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## Miscellaneous

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## Living in digital space: Everyday life on Twitter

### Abstract

New media tools and the corresponding digital networks have begun to take part in the centre of our daily lives, thereby caused a practice of everyday life in digital space. In Twitter, a network in which users are involved through the machines, the concepts such as life, time, space, rhythm have developed. This study focuses on the constitution of everyday life in digital space. Twitter is a digital space that users do their everyday life practices in this network and are involved in through the machines. A sample of 10 Turkish users was selected with social network analysis to discover everyday life practices in this digital space. The content produced by this sample was observed employing digital ethnography and analysed by the sociology of everyday life. It is observed that Twitter creates its own rhythm. Observations show in Twitter that tactics have been produced, and strategies have been tried to be turned down with these tactics and acted rhythmic practices as forms of production and consumption in everyday life. People tend to follow similar others on Twitter, and accordingly, content is being produced for an imaginary community.

### Keywords

**Twitter, everyday life, Digital space, Social Networks, Digital Ethnography.**

## 1. Introduction

With the emergence of the internet, the development of new media technologies, and the rise of digital social networks, a digital cultural environment has begun to arise. Digital culture, which is getting more vital with the emergence of tools such as computer and internet is a cultural environment that seeks the features of digital environments in cultural production and has ties with digital environments.

Lefebvre (2010, p. 43) indicates that culture is a way of sharing resources of a society and steering the production. It is a way of producing, and production gains the meaning that people produce their own lives. In digital culture, tools such as machines, computers and internet step in; this way of producing its own self starts to occur in digital environments through digital tools. This machine environment, which comprises everyday life, also creates an everyday life environment within itself in the digital environment. Users individually interact with each other, even they act as a team, exist through specific routine sequences, try to create strategic relations with the imposed one, and create a cultural world in this regard.

This study seeks an answer to how digital social networks, which have a decisive effect on our everyday lives, can establish an everyday life by themselves. How actors who participate in the network live in this network will be explained in terms of the sociology of everyday life. In this study, the answer to the question “How are everyday life practices

presented in the microblogging network Twitter which is a digital culture space?” will be sought. Within this scope, the study will analyse everyday life routines, practices and invisible aspects of Twitter that are dynamically updated all the time.

## 2. Theoretical background and research questions

There is a growing body of research that examines how people use social media in everyday life, such as the study of home internet use (Bakardjieva, 2005), the internet in the everyday life-world of Norwegian and Chinese high-school students (Liu, 2010), young people’s usage of social media in their everyday lives (Awan & Gauntlett, 2013) and families consume of energy and use digital media in their everyday lives in UK (Pink & Leder Mackley, 2013), social media usage among 25-30 year-old Irish during the crisis (English, 2013) or domestic users usage of internet in their everyday lives (Bakardjieva & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, there are a few studies about specific social network sites and everyday lives, like imaging the everyday on Instagram (Ibrahim, 2015), youths’ strategies and tactics on Netlog (De Ridder, 2015) or smartphones (Thulin, Vilhelmson & Schwanen, 2020).

Twitter has been gradually becoming the focus of more and more studies. Studies on Twitter analyse Twitter behaviours such as retweet (Boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010; Recuero, Araujo & Zago, 2011), mention (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009), unfollow (Kwak, Chun & Moon, 2011), and follower-following (Kwak *et al.*, 2010); also analyse terms such as motivations of usage (Java *et al.*, 2007), homophily (Halberstam & Knight, 2016; Šćepanović *et al.*, 2016), and imaginary audiences (Gruzd, Wellman & Takhteyev, 2011; Kavoura, 2014; Marwick & Boyd, 2010). Research that analyse Twitter and everyday life studies are a few. Bogers and Björneborn (2013) studied meaningful coincidences in everyday life shared on Twitter; Miller, Davis and Partridge (2019) studied everyday life information experiences on Twitter; Brownlie and Shaw (2019) studied everyday conversations about emotional distress on Twitter; and McGarry *et al.* (2019) analysed the performance of everyday life on social media during Gezi Park protests in Turkey. While these studies focused on digital media, social networking sites or specifically Twitter in users’ everyday lives, no study in the literature focuses on Twitter as digital space and observes everyday life on Twitter. In this chapter, the sociology of everyday life will be addressed briefly, and the Twitter space and behaviour in this space will be discussed.

### 2.1. Sociology of everyday life

As a microsociology tradition, sociology of everyday life attempts to make sense of our everyday life, which we live, and mostly we are not aware of it. Everyday life seems ordinary and insignificant. However, “important discoveries in many fields of science have occurred as a result of analyses of insignificant and ordinary everyday life objects (in appearance)” (Lefebvre, 2012, p. 136). According to Bovone (1989), the sociology of everyday life is fed by three fundamental trends. These are the phenomenological tradition, American microsociology, and Neo-Marxist approach. American microsociology has been established based on symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, and it reads everyday life through interpersonal interactions. Neo-Marxist everyday life approaches perceive life through Marxist terminology within the scope of terms such as consumption, alienation, consuming the city, and bureaucratic leading. It takes the everyday life organised by the neo-capitalist system as an object of research. Phenomenology, on the other hand, approaches to the subject itself.

### 2.2. An everyday life practice: Twitter

Established in 2006, Twitter is one of the most intensively used microblog networks. The network became popular in 2008-2009, the number of user accounts has increased, and the media’s focus has become intense (Marwick & Boyd, 2010). This easy-to-use tool is used

intensively in Turkey as well. In 2011, Twitter put the Turkish version into service, and in this way, users with language problems have also had the opportunity to use it easily. While one of the significant features of Twitter was its limitation of 140 characters, it was increased to 280 in 2017.

Another distinct feature of Twitter is that it is not *directed*. It is composed of directional bonds, not nondirectional ones. When a user follows another user, the followed user does not have to follow the user who follows him/her, which distinguishes Twitter from other social network sites based on mutual relation.

The default feature of Twitter is that it is a public account; however, if users wish, they can change it into private mode. The dominant communication action on Twitter environment is to create content publicly by enabling everyone to read it (Marwick & Boyd, 2010; Takhteyev, Gruzd & Wellman, 2012).

Twitter presents particular behaviour patterns. As users spend time on Twitter, he/she socialises in this new time and space, gets implicit knowledge, and learns practices. Twitter has a language and norms, and with the use and generality of this social network, some basic behaviour unique to Twitter have emerged in this network environment, such as “retweeting,” “unfollowing” or “replying,” and they are used in Turkish as well. The reality of everyday life is full of objectification; creating indicators through language maintains commonly shared objectification of everyday life, and it produces everyday life that has occurred through accumulated information (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). This common language creates a communication ecology. According to Bruns and Moe (2016, p. 62), this communication ecology has micro, meso and macro structural layers on Twitter. While meso-layer consists of follower/following networks, macro-layer consists of hashtagged correspondences, and micro-layer consists of @reply conversations. There are transitions between these three layers, and the most important transition is retweeting. Retweets of the received @replies or retweets of tweets sent by the followers of users become visible to more people when a hashtag is added to the retweet. The macro-layer viewer sees messages coming from micro-layer or meso-layer through a newly hashtagged tweet; even when a new hashtag is not included, a received @reply retweet becomes visible for all followers of the user who retweeted the message, and hence transition from micro-layer to meso-layer occurs. At the same time, during the retweeting process of a message, the message is taken from the source user’s meso-layered personal public, which is formed by the followers of that user and transferred to the meso-layered personal public of the one who retweets, and it reaches to another group of followers; this is one of the actions having the characteristics of this transition (Bruns & Moe, 2016, pp. 62-71). Twitter users live their everyday lives in this new communication ecology and learn the new norms.

### 2.3. Formulation of research questions

Within the scope of sociology of everyday life, this study aims to understand everyday life practices on Twitter, which is a digital cultural environment. In this study, Twitter will be addressed as a dynamic digital life within the new media environment, and it will be attempted to analyse everyday life practices experienced in a microblogging environment. Within the scope of the study, answers will be sought to the following questions in the context of Twitter:

RQ1. How is everyday life shaped on Twitter?

RQ1.a. What are the forms of production and consumption on Twitter?

RQ1.b. What are the rhythms and repetitions in everyday life of Twitter?

RQ1.c. What is ordinary and natural in everyday life of Twitter?

RQ1.d. What are the tactics and strategies in everyday life of Twitter?

### 3. Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed together in the study. Firstly, a sample was determined by using social network analysis method; and then, digital ethnography method was applied on Twitter accounts of this sample; field notes were kept from the field based on participant observation, and these notes were analysed by dividing them into themes within the scope of sociology of everyday life.

In the study, firstly, a key person was chosen, and the field was entered through that person. While choosing the key person, attention was paid to make sure that the person has a high number of followers, follows many people, and has good interaction with people because everyday life is the life which is lived with “others” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). The key person is the person who lets the researcher get into the field (Riemer, 2009), and at the same time, he/she opens the doors of other environments for the researcher. Attention was paid to ensure that it is not a bot account; it posts tweet/tweets every day and uses the Twitter environment dynamically and timelessly. At the beginning of this study, the key person selected for the research had 51.225 followers. The number of accounts followed by him/her was 1.345. It was obvious from his/her profile picture and his/her tweets that he/she was a real person. Also, he/she was using Twitter routinely. He/she was mentioning, replying, or retweeting other users, and he/she also received interaction. He/she was a dynamic user, and his/her interaction on Twitter was high.

The key person’s network was visualised through the use of Gephi (Bastian, Heymann & Jacomy, 2009) on a randomly chosen day to see these association structures. On the randomly chosen date, September 26, 2016, the field was entered with the key person, and the network of the key person was retrieved from Twitter Users Network through NodeXL (Smith *et al.*, 2010). The first ten actors whom the key user is linked with the strongest ties were checked to choose the sample. Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> account with the strongest tie was the Twitter account of an institution, it was not included in the sample; and since the 10<sup>th</sup> account with the strongest tie was private, it was not included in the sample. For the date of September 26, 2016, the edge weight table of the key user is as follows:

**Table 1:** Edge weight of the key user dated September 26, 2016.

Source	Target	Edge Weight
A	B	24.0
	C	18.0
	D	14.0
	E	11.0
	F	6.0
	G	5.0
	H	5.0
	I	5.0
	J	4.0

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on this network, the size of nodes and the density of edges were checked; and a sample composed of 10 public accounts was determined<sup>1</sup>. On October 3, 2016, it was seen that the user (D) locked his/her account; since it was not considered ethical to study on a private account, a new network was created. Since the highest value of eigenvector centrality belonged to the person named (K), (K) was included in the study, and (D) was excluded from the study.

<sup>1</sup> In the study, betweenness centrality was not paid attention since the interaction produced between 10 people in the sample would be analysed; because it is obvious that the highest point of betweenness centrality would be gotten by A since the network is around the key person. This parameter can be used to find central users in other networks, however, in such a study, significant results cannot be obtained since the central user is identified (Irak, 2016).

Eigenvector centrality of (K) in this network reveals that he/she is an influential person in the network and has the power of steering the communication; for this reason, he/she was included in the study.

For the date of September 26, 2016 and the date of October 3, 2016 algorithms of users are as follows:

**Table 2:** Algorithms of users in the sample dated September 26, 2016 and October 3, 2016.

	Users	Eigenvector Centrality	In-degree	Out-degree	Closeness Centrality	Degree Centrality
September 26, 2016	A	1.0	10	10	1.0	20
	B	0.30639	2	3	0.5625	5
	C	0.522541	4	2	0.529412	6
	D	0.400558	3	2	0.529412	5
	E	0.400558	3	3	0.5625	6
	F	0.30639	2	2	0.529412	4
	G	0.400558	3	2	0.529412	5
	H	0.30639	2	2	0.529412	4
	I	0.30639	2	5	0.642857	7
	J	0.30639	2	2	0.529412	4
October 3, 2016	A	0.441367	5	8	1.0	13
	B	0.0	0	3	0.6	3
	C	0.403543	4	1	0.666667	5
	D	0.257978	2	0	0.0	2
	E	0.252903	1	3	0.6155385	4
	F	0.759406	2	1	1.0	3
	G	0.257978	2	1	0.533333	3
	H	0.252903	1	1	0.533333	2
	I	0.0	0	3	0.6	3
	J	0.252903	1	0	0.0	1
	K	1.0	4	1	1.0	5

Source: Own elaboration.

When social network analysis was conducted, the program was used with an anonymous account, which was created to not affect the use of any search engine or page. During the stage of digital ethnography, the researcher started to follow these users by using her own Twitter account, which includes her photograph and username, follows other users from the sample, and also has other followers; and she started to apply digital ethnography method through participant observation. The researcher prefers to be in the field as a *participant*, not as a *lurker*. Ideas of the researcher were not posted as tweets in order not to influence the field much or not to start a discussion; however, from time to time, some tweets were retweeted or marked as favourite, and users apart from the sample were followed or unfollowed to be in the field and to join/approve/interact.

As an essential part of participant observation, field notes are vitally important in this study. Digital ethnography has a specific kind of freedom in taking field notes, different from traditional ethnography. The research data was rendered independent from time and place by logging in to Twitter through smartphone and computer, and field notes were taken through the means offered by the digital environment. However, the political conditions of Turkey impose to be there at any time. To not lose data in digital ethnography, it sometimes becomes very important to be there at that moment. While taking field notes, *screenshots* make it significantly easier for the researcher to take notes in the digital ethnography process.

The field was entered on a randomly chosen date, September 26, 2016; and on November 4, 2016, the researcher left the field. On November 4, 2016, as a result of the detention of HDP's (Peoples' Democratic Party- a political party in Turkey) members of parliament, users in the sample started to lock or close their accounts<sup>2</sup>; for this reason, the researcher who already observed data saturation left the field. Saturation is a sign indicating that data collection is over (Boellstorff *et al.*, 2012). The researcher left the field because she felt contented, the data started to repeat itself, and the users started to use private accounts. In this sense, the study was conducted between September 26, 2016–November 4, 2016.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. *An imagined everyday life*

Twitter creates an “imagined community” where common meanings and ideas are shared with an uncertain imagined target audience or imagined viewers. Imagining the community (Anderson, 2006) in the world of nation-states is similar to imagining the audience in social networks. As individuals in nation-states live without knowing each other but knowing that they exist, Twitter users also address to an imagined community that they do not know but think that exists.

We finished September as well, what are you doing on the New Year's Day ((A), September 30, 2016).

With the internet, imagined communities keep being created based on serial interactions of electronic texts (Feenberg & Bakardjieva, 2004). Users never know all users of Twitter, but they are aware of their existence and sources. Beyond creating an imagined community, Twitter is not imagined only by each user, but at the same time, it also creates an online community that is founded based on a shared community feeling (Gruzd, Wellman & Takhteyev, 2011). When they log in to Twitter at the beginning of the day, they say good morning to their followers; when they log in to Twitter last time at the end of the day, they wish good night to the imagined users in their minds.

Good morning, and one more good morning to the ones whose minds are not awake yet ((G), October 23, 2016).

Addressing followers/imagined followers is common behaviour on Twitter. Although there is no reply or no interaction, users frequently “address” other people:

Come on, look here! How terrible these people are ((I), September 30, 2016).

(I) quotes another user's tweet for his/her imaginary community, and he/she wants them to look at that tweet, comment on it, and interact. However, he/she cannot get any interaction. The number of favourites, retweets, or replies for the tweet is zero.

Using the mention at the end occurs as a result of the imagination of an imagined community. While the tweet is seen only by the person whom the user posts the tweet and by the people who follow both when the mention is written at the beginning, the tweet is seen by all followers of the user and the ones who can follow when the mention is written at the end; in other words, her/his imagined community will see. It is not important whether the mentioned account knows Turkish or not (the tweet is Turkish). For example, it is not important whether Apple knows Turkish or not; what is important is to convey the message to the imaginary community that knows Turkish:

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<sup>2</sup> On November 4, 2016, HDP's joint leaders and other MPs have been detained. Some users in the sample deactivated or made their accounts private with the fear of facing legal sanctions due to the online surveillance in Turkey. For surveillance in Turkey, see Topak (2017).

Fuck the telephone you produce. I could customize nokia 3310 just this much! @Apple ((K), October 14, 2016).

At the same time, although it is imaginary, the idea of an imagined community creates a motivation for the user to be in solidarity with a group. When the mention at the end of the tweet posted by (K) is taken into consideration, it is observed that the message is not for Apple but her/his own imagined community; it is used to unite the ones who are similar to her/him and to get support from them. The question of which community is expected to help takes us to the principle of homophily.

#### 4.2. Homophily

Homophily is the principle of the tendency to create relationships with people who are similar to the self (Currarini & Mengel, 2016; De Choudhury, 2011; Mark, 1998; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001; Šćepanović *et al.*, 2016). With the development of the internet and the popularisation of social networks, it has become possible to understand homophily through electronic connections people create with each other (Noë *et al.*, 2016). As a prominent principle in social connection, homophily is also observed in social network communities; and Twitter is one of these social networks.

This situation is also valid for the user network in the sample. Actors in the network have at least one homophilic connection. Similar to the studies of De Choudry (2011) and Šćepanović *et al.* (2016), homophilic connections of the sample are observed in occupation, sexual orientation, and political opinions. 4 of the users, including the key person, are lawyers, and it is clearly seen in the tweets they post. In addition to this, another common characteristic is their sexual orientation. For example, (J) writes the following about sexual orientation:

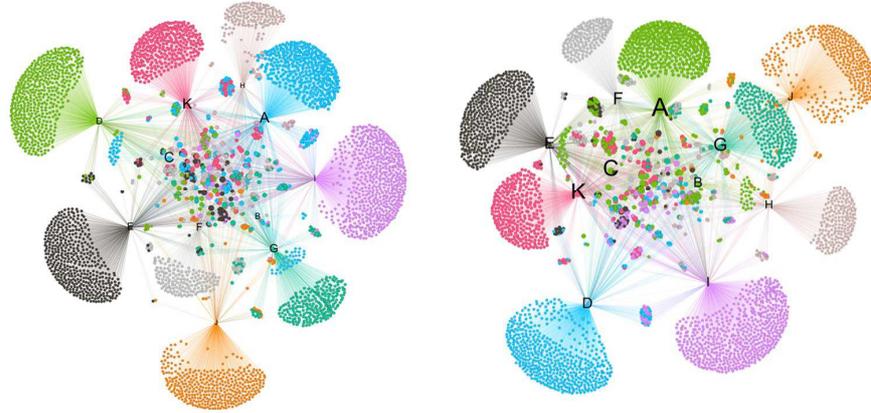
I don't want to limit my sexual identity by putting it into a word like bisexual, lesbian, etc., I define myself as Queer ((J), October 9, 2016).

With this tweet, (J) states sexual orientation to the “others,” the other whom (J) encounters within the lifeworld and declares that (J) will create the “connections” depending on this. The key person also states his/her sexual orientation on his/her Twitter account. Although one person explicitly states that he is heterosexual, he frequently writes to the key person just for irony that he likes (A). The most obvious homophily feature of the sample is for political opinion. Ten people in the sample define themselves in different scales of the left-wing. Only (J) does not post explicit tweets about it but frequently being Kurdish. (J)'s inclusion in this network is because of sexual orientation. Nine people got university and post-graduate education, and it is stated in their tweets that two people are still getting post-graduate education. As in political opinion, only (J) is a different example in the educational level aspect. (J) is a textile worker and is from a different socio-economic community compared to the others. (J) is included in the study because of explicit sexual orientation and a strong relationship with the key person.

Similar to the studies analysing homophily on Twitter (Bollen *et al.*, 2011; De Choudry, 2011; Halberstam & Knight, 2016; Kwak, Chun & Moon, 2011), it is also seen in the sample that the homophily principle is frankly presented. While it is possible to see homophilic characteristics in social networks such as Facebook, which includes friendship relations and nondirectional edges, it is surprising and significant that it is commonly seen on Twitter, which is a social network environment that includes unreciprocated relations and directional edges.

This homophily principle is observed in networks dated October 16 and October 25, 2016.

**Figure 1:** Network dated October 16, 2016 (left) and October 25, 2016 (right).



Source: Own elaboration.

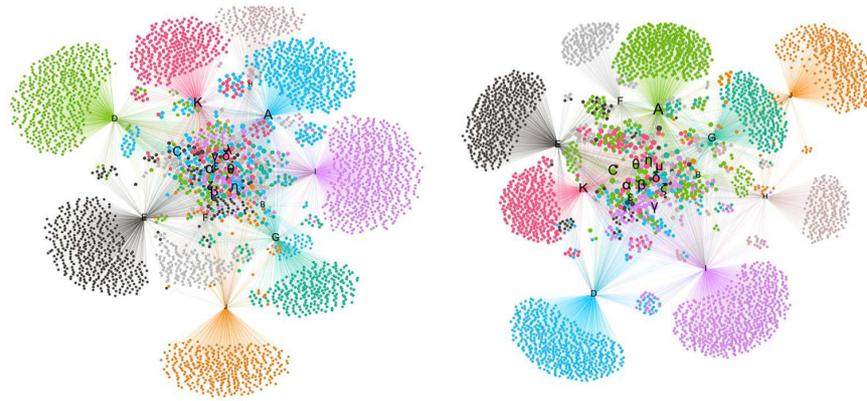
However, although the network in the sample interacts with each other, there are also other users who are stronger than the strength of them. Other users with higher eigenvector centrality points get ahead of many users in the sample from time to time. For the date of October 16, 2016 and October 25, 2016, scores of eigenvector centrality are as follows:

**Table 3:** The scores of eigenvector centrality dated October 16, 2016 and October 25, 2016.

	<b>Users</b>	<b>Eigenvector Centrality</b>
October 16, 2016	$\alpha$	1.0
	$\beta$	0.936522
	$\gamma$	0.86777
	$\delta$	0.841617
	$\varepsilon$	0.825335
	$\zeta$	0.816452
	$\eta$	0.813379
	$\theta$	0.81209
	A	0.79748
	$\lambda$	0.79744
October 25, 2016	$\alpha$	1.0
	A	0.953931
	$\beta$	0.901324
	$\gamma$	0.877095
	$\delta$	0.84799
	$\varepsilon$	0.832421
	$\zeta$	0.829741
	$\mu$	0.826009
	$\eta$	0.820898
	$\theta$	0.815611

Source: Own elaboration.

**Figure 2:** The network with eigenvector centrality dated October 16, 2016 (left) and October 25, 2016 (right).



Source: Own elaboration.

In both networks, the relationship between the ones with high eigenvector centrality points and the users in the sample support the homophilic relationship. People who are identified with  $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \varepsilon \zeta \mu \eta \theta \lambda$  signs stand close to the left-wing like other people in the sample. At the same time, they have high educational levels. Within this scope, it can be stated that this network is under the influence of the homophily principle.

#### 4.3. *The rhythm of writing: Rhythms and repetitions on Twitter*

As on other spaces, there is a time-wise life cycle and a rhythm of life also on Twitter. Content on Twitter progresses independently from the parts of everyday life such as leisure time but still keeps loyal to the rhythm. Repetitions are important in the rhythm (Lefebvre & Regulier, 1999). Although these repetitions seem to be broken by changes in the agenda on Twitter, actually the change in the agenda and writing posts about the new agenda also includes a rhythmic action. Agenda shapes Twitter, and likewise Twitter shapes the agenda. Rituals are also a part of rhythms and dominate the agenda of Twitter. In the period analysed, the Day of Ashura or October 21, the day of cyber-attack, create a rhythm in topics that set the agenda. Such agenda feeds the posts on Twitter, keeps them repeated, and continues to be elements that feed the rhythm. The agenda's content will change, but the changing and renewing situation of the agenda will not change. Everyday life consists of repetitions without indicators (Lefebvre, 2010), and it is repeated similarly.

There are many repetition types that cannot be degraded into each other in the rhythm. Lefebvre (2013) highlights cyclical and linear processes. Time perception in the ancient Greek-Roman Period is cyclical and continuous, and after Christianity, it is linear and interrupted (Agamben, 1993). Today's two types of time, both cyclical and linear, vary by cultures; such difference can also be observed on online environments and on Twitter (García-Gavilanes, Quercia & Jaimes, 2013). Linear and cyclical time intertwine in tweets. Reflections of arranged times, leisure time, working time, sleeping and waking times, weekends which are perceived as free time in everyday life, and especially "Friday nights" are obvious; reality is not different from the everyday rhythm, and it has a rhythmic repetition within itself.

“Hoff is today Friday yhaaaaa ^^” (F), October 7, 2016.

The purpose of this whole process is to organise work life. The strongest pressure in these periods is felt in business life. Work life is one of the most important elements which set the rhythm of a day in the posted tweets:

I missed the shuttle but mom forces me to go to work ((j), October 4, 2016).

An important part of the rhythm on Twitter is set by destructive effects stated as “produced by the capital” by Lefebvre (Meyer, 2008, pp. 150-152). Twitter is mostly used publicly. However, Turkey’s rapidly changing agenda, the censorship system, and the use of social networks with hesitation caused by the idea that the government and its apparatuses will punish users have created a rhythm. Political power controls this rhythm. When the fieldwork started for this study, accounts in the sample were chosen especially from public accounts; however, some accounts were locked or became private due to some political issues experienced during the field study or as a result of users’ worries. This rhythm has already occurred through some repetitions; however, the breaking point occurred during the arrest of HDP’s parliament members; 3 people in the sample turned their profiles into private, and one person signed out in the following period. One person turned her/his account into public after some time. During this period, the researcher could see the posted tweets since she was already the follower of these accounts; however, considering the ethical dimension, tweets posted during this period were not included in the study. While ignoring the posted tweets might become a process blocking the researcher’s analysis, it enabled the researcher to be aware of another rhythm. Not only the apparatuses of the government but all discourses, writings, etc., set the rhythm of users in the virtual world. Independent from political issues, negative experiences with another user can sometimes lead users to lock their accounts or turn their accounts into private. Beyond the state apparatus, interpersonal relations can become a dominant power that affects the rhythm. Power relations have roots in all social networks (Foucault, 2014), and Twitter is a place where these power relations are frequently seen. These accounts, which are expected to become public during the days when the perception of threat decreases, will become private again when there is a new critical agenda since it creates a risk for users; this rhythm will continue as a pattern with characteristics forming another rhythm.

#### 4.4. Creative craftiness in the space: Strategies and tactics on Twitter

Twitter does not only include “insignificant short-term explosions” (as cited in Murthy, 2013); the aim of emergence and spread could not impose how the consumer should use this product. Users do not share insignificant things in this environment; they also use it for different purposes, such as producing political discourses by creating a tactical creation process or reaching masses for protests. In Certeau’s (2009) everyday life theory, the tactic is positioned opposite to strategy; while strategy is the language of power, tactic is the craftiness of the public.

##### 4.4.1. Tactics against Twitter strategies

Social networks are statements of strategies of social media giants. When a user becomes online or shares a post, he/she leaves *cyber-footprints* on the digital space, which are collected by giants such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google. This situation is a key from which social networks derive added value, and it is vital for their economies (Ioşifidis & Wheeler, 2016). Twitter is also included in this social network economy. Users who log in to Twitter see various advertisement products such as *promoted tweets*, *promoted accounts* and *promoted trends*. The contents of these advertisements are directly related to cyber-footprints left by the user. Your search for a content on Twitter, your profile information, location, or other cyber-footprints you have left behind provides information for Twitter to customize

advertisements. Users are exposed to the most sponsored tweets on the timeline flow. Twitter provides some options about these tweets; the user can delete the advertisement from her/his timeline by clicking the *dismiss* option. However, he/she cannot prevent advertisements. Twitter will create new advertisements by tracking the data provided by the user through specific algorithms. Dismiss option provided by Twitter is not enough for users, so users create their tactics:

You may also like this... Who the hell are you to choose my likes you godless twitter!!!!??? I don't like man, I directly close it ((K), October 8, 2016).

(K) created a tactic about the sponsored accounts presented to him/her by directly closing them. On the other hand, (C) found his/her solution by blocking sponsored tweets, not by "dismissing," he/she keeps blocking although Twitter brings new sponsored tweets for him/her:

Twitter brings a new account for each sponsored twit account I blocked... ((C), October 22, 2016).

Another dictated feature of Twitter is its number of characters. Although it has been increased to 280 now, the old number of characters, 140, was not enough most of the time for the content produced by the user. Although users continue that by putting + sign and writing in another space with 140 characters, the common idea is to make flood (while Twitter calls it thread, it is generally called "flood" in Turkey). The user makes it to overcome Twitter's strategy; however, Twitter is aware of a flood, and they even posted a flood to show how to do it. Flood means creating a chain or a flow by replying to a posted tweet and deleting @username, and writing another tweet. It is a tactic to write texts which are more than 140 characters.

In the flood feature of Twitter, tactics and strategies have intertwined. In fact, in today's flexible world, strategies and tactics are frequently interrelated, and they are in an interactive relation. Especially on digital spaces, features of these are designed for users to customize (Manovich, 2009). It is a tactic not to use the one provided and dictated by power. Although social media networks present a public space for people, they maintain their lives as a marketing tool; it causes users to create new tactics just as they do on Twitter.

The users use another strategic pattern provided by Twitter as a tactic. It is "blocking." The blocked user cannot follow the user who blocks; at the same time, the user cannot follow the user whom he/she blocked. The blocked account is automatically unfollowed. No notification is sent to the blocked person about blocking. In this sense, it is a frequently used tactic. Even when the user asks his/her friends to block that account, he/she may use space between @ sign and the username, change the name, or change a letter by putting a dot instead of that letter. Homophily lies on the basis of blocking action. The user tends to block accounts which he/she perceives as 'the other' –whether the tweets of those accounts are seen on his/her timeline or not. As he/she pays attention to homophilic features while creating his/her network, he/she also pays attention to keep 'the other' away from him/her by blocking.

I cannot stand moralists; if there are any moralists, I'll simply block ((J), October 25, 2016).

Using mention at the end is also used as a tactical act. "Using mention at the end" means that the post which the user sent to the one he/she mentions is seen on the home page of his/her followers, and in this way, interaction is higher. Using mention at the end is a way of opening a field for the opposite user by taking your followers by your side. This action is also done to the founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey. It is not important whether Dorsey knows Turkish or not; the important thing here is that followers of (K) will read the tweet.

Hey, dude! Do you sell the store? It is yours, what can we say ☹ @jack ((K), October 6, 2016).

#### 4.4.2. Tactics using Twitter as a tool

##### **Humour as a way of resistance**

Like the way styles of walking create tactics while consuming the city (de Certeau, 2009), the language used in Twitter to send a tweet, selected sentences, assigned emotions and the used humour create a tactic against strategies. The use of humorous language is highly common on Twitter. Especially with the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey, the sense of humour created by university students who are ironic, know a foreign language, and master the popular culture (Cantek, 2013), has started to absorb other contents, and this humour produced through the use of Twitter as a tool has become common.

To understand the humorous language used in Twitter, one needs to include in the culture and everyday life practices on Twitter, create a habit, and be familiar with the culture that feeds communication sources on Twitter.

If today's history is written in the future, they will mention us by saying: they were trying to respond whatever done to them by humour ((A) September 28, 2016).

Another tactic which intertwines with humour and uses Twitter as a tool is lynching. Although lynching is seen as a tool for creating hegemony, it is generally used in Twitter to overcome problems, which cannot be overcome in real everyday life, in the virtual environment.

I don't use antidepressants; instead, I participate in Twitter lynchings ((A), September 29, 2016).

Digital space is the place where parties of communication meet. Within the layers of Twitter, people can encounter with people who do not share their opinions, lifestyles, or world perceptions based on homophily. Lynching may occur as a result of these encounters.

##### **Solidarity/amelioration as a way of resistance**

Some tactics on Twitter are created with the aim of solidarity and amelioration; tweets are sent with the aim of solidarity or amelioration from hard life conditions experienced in everyday life. Statements that cannot be said in face-to-face communication in everyday life are expressed on Twitter environment as a tactic. According to Goffman (2012), the stage and backstage are two important areas in a person's life. In some cases, Twitter looks like backstage. Actors are always well-controlled at the stage. Statements that cannot be expressed to the other person during the performance are expressed later by using Twitter as the backstage, and a field of tactic is created at backstage:

Mr. Professor, please stop, stop the lecture!!!! ((K), October 31, 2016).

Calls for favourite button abbreviated as "fav" also appear as a call for solidarity. Giving FF or asking for a retweet to disseminate the tweet (rt please, or rt pls) are also calls for solidarity. In addition to this, these calls are made to start communication or to be included in a public sphere.

The ones who will take care of me if I abandon home fav ((J), October 10, 2016).

Although such attitudes of people who want to stand against strategic structures do not destroy these structures, they open a life space for the user. As well as tactics, which aim to open a place for breathing in everyday life on Twitter, re-organisation of this everyday life by dominant structures is also clearly observed; and this organisation is mostly established through ways of production and consumption.

#### 4.5. *Ways of production and consumption in the space*

One of the basic determinants of the sociology of everyday life is the way of production and consumption. In the analysed sample, it was used mostly for eating and drinking:

Youngsters what's up, I'm eating lamb in tandoori and drinking raki ^^ ((K), October 28, 2016).

As soon as the needs are met, the consumer is provoked by mechanisms he/she feels content with, and another need emerges (Lefebvre, 2010). From the perspective of these needs and satisfactions, new communication technologies also cause deprivation in the person as technology advances. Fashion plays a dominant role in new communication technologies. Mentioning the obtained technological object is closely related to expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well as declaring to the imaginary community that you own this object. For the tweets sent about the products of new communication technologies, it may require opening a parenthesis for (J). This user, a textile worker and belongs to the low-class and was fired during the observation period, attributes special importance to the smartphone and its brand.

I cannot buy iphone 7 Plus jet Black 128 gb since I was fired; tragedy, sorrow, melancholy... ((J), October 14, 2016).

Samsung s7 edge has a very nice design, but it is not useful. I don't suggest ((J), October 22, 2016).

Folks! I will sell my Samsung s7 edge telephone because I'm in need it is used just for 1 month there is not any scratch, etc. Price is 1800 tl ((J), October 29, 2016).

(J) cannot afford these smartphones because of poorness. And these smartphones are products of "strategy" as mentioned by Certeau; he/she would log in to Twitter, which is another strategy but at the same time a space where users can develop tactics with the aim of solidarity, amelioration, and communication with the imaginary society. Later on, he/she took a break on Twitter and could not log in because his/her phone was broken.

Consumption processes and desire strategies continue on Twitter, which always includes the possibility of tactics but also establishes hegemony with its strategic structures.

## **5. General discussion**

This study has intended to understand everyday life practices on Twitter, a microblogging environment in the social network space, within the scope of sociology of everyday life. The major question of this study is how everyday life is shaped on Twitter. And then, we observed the production and consumption forms, rhythms, and repetitions, ordinary and natural, tactics and strategies in the everyday life of Twitter. The study's starting point is that social network environments in general and Twitter in particular present everyday life patterns. Twitter also creates an everyday life space, and users present practices on this space. Although it is not significantly different from the real agenda, it has a lifestyle within itself; some points need to be analysed from the perspective of everyday life.

### ***Ordinary and natural in the everyday life of Twitter***

First of all, on Twitter, content is produced in the space that is created by imaginary communities. Although the user who posts a tweet is an ineffective character in the channel, he/she acts by the practice of addressing an imaginary society and subjects whose existence he/she does not know. Users use a common language, and this language is known by people who are a part of the space or know the space. Behaviours such as retweeting, using a hashtag or using a mention at the end are important in terms of imagining the population of the space.

Everyday life on Twitter is established by creating communication through the directed following. Homophily principle lies at the heart of this relationship. Although Twitter is established on the basis of directed connections, homophily principle works in this space. Although users do not have to follow the ones who follow them and do not have to be followed by the ones they follow, they follow people who are similar to them.

The relations of the network of the sample indicates this homophily principle. It is seen that the sexual orientations and political views of the sample that are connected with each other as a profession are also an important motivation to follow each other. In this context, their motivation to follow each other on Twitter is based on socio-demographic characteristics like in real life, they do not differ much in virtual space. The other users with whom the sample and the users in the sample interact, and the users who dominate the network with a high eigenvector centrality, mostly connect based on the homophily principle. The “other,” encountered in daily life is generally composed of people who resemble the user himself, considering the flow of those who are followed on Twitter. Relationships with the other on Twitter, which is a world of life, follow the principle of homophily.

### *Rhythms and repetitions in the everyday life of Twitter*

Just like the way the residents of a city live their lives in the space of the city, the residents of the space on Twitter have a rhythmic structure where users produce content and create discourses, and it defines their existence in this space; it has regular repetitions. The rhythm of rituals and changing the rhythm of the agenda are among these rhythms. Agenda sets the content of Twitter, and Twitter sets the content of the agenda. Actions such as closing the account, re-opening the account, deactivating the account, locking the account, and turning the account into public are rhythmic on Twitter. The destructive power shaping this rhythm is related to power. Although Twitter is mostly used publicly, rapidly changing agenda of Turkey, censorship system and the use of social networks with a hesitation caused by the idea that the government and its apparatuses will punish users have created a rhythm and caused these actions to continue rhythmically. Such situation makes them determiner of everyday life rhythm on Twitter. With the apparatuses of power, interpersonal relations (such as lynching, swearing) can also be why people change their accounts' situation. As associations absorbed and rules specified by the government and the capital set the rhythm of contents and flows on Twitter, they also create tactics against strategies.

### *Tactics and strategies in the everyday life of Twitter*

There are two different tactical actions on Twitter. The first of them is the tactic that users have developed while using Twitter against the strategies created by Twitter. The other is producing tactics against the strategies in everyday life by using Twitter as a tool. In the first case, Twitter helps formulate strategy; in the second case, it helps produce tactics. Removing the post of a sponsored account, blocking sponsored accounts, exceeding the limit of 140 characters through + sign and floods, blocking practice based on homophily or using mention at the end to reach meso-layer are tactics that users against the strategies of Twitter have developed. Humour, lynching, call for solidarity, catharsis, fav request, ff request, and rt request are tactics that have been developed by using Twitter as a tool against the strategies in everyday life.

### *Production and consumption on Twitter*

Ways of production and consumption on digital space also create the rhythm of everyday life. Most of the produced contents are based on consumption or showing what is consumed. A three-staged consumption mechanism is established in the digital space. First of all, the object consumed in everyday life is not consumed because of necessity; an object with a price which is close to the value of use is not preferred. This consumption is independent of necessities. A lifestyle is bought through this consumption. And thirdly, these two processes are presented to the consumption of followers and imaginary followers on Twitter. Posts in which subjects are objects are seen in the timeline of imaginary followers, and tweets with the theme of consumption are seen, perceived, and rhythmically consumed by other users. In this sense, as posts on Twitter are momentarily written, they are also momentarily consumed.

It continuously goes on as a flow. Contents on Twitter are seen in a flow in the user's timeline, and it continuously flows.

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