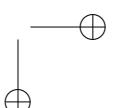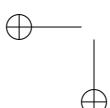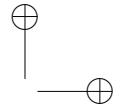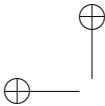
This research aims to find out the potential of social media to create an autonomous space for journalist who working under pressure to act in the companies' interests which has been described by McChesney (2008) as one of the most important problems of journalism. In order to evaluate this impact, this study tried to find out the Twitter usage patterns of the popular reporters and columnists from mainstream media. In addition to general intention, their reactions (tweets) especially during the important public events are also significant indicate to show their journalistic purposes and its relevance for agenda of users. As a part of Twittersphere, the journalists' micro journalism intentions have been analyse by two cases which have been trending topics in Twitter. Finally, the journalistic motivations, the usage strategies and the principles applied on utterance have been asked via open - ended questions to other sample including seven journalists from different ranks in different media companies. Using two different sample have provided opportunity to examine different perspective changing by popularity and carrier prospects of journalists.

Related work

The numerous studies which have focused on Twitter as a social media platform have provided an insight to understand users intentions (Java et al. 2007, Huberman et al. 2008, Johnson & Yang 2009, Heil & Piskorski 2009, Crawford 2009, Heverin & Zach 2010,), Twitter convention (Krishnamurty et al. 2008, Hughes et al. 2009, Lerman et al. 2010, Naaman et al. 2010) further some specific tools which associated with social relations (Honeycutt et al. 2009, Boyd et al. 2010, Chen et al. 2010) its functions of social events (Morozov 2009, Mungiu-Pippidi 2009, Starbird et al.2010).
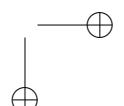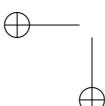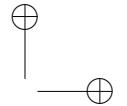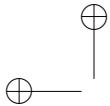
The studies focused on the interaction between social media and traditional media indicate that the social media especially Twitter is inspired by the news, and also vice versa (Tsagkias et al. 2011). But their connection could be determined by agenda especially during the important public events like election or court decisions. In this case mainstream media leading the way and after that the relevance could be diminished depends on context (Sayre et al.2010). On the other hand, An et al. (2011) show that media tweets who had long and wide retweet chains were not always on topics that appeared as top stories in the media outlets website. In other words, the media stories are filtered by unique experiences of Twitter users. This interaction between mainstream media and social media has been interpreted in the way that modern version of Katz and Lazarsfeld's two-step flow (1955). According to Sayre et al. (2010) new media outlets - namely different kind of social media - took the place of opinion leaders in the past years while the mainstream media is remaining unchanged. A key question for this research is whether the social networks revitalise public sphere communication enabling diversity of viewpoints for journalist who need to monitor a large spectrum of sources. According to Chesney, internet will never fulfil its potential as an engine of democratic communication because of its involvement of the commercial system (2008: 363). Notwithstanding, some results indicate that indirect media exposure expanded the political diversity of news users if they prefer to receive diverse political opinions (An et al.2011).

Additionally internet and the social media have also redefined the role of journalists. The journalists in traditional media stayed out of the spotlight behind their publications, but social media journalists can reach the audience directly, by responding to user comments and fellow bloggers, and so build a more personal presence (An et al. 2011) even sometimes their followers has exceed their media organisation as example of some Turkish journalists as mentioned before. The increasing popularity of journalists in new media could be explained as a new trend called "journalistic star power" by Ken Doctor (2010). This new trend or new bubble means that due to increasing content value, the high-level journalists will become a brand by themselves. Doctor also pointed out that the journalists have become active bloggers and they have certainly lowered the output through traditional media because of downsizing of the industry. But also they are producing outside a branded media. In the meantime according to Gillmor (2004:113) the journalists has
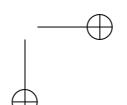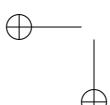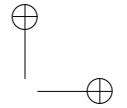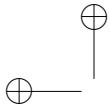
already adopted themselves this new interactive journalism. Therefore, social media serve a useful platform to studying future of journalism.

However, before evaluating the usage patterns and usage strategies of Turkish journalists in Twitter, we should first examine Turkish media environment and the labour conditions for journalists to understand the corporate logic to exert pressure on the journalists.

Concentration of Media Ownership in Turkey

In Turkey the media market has been dominated by only a few media groups. After the 1980s, entry from other sectors and liberalization policies especially on the broadcasting sector since 1990s resulted in concentrated market structures in media industry. While 1990s are recalled for their instability periods in the general economy, the groups investing in the media sector rapidly grew in strength with the customs discounts, subsidies and low-interest loans they received from the government. The media sector took a big hit in the 2001 crisis, together with the finance sector. With the crisis, the media enterprises of corporations operating in the finance sector were either wiped out from the market or were taken over by the TMSF together with the finance organizations (Sönmez 2003). Although the crisis culminated in some ownership exchanges in the market, the cross-ownership and concentration market structure have still affected communication process and as well as working conditions of journalists (Sözeri & Güney 2011).

The concentrated structure of the media markets in Turkey and the presence of enterprises that operate only for the sake of having media power even under less than economically advantaged conditions affect labour conditions. The most important challenge faced here so far is where journalists are forced to waive their contractual rights due to the increased concentration of the market. Today, in almost all media sectors, the average year of seniority for employees is less than five years. The high employee turnover rate suggests that specialization and experience, which are of utmost importance due to the social function of the sector, are more or less pushed to the back burner (Sözeri and Güney 2011). For example, getting fired from one newspaper can mean losing all chances of working at five or six other publications under the same corporate umbrella (Christensen 2007). Experienced journalist Ahmet Şık, as
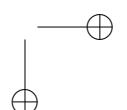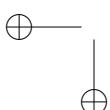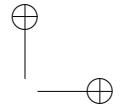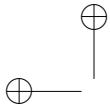
a result of his actions concerning contractual and organization problems that ultimately left him jobless. He is currently on trial; furthermore, he remains ignorant of the charges against him. This and similar examples show that journalists are deprived of even the simplest guarantees that the state is obligated to make to in order to maintain their jobs (Sözeri and Güney 2011). Accoridng to the recent report prepared by Esra Arsan, 95 % of the journalists surveyed said the government intervenes and 89 % said the media owners do (Hurriyet Daily News, August 10, 2011). Considering the other investments of media companies in different industries (mostly in energy, mining, finance and trade among others) there is also inextricable link between political and commercial pressure on Turkish journalists.

Method

This research basically seeks to understand how the social media have perceived and used by Turkish journalist for its journalistic practices and their potential to diminish the corporate interests pressure on journalism. Based on the synthesis of related work above the following research questions examined in this study. First, social media utterances of popular journalists were observed to reveal their journalistic intention in Twitter. After that diversifying the sample, different types of journalists' social media experiments and responsibility to their corporation examined.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How the journalists use Twitter? What are their motivations?

2. Which message tools are used most and for what purposes?

3. What are their intentions associated with the agenda of corporate media and the agenda of Twitter?

4. Which ethical and/or journalistic principles are considered while writing a Tweet as part of their responsibility to their media corporation? Are liabilities influencing their utterances?

In aiming to answer these questions, three different qualitative methods are used in different steps of research. The observation of journalists' conventions on Twitter has been based on the messages (Tweets) of nine very popular
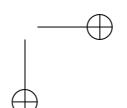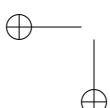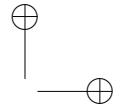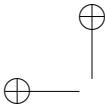
journalists from mainstream newspaper and TV broadcasting companies written between 15 April and 15 May 2011. Nine of them are very popular and politic correspondents, six of them at the same time columnist. In other words, all of them have star power in Turkish media sphere.

To evaluate their intentions associated with the agenda, two events which show the differences between mainstream media's and Twitter's approaches have been chosen as the cases and the contribution of journalists to the conversations has been examined via their messages on those days. Moreover, to understand their individual intention strategies, ethical principles and liabilities to their media corporation, in-depth interviews have been made with another sample; includes three popular journalists whom observed in first two steps and three young journalist from online media and TV and also one independent journalist. Using two different sample have provided opportunity to evaluate different perspective changing by popularity and carrier prospects. For reason to protect their professional rights against their corporation, the names remained anonymous.

Journalists' Usage Patterns

Social media utterances, namely tweets in Twitter, could be categorized by convention, which is also useful to understand the usage patterns of users. The users can write any message or mention anyone, or retweet another tweet to spread tweets to new audiences in their field limited to 140 characters. Mentioning who refers to the conversation usually involves use of the "@user" syntax. Retweets, are the equivalent of e-mail forwarding, where users post messages originally posted by others. The users can use the tool of retweet or use the common form of "RT @user msg". Retweets function not only to get message out to the audience, but also to validate and engage with others (Boyd et al. 2010).

Excepting the reply and retweet convention, we also need another indicator to dissociate the general tweets' contents and to evaluate the users' g,bilmiyorum.' intentions. Java et al. (2007) reports that users intentions with related their roles in different communities. Considering their social positions, the tweets of journalists could be divided generally by content about agenda and daily activities. Focusing on their tweets about agenda, the utter-

ances have been re-filtered referring to study of Tsagkias et al. (2011). The study reveals a distinction of utterance which are linked to the news explicitly and implicitly linked in between. In explicitly linked utterances there is a hyperlink pointing to the article, but in implicitly utterances there is not. The explicit links quickly show the users' preferences about discussing strategies. For example, some of them participated in debate on Twitter, giving links of information that had been produced by their company, so this could indicate a strong corporate loyalty. Also the tweets included a mention divided as reply to journalists mostly friends and reply to others mostly audience to evaluate the effect of 'homophily', which means that the contacts between similar people occur at a higher rate than among dissimilar people's interactions (Kwak et al. 2010) and the interaction with audience.
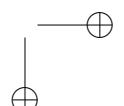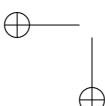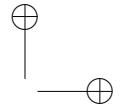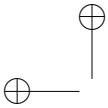
Therefore, considering these studies and the indicative tools offered, the utterances of journalists have been categorised by their contents as below:

Agenda: The tweets discuss the news content of mainstream media without links
Linked to Own Media: The tweets about agenda who linked to media that the journalist work for.
Linked to Other Media: The tweets about agenda who linked to other media that the journalist doesn't work for.
Mentioned a journalists: Tweets which include a mention (@) a journalist, mostly his/her friends
Mentioned other: Tweets which include a mention (@) outside journalists, mostly readers and audiences.
Retweet: Spread of tweets of others to validate and engage with others
Daily activities: Tweets about journalists' daily activities.

As it is expected that the biggest part went to the tweets linked implicitly to agenda (37 %). When the total of all mentions brought from the same part of the pie (37 %), the conversations with the audience (Mentioned Others 21 %) was a bit more frequent than conversations with friends (16 %). The tweets linked explicitly to agenda remained 10 % and the journalists preferred put links to their productions rather than the other's media productions. Finally, it is clear that journalists who have been observed consider Twitter a public
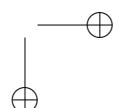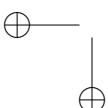
sphere or media sphere as they didn't share much more information about their daily activities (3 %).
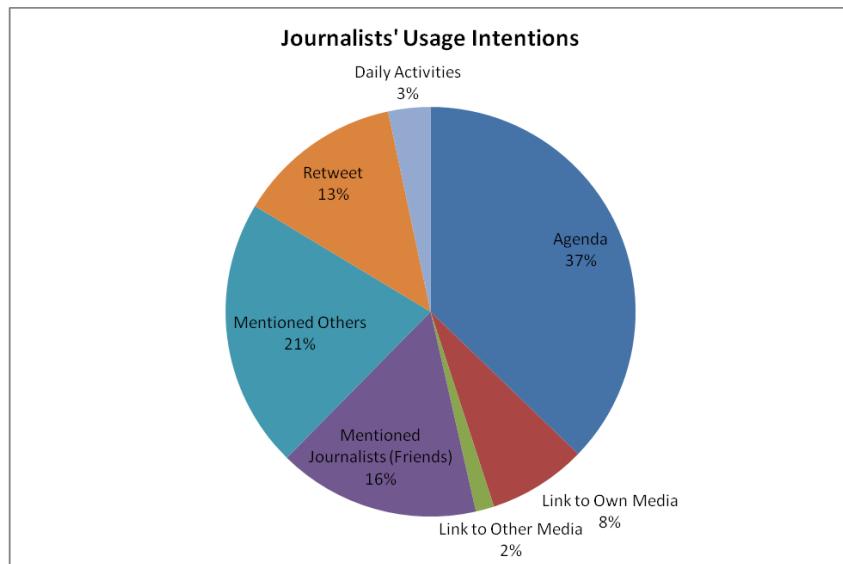
Figure 1: Journalists' Usage Intention between 15 April – 15 May 2011

When the utterances have been analyzed individually, the differences of intentions of users could be seen in detail. Although most of them share their opinions implicitly linked to agenda, some of them are prone to conversation more than others. Explicit links referred more often to own media corporation's production than to other media contents. Hence, it can be suggested that some journalists consider the Twitter as a distribution channel instead of a platform.

As seen in Figure 2, the majority's second activity is @replies to other users which means connection to other users. For this study the responses are classified by target. There are slightly more conversations with audiences than with colleagues. While the conversations with colleagues referring to homophily in Twitter sphere, the responses of the audiences point out the new kind of direct interaction between news producers and audiences. This
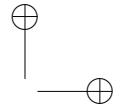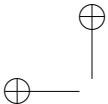
considered to explain why some users follow to journalists instead of media organization, Twitter provides conversational link between journalists and audience (An et al.2011).
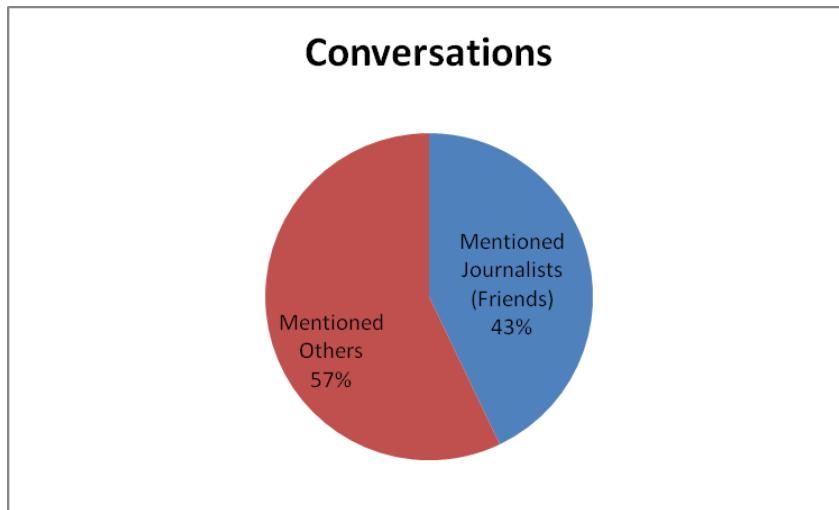
Figure 2: Journalists' Intention of Conversation, between 15 April – 15 May 2011

As you see in Figure 3, further @replies to the audience is primary for some of them (Jou 5, Jou 7). In the contents of tweets, a lot of criticisms, comments or questions have been responded to severally by some journalists unless they included outrage.

In some case, when a comment or criticism has been appreciated, it can be shared with the followers by means of "retweeting". But it is remarkable that, while some retweets aim to validate and engage the messages of others, others seem like selfish acts of attention seekers. Furthermore, referring to "ego retweets" of Boyd et al. (2010) some retweets included positive or negative mention sharers' oneself. For example, retweeting of positive or negative reaction of followers about the utterance or the published stories/broadcast news programs of journalists.

Tweet Contents of Journalists

	Jou 1	Jou 2	Jou 3	Jou 4	Jou 5	Jou 6	Jou 7	Jou 8	Jou 9
Agenda	57	29	51	53	22	42	13	37	45
Linked to Own Media	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	12	38
Linked to Other Media	0	2	1	12	0	2	2	2	0
Mentioned Journalists (Friends)	8	17	13	7	15	22	30	14	7
Mentioned Others	13	26	2	11	54	13	35	26	2
Retweet	16	24	33	13	2	20	11	8	6
Private Life	6	0	0	2	4	1	9	0	2
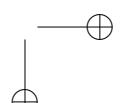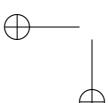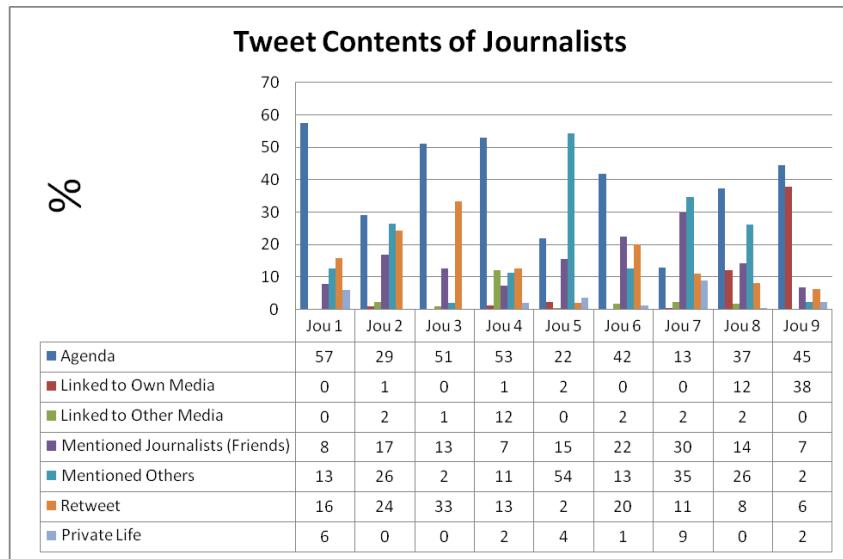
Figure 3: Tweets Contents of Journalists between 15 April – 15 May 2011

Contribution to trending topics: Two Cases

This research hypothesize that Twitter redefined role of journalists providing a new kind of direct connection between journalists and the audience. And it also has built a new platform to debate different viewpoints and diminished domination of mainstream media on the control of information. Therefore, the specific tweet contents of journalists especially during the important public events are also significant indicates to show their journalistic usage purposes. This approach has been analyzed by two cases which reveal also the relevance between the agenda of journalists who work for mainstream media and the agenda of users. The first case has been extensively covered by mainstream media, but the second one has been discussed, and some social events have been organized only in Twitter.
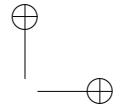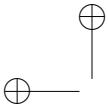
Case 1:   *"On April 18 (2011), Turkey's electoral board (YSK) barred promi-*
nent Kurdish candidates from standing in upcoming elections. After the strong
demonstration which protested the ban, on April 20, YSK reviewed the deci-
sion and allowed most of them to run in elections."

The first day that is April 18, the ban decision became one of the main
topics, namely a "trending topic," of Twitter in a short time, and right after
the people were called to action to protest YSK by some journalists. Small
groups, including some journalists of this study's sample, gathered that night.
The day after, another demonstration was organized and announced, also via
Twitter. The decision has been discussed correspondingly in mainstream me-
dia and also on Twitter. As seen in Table 1, the contribution of our sample
to agenda via Twitter indeed remained at a very low level even though our
sample involved only the political correspondents. In the first day only two of
them contributed to discussing by comments, @replies and retweets. In other
words, most of them didn't react instantly, they got involved in debate the day
after like sluggish traditional media. On the second day, their involvement in-
creased, particularly via comments and conversations, mostly with audiences.
Conversely, the last day relevance rapidly diminished excluding the discus-
sions about legitimacy of YSK.

Case 2:   O*n May 15 (2011), a march has been organized against internet*
censorship via internet and social media. The internet filter system to be en-
forced 22 August 2011 [1] *was stimulator of this march. Although thousands*
of people protest against the new draft bill and net bans on the squares and
streets, the mainstream media prefer to not to cover the demonstrations. Evi-
dence?

Secondly, since May 15, the utterances of our sample have been analyzed
in terms of reaction to the march and internet bans until the relevance disap-
peared. Only the tweets linked to subjects have been analyzed.

As seen in Table 2, accordingly the negligence of mainstream media, the
journalists in our sample didn't pay attention to movements which have risen
only on the internet, particularly on social media. Only two of them (Jou 7

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1. For more information about the internet filter system in Turkey:
   http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingeurope/2011/05/15/yes-we-ban-
turks-protest-internet-censorship/
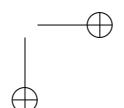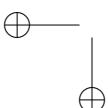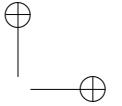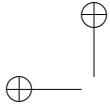
Table 1: Reactions of Journalists to Election Bans

18.04.2011	Agenda	Link	Reply	Retweet
Jou 1	0	0	0	0
Jou 2	0	0	2	3
Jou 3	3	0	0	0
Jou 4	0	0	0	0
Jou 5	11	0	10	1
Jou 6	26	0	7	16
Jou 7	2	0	0	1
Jou 8	3	0	3	2
Jou 9	5	0	0	0
19.04.2011	**Agenda**	**Link**	**Reply**	**Retweet**
Jou 1	4	0	2	0
Jou 2	0	1	3	0
Jou 3	1	0	0	0
Jou 4	17	0	3	0
Jou 5	8	0	39	2
Jou 6	20	0	13	21
Jou 7	0	0	0	0
Jou 8	5	2	0	0
Jou 9	10	11	1	1
20.04.2011	**Agenda**	**Link**	**Reply**	**Retweet**
Jou 1	4	0	3	1
Jou 2	0	0	0	0
Jou 3	1	0	0	0
Jou 4	1	0	1	1
Jou 5	1	0	1	0
Jou 6	9	0	12	2
Jou 7	0	0	0	0
Jou 8	0	0	1	0
Jou 9	1	4	0	0

and Jou 9) were active on the day of march. In the days following, discussions were generally surrounded by justification of new draft bill.

These two cases show that the agenda of the journalists on Twitter is mostly parallel with their media corporations. They didn't react instantly to trending topic or agenda of Twitter either they have another agenda correspondingly with their corporation or some liabilities influence their utterances directly or indirectly.
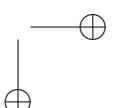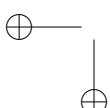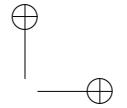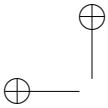
Table 2: Reactions of Journalists to Net Bans

15.05.2011	Agenda	Link	Reply	Retweet
Jou 1	0	0	0	0
Jou 2	0	0	1	0
Jou 3	0	0	0	0
Jou 4	0	0	0	0
Jou 5	0	0	2	0
Jou 6	0	0	0	0
Jou 7	5	0	9	2
Jou 8	0	0	0	0
Jou 9	0	3	0	8
16.05.2011	Agenda	Link	Reply	Retweet
Jou 1	0	0	0	0
Jou 2	0	0	0	0
Jou 3	0	0	0	0
Jou 4	0	0	0	0
Jou 5	0	0	0	0
Jou 6	2	0	0	1
Jou 7	0	0	0	0
Jou 8	0	0	0	0
Jou 9	1	0	0	0
17.05.2011	Agenda	Link	Reply	Retweet
Jou 1	0	0	0	0
Jou 2	0	0	0	0
Jou 3	0	0	0	0
Jou 4	0	0	0	0
Jou 5	0	0	0	0
Jou 6	0	0	0	0
Jou 7	0	0	0	0
Jou 8	0	0	0	0
Jou 9	0	0	0	0
18.05.2011	Agenda	Link	Reply	Retweet
Jou 1	0	0	0	0
Jou 2	0	0	0	0
Jou 3	0	0	0	0
Jou 4	0	0	0	0
Jou 5	3	1	13	1
Jou 6	0	0	0	0
Jou 7	0	0	0	0
Jou 8	0	0	0	0
Jou 9	0	0	0	0

Usage Strategies of Journalists Under Impact of Corporate Influence

In the last step, questions about their motivation to become members of Twitter, their usage strategies and their principles applied on their tweets have
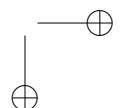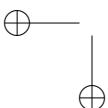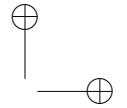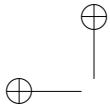
been asked via open - ended questions to seven journalists from different kinds of media companies.

The answers have been gathered around several subjects as below:

– **Twitter has been seen as a kind of news agency by journalists:** As other users, the journalists use Twitter to follow different agendas in all over the world. They can diversify their sources of information, confirm information and also follow the agendas of colleagues whenever and wherever they are needed. All of them pointed out the importance of the exchange of views in covering information. They believe they provide some advantages in following the right users to reach the information in the quickest way. Only two of them mentioned having fun on Twitter, and one added obviously to share information, to tell something, to understand others and news events, and also to be visible and to become famous on public sphere to his reasons.

– **Journalistic practices stretching and nourishing thanks to interaction:** Despite the grammatical accuracy, some journalistic principles could be stretched while writing the messages. Our interviewees mentioned that even small mistakes in fact are being noticed and criticized by audiences. But the 140 character limitation doesn't normally allow some journalistic practices like 5 W and one H. Furthermore, speed pressure might create some mistakes. But mistakes tend to be corrected quickly by other users on the grounds of misinformation or disinformation.

On the other hand, some journalists mentioned avoiding personal polemic with audiences and take great care about their utterances; nonetheless, *"Some people could forget that 'we are also human beings' while writing their criticisms in this case I oblige to block them"* one of them said. Otherwise, the comments of audience have been seen as invaluable for the news production process. They believe that they are being nourished by interaction with audience and colleagues without limitation of time and space as never before.

– **Employment pressure and concentration of media ownership causes self-censorship:** Four of seven interviewees have been warned about their Tweets by editors or have witnessed this kind of warning in their corporations. Most of them are related to contradiction of editorial policy. Only one warning arose from the political interests of the media
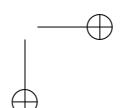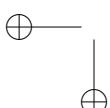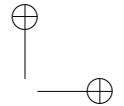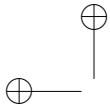
corporation. Six of them accepted Twitter as a public sphere more than a private sphere, one strictly identified her Twitter account from her corporate responsibility. Even if they share daily activities, they refrain themselves and maintain their self-control.

They also avoid revealing their true thoughts or sentiments to their corporation. One example with a negative consequence is the case of CNN's ex-Middle East correspondent Octavia Nasr who lost her job because she offered condolences to Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. As a shared concern by many among them, the journalists claim that Twitter isn't a sufficiently free environment similar to other social networks. (Hürriyet, September 21, 2010). This belongs earlier in your article – helps you explain the significance of your research.

"Owing to fact that I cannot criticise my own newspaper, to criticise other media have been seen not to feel right about me" an interviewee said. Thus, the media companies have been taken under protection of new ethical principles to avoid polemics with colleagues.

On the other hand, the concentration of media ownership might lead to self-censorship, particularly in high concentrated market structures like the Turkish media market. For example, the issues of employees' personal rights of journalists have never been covered by mainstream media. However, they could be trending topic on Twitter only if the journalists had been fired, not while working.

While the employment pressure affected to mainstream's journalists, the future expectations don't allow the alternative media's reporters to move freely. Especially the younger of them are obliged to be more careful for their careers.

"Along with followings of some well-known journalists, I have begun to pay more attention to my Tweets, I share no longer only the information of agenda instead of my daily activities" youngest one said.

Using a nickname or a proposition in Bio like bureau in chef of Thomson-Reuters in Iran Parisa Hafezi's *"all views expressed here are entirely my own"* are seen as solutions as of now.
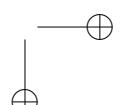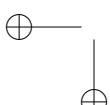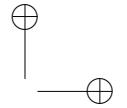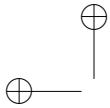
Conclusion

This research shows that journalists in Turkey are primarily motivated to use Twitter for information needs rather than for satisfying social needs. One month's tweets content analysis indicate that the biggest part of the content related implicitly to agenda. The tweets linked explicitly to agenda were not preferred. The conversations which are second most popular usually involve use of the @ replies. The journalists primarily communicate with the audience, secondly with their colleagues. Additionally, the retweeting tool that is being used to spread the message to new audiences has been frequently used not only to validate the message, but also to attract followers' attention to the journalists. It is clear that more than other social networks, Twitter has remarkably changed the interaction between the news producers and the audience.

The journalists are no longer a part of collective real-time news organization which could compete sometimes with the mainstream media corporation. Moreover, Twitter has been considered an alternative news source to corporate news journalism. However, our short case studies show us that this claim is a little exaggerated for now. As seen in case studies, the information sharing strategy of journalists is not so different from the mainstream's coverage strategy. The contributions of followers like comments, questions, criticism, make all the difference.

These contributions and opportunity to reach enormous sources of information are invaluable for journalistic practices nowadays. Most of the journalists' motivations for being a member of Twitter, are to diversify their sources of information, confirm information and follow different agendas all over the world.

They recognized that they were no longer invisible and that they have to be aware of the requirements of this new platform. They want to be accredited so they avoid personal polemic with audiences unless someone is affronted. The younger of them pay more attention to their utterance in consideration of their own career plans.

Despite the great opportunity to gather and share information Twitter as other social network couldn't diminish the corporate interests pressure on journalism as expected for now. Most journalists confirmed self-censorship effects their messages because of concentration of media ownership and em-

ployment pressure. They have seen their accounts as a public sphere involving their works. To be more autonomous and to write more freely on social media they prefer use anonymous nick name or abandon their expectation in terms of career in big media companies.
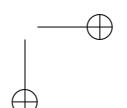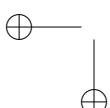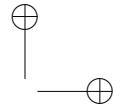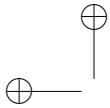
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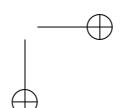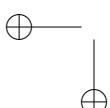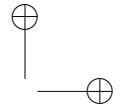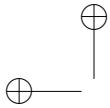
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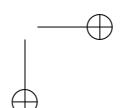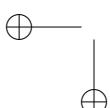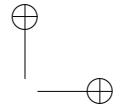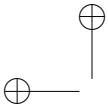
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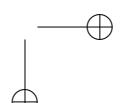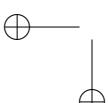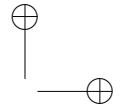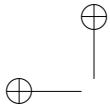
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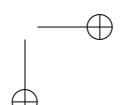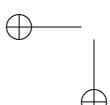
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