

DISCUSSING POLITICS ON FACEBOOK:
CLUB MODEL AND ROWDY DELIBERATIVE TALK

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ABSTRACT

Didem Türkoğlu: Discussing Politics on Facebook: Club Model and Rowdy Deliberative Talk
(Under the direction of Charles Kurzman)

Scholars who study deliberative democracy put a lot of emphasis on the importance of the way people talk about politics, which shapes their thoughts and practices. In online political settings people tend to talk about politics with like-minded individuals creating echo chambers. However, by focusing on overtly political venues, the literature understudies the political talk that takes place in non-political settings. In this paper I investigate the question of how we come across political discourse on a pre-dominantly non-political platform on social network sites (SNSs). Based on a mix-method analysis of over 80.000 comments from the 50 most popular public Facebook pages from Turkey, the findings suggest that we are more likely to find deliberative talk in non-political settings if politics is considered to be an appropriate discussion topic. They may also be unexpectedly rowdy, contrary to the most of the conceptualizations of deliberative talk.¹

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On 6 September 2012, the Facebook page of the Galatasaray Sport Club (one of the most popular sport clubs in Turkey) hosted a heated discussion about which word should be used in reference to God: *Tanrı* or *Allah*. The reason for the discussion was a post made by the page's administrator expressing condolences to the families of the soldiers who died as a result of an explosion in a military armory. The admin used the word *Tanrı*² instead of *Allah*. *Tanrı* is Turkish. *Allah* is Arabic but also widely used in Turkish. This created a huge uproar. Some of the page members deemed *Tanrı* to be related to Christianity or polytheism, thus not Islamic enough, while others supported the usage by finding it more "modern," more "secular" or more "Turkish." However, this wasn't only a semantics debate because it took place against a background of emotional outrage in the mass media due to the increasing numbers of terrorist attacks, instability along the Syrian border, and a public discussion among politicians and the mass media about whether the state is losing its secular premise. Consequently, the sides taken by Facebook users also reflected their position on these issues as well as a criticism of the government and the party in power. The tone of the Facebook conversations was quite antagonistic and in some instances expressed outrage, but there were also attempts by some users to provide information and convince people of opposing views. In some instances there were small indications of solidarity next to swearing or threats of unsubscribing from the page if the initial controversial post wasn't edited.

This example is just one among many that might give us clues about how we come across political discourse on social network sites (SNSs) in a pre-dominantly non-political platform.

The literature has a tendency to talk about deliberation as an outcome, focuses on exclusively political venues and relies heavily on research settings like forums and focus groups. In doing so it understudies the political talk that takes place in non-political settings. There is also a tendency to disregard the type of political talk that reflects some characteristics of deliberation and yet does not reach a well-defined outcome. In this paper, deliberative talk is operationalized in terms of the presence of inter-ideological questioning. It also includes tolerance for the presentation of ideas/ positions that are not shared by the main political position of the page (for overtly political pages) or a position different than one's own (for the users in seemingly non-political page settings). Tolerance might be demonstrated through an explicit encouragement or it might be demonstrated by the absence of discouragement. In doing so, this paper contributes to the literature in the following ways.

Firstly, this paper aims to look at the way politics is discussed in a not exclusively political platform. Political talk does not exclusively take place in overtly political settings. Secondly, the type of deliberative talk can also be quite rowdy unlike the normative prescriptions proposed by some scholars. When the primary affiliation of the group is not political then presentation of different political ideas, especially those that are not shared by the members at large, might not be perceived as a threat to the basis of the group and might be tolerated.

Based on the analysis, I suggest a club model to describe the interactions on popular public Facebook pages. Facebook data provides an opportunity to capture the interaction of the speech acts and the social context as it occurs. Influential users shape the conversations and who will be informally included is shaped by those conversations, which vary among Facebook pages. Furthermore, in relation to SNSs and from the perspective of civic engagement and

deliberation, this paper cautions against making generalizations about a certain site by demonstrating different dynamics of political talk within the same SNS.

In what follows, I elaborate on how deliberative talk is approached in previous works. I discuss how we can conceptualize deliberative talk and suggest two hypotheses. We are more likely to find deliberative talk in non-political pages and in some instances uncivil and outraged comments might encourage deliberative talk. In the quantitative analysis section I demonstrate that we are more likely to find deliberative talk in sports pages, even if deliberative talk in general is rare. In the qualitative conversation analysis section I discuss how political talk takes place by putting an emphasis on the mechanisms.

My findings suggest that in the overtly political Facebook pages, discussion is deemed acceptable only if the user believes in the same things the group stands for, so there isn't much room for inter-ideological talk. On the seemingly non-political Facebook pages there are mixed responses. While on entertainment pages it is considered not very appropriate to discuss politics, on the pages of soccer clubs/fans there is an interesting pattern of deliberative talk. We are more likely to find rowdy deliberative talk on sports pages.

CHAPTER 2: DELIBERATIVE POLITICAL TALK

Civic engagement and deliberation are two of the major issues scholars discuss in democratic theory. Debates on deliberative democracy gained momentum in the late 1990s with the discussions of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. (Dryzek 2000; Habermas 1996; Rawls 1993) Problems of democracy and the limitations of the current political structures led to a concern with the future of democracy and civic engagement. Within this context the rise of the Internet as a new and popular medium attracted attention, and scholars began to inquire whether this new medium can open some new opportunities for deliberation and civic engagement.

In this paper, I take Facebook as a reflection of political conversations that occur in everyday life settings even if there are peculiarities due to being an online medium. Facebook gives us an opportunity to observe political conversations as they happen without the interference of the researchers. Moreover, it allows us to capture the interactions between the users as a group as well as the interactions of the users with the particular context they are in. Consequently, bringing the discussions on SNSs and political conversations together give us an advantage to more closely scrutinize these dynamics.

Putnam was concerned about “cyberbalkanization” leading to atomization and segregation of communities (Putnam 2000). Even if there are studies showing that cyberbalkanization does not seem to be supported on the social capital level (Skoric, Ying, and Ng 2009; Vergeer and Pelzer 2009), implications still exist for political communities on the Internet. The structure of the discussion forums might influence whether the online environment is deliberative or not (Stroud 2008; Wright and Street 2007). The cyberbalkanization argument is

revised further by the argument that Internet forums are not the place for democratic debate but they are merely “echo chambers”(Jamieson and Cappella 2008). Some scholars regard this as having caused an erosion of the common ground which is especially important for the democratic theory and discussions on deliberation (Sunstein 2007).

If the cyberbalkanization argument is valid, then we would expect to see very little deliberation on the Internet especially in regard to inter-ideological conversations. For the political communities, this seems especially hard to achieve due to the prevalence of echo chambers. Consequently on Facebook, I would expect to find political pages reflecting echo chambers as well, where the people who interact with each other are the ones who share the same political position.

One of the approaches to the issue of civic engagement and the SNS is the argument that social networking sites enable more interaction, increase social capital, and facilitate offline social relations (Boyd 2006; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007). In parallel to this argument, scholars also argue that SNSs facilitate and/or encourage civic and political engagement (Gaby and Caren 2012; Marzouki, Skandrani-Marzouki, jaoui, Hammoudi, and Bellaj 2012; Pasek, More, and Romer 2009; Valenzuela, Arriagada, and Scherman 2012; Zúñiga, Jung, and Valenzuela 2012).

Even if Facebook has been presented as a quite democratic tool where people create and share their own ideas without any mediation that can be imposed upon them, still the conventions and norms of conversations are learned in other settings. Those conventions and norms influence the structure of the political narrative on Facebook as well as the deliberate discursive choices of the people and discursive frames available to them(Polletta, Chen, Gardner, and Motes 2011). First, the conversations are not on equal footing in having equal chance of gaining popularity.

Second, these conversations are also composed of deliberative, contentious as well as polarizing talk. New social media cannot provide a uniform effect on political action but at the same time they do provide a new setting as well as norms and rituals for political conversation.

Deliberation is a difficult aim to achieve which takes place only occasionally. (Button and Mattson 1999; Hendriks 2006; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005) Deliberative political conversation is defined as composed of “openness to political conflict, the absence of conversational dominance, clear and reasonable argument, and mutual comprehension.” (Moy and Gastil 2006) Also see. (Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004) Moy and Gastil support the argument that one needs to make a distinction between social conversation and problem solving conversation. In the former people are among like-minded individuals and their conversation does not have a clear goal. In the latter case, on the other hand, the conversation is public, leads to sound judgment, involves people with different ideas and beliefs, and finally has an egalitarian atmosphere that is non-tyrannical but politically equal (Conover, Searing, and Crewe 2002). Such a distinction is hard to make. Moreover, as Andrew Perrin suggests we cannot confine political talk to these types of situations because political talk takes place in formal as well as informal settings. (Perrin 2006) Furthermore, political conversations are rarely as problem-oriented as the supporters of rationality in deliberative conversation literature suggest.

Some scholars suggest that people might think that argumentative discussions are reserved for the private space (Conover, Searing, and Crewe 2002). This approach would predict that the people might avoid argumentative discussions in public forums. However, there are also studies which disagree with the avoidance argument (Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger 2009). Others argue that political conflict or political homogeneity do not influence online political deliberation (Albrecht 2006). I suggest that we can look at the instances of conflictual political

talk and even discourses of outrage and see if we can find any instances where there are also elements of deliberative political talk. However in order to do that, the operationalization of deliberative talk needs to be more flexible. In that regard, civil-rational-solution oriented talk would be only one of the possible types of deliberative talk, not the only type of deliberative talk.

We also need to consider the contexts these comments are made such as how individual comments are positioned in the conversation and how they can be tied to the norms of conversation prevalent in those specific group-conversational contexts (Polletta and Lee 2006). In a study on political micro cultures and logics used in political talk Andrew Perrin, for example, finds out that sports groups use “doubt” logics more and argues that this might be related to their “relative insulation from public sphere problems” compared to unions, business associations and churches (Perrin 2005). Likewise it would not be very fruitful to just look at the conversation made in the same general theme across all groups because the way those conversations are made would also reflect the different characteristics of the groups as well as the differences of group members in those settings.

As I will demonstrate in the case of Facebook sports pages, people might be aware of different political positions among the audience they target and yet depending on the norms and group identity of the page they might still engage in political discussions. Based on the arguments presented in the literature review, I expect to see some political talk on these Facebook pages especially the overtly political ones which will be discussed further below. However, the literature suggests that we would expect to see echo chambers formed along ideological lines and deliberation would be very rare on these overtly political pages. I expect to see a higher percentage of deliberative talk on non-political pages when political issues come up since they are not based on the echo chambers of political camps. (Hypothesis 1)

In this regard, I would like to see to what degree presentation of different ideas are encouraged (explicitly) or tolerated (absence of discouragement). On Facebook, one might find formal discouragement in the form of deleting one's comment or banning someone altogether. There are also less formal tactics that might be employed such as using the discourse of outrage to demonize and discredit opposing opinions, constructing a political identity that would emphasize us/them or overwhelming use of emotional support that indirectly discourages diverse opposing opinions by creating the norms of behavior in a certain page. Consequently, my coding will be informed by these concerns as I will discuss below in the methodology section.

Following Dahlberg's three model typology of democratic communication Freelon proposes to evaluate political talk on the Internet on the following models: liberal individualist, communitarian and deliberative. (Freelon 2010) According to him; in the deliberative model, according to Freelon, indicative metric is composed of rational-critical argument, public issues focus, equality between participants, focus on the discussion topic, inter-ideological questioning and inter-ideological reciprocity. This category is heavily influenced by a Habermasian understanding of deliberation. Similarly, in their book *Outrage Industry* Jeffrey Berry and Sarah Sobieraj emphasize the negative consequences of the outraged discourses forming a barrier against potential deliberation.(Berry and Sobieraj 2013) In both of Freelon's and Berry and Sobieraj's arguments, most political talk on Facebook wouldn't be considered fitting to this deliberative model because of a lack of rational-critical argument and the exclusive focus on the discussion topic.

However, in those pages, we also occasionally see encouragement of the presentation of dissenting views and reciprocity even if the discussion is not always civil. Considering the argument I made earlier about a flexible operationalization of deliberative talk, I expect to find

some rowdy political talk in the Facebook conversations I analyze. There might be instances of incivility and outrage and yet the same uncivil and outraged comments might also encourage different political views in the conversation in the forms of deliberative political talk (Hypothesis 2).

Facebook Pages

Currently, Turkey ranks as the sixth country in terms of the number of Facebook users in the world. In 2012 Turkish Facebook users represent 90 % of the population who uses the Internet in Turkey.³ 2013 PEW Global Attitudes survey reports that 79% of Internet users are also active in Social Networking Sites.⁴ In Turkey, roughly 42% of the population uses the Internet (TÜİK 2010). Based on the statistics provided by TÜİK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu/Turkish Statistical Institute) an average Internet user in Turkey is more likely to be young (between 16 and 34), educated (high school graduate and above) and living in the urban areas of the country. Therefore the study of Facebook will also be reflecting these demographic characteristics. It is interesting that Turkey is ranking among the top countries whose Facebook users share political views or religious views. Based on PEW Global attitudes survey for 42%⁵ of the SNS users in Turkey, the share their views on religion and politics on these sites.

It is useful to briefly look at the top 50 most popular public Facebook pages to see some of the trends on Facebook. When most popular 50 public Facebook pages (see Table 1)⁶ followed by the users from Turkey are scrutinized a distinction can be seen between the overtly political pages and the rest of the pages. Here I use a relatively narrow definition of “political” that covers statesmen, state institutions or concepts/institutions heavily regulated by the state. Among these 50 Facebook pages, the category of overtly political refers to the pages that focus on religion, military or political persona/parties. The seemingly non-political ones include entertainment,

music and sports. The pages that can be considered overtly political are Atatürk, Hz. Muhammed, Mehmetçik, Namaz, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri.⁷

a) Overtly Political Pages

Overtly political groups analyzed in this paper refer to Mehmetçik (support page for soldiers/ army), Namaz (praying), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (prime minister), and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (main opposition party leader). As I will discuss further below, in those pages the political discussions are acceptable only if the person in question believes in the same things the group stands for. In Mehmetçik, anti-militarist comments or comments that criticize Turkish nationalism would not be welcomed; in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan or Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's pages criticism of the party lines would be considered treacherous. These pages reflect the political polarization in Turkey quite well.

b) Entertainment

Entertainment category, broadly construed, is the most common category in the top 50 which is not necessarily surprising considering the fact that Facebook is used mainly for communication and entertainment purposes. On the days I collected data, 21 pages in this category had some political discussion but overall there were very few instances and were mostly restricted to a few comments rather than full-fledged conversations (see Table 2 for the frequency of political comments). As I will discuss later this had a lot to do with the perceptions of users. In many cases, those pages are deemed inappropriate for political discussion.

c) Sports

Most popular top 3 Facebook pages are the pages of the most popular sports clubs in Turkey: Galatasaray, Fenerbahce and Besiktas.⁸ However, "the big three" in Turkey are not

known for their political positions like St Pauli of Hamburg known for its slogan “no more war, no more fascism.” Turkish teams’ rivalry is not akin to the one that used to be between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid under Franco in Spain when Real Madrid represented the authoritarian center and Barcelona represented socialist Catalonia.(Kuhn 2011)

There are different and multiple fan groups affiliated with big teams like Galatasaray, Fenerbahce and Besiktas. Overall political profile of the supporters of these teams is quite diverse for these most popular and most commercialized teams. During the Gezi protests some of the fan clubs of these three major teams became quite visible. Some of the supporters participated the protests with their team jerseys, which emphasized their fan identity as well as that identity’s presence in those events. However, this does not mean that supporters of these teams as a whole are situated at one side of the political spectrum.

Debates over the protests in the stadiums are cases in point to underline this political diversity. Some of the soccer fans continued their protest in the soccer games of these three clubs by chanting “Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance” at the 34th minute of the games during the international matches as well as the first part of the national league in fall 2013. Çarşı fan group was the main organizer of protests among Besiktas fans⁹ which led to the establishment of a pro-government Besiktas fan group, 1453 Eagles, and clashes during the games. GençFenerbahçeliler, the fan group that supported and participated Gezi protests, also had some backlash during their protests in the stadiums. Similarly, in Galatasaray matches the West and Southeast tribunes chanted pro-Gezi slogans which caused a reaction from another fan group UltrAslan. These tensions indicate the political diversity of the fans of these sports clubs.

UltrAslan¹⁰ is a fan group of Galatasaray established in 2001 in order to unify different small fan groups of Galatasaray. In line with the general trend of ultra movement, they also

declare that they are against further commercialization of soccer. Unlike the previous sport pages I discussed, this is the only fan group page that made it to the most popular top 50. There were also soccer fans who joined Gezi protests under the Ultraslan flag with Galatasaray jerseys but Ultraslan itself made a public declaration that they remain unaffiliated to any political position while respecting the diversity of political positions among its members. In some cases they were actively against the pro-Gezi protests in the stadiums. Considering these points, I also expect the members of the Facebook page reflect different political positions and ideologies.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

I collected Facebook comments between September-December 2012 by selecting five random days. (6 September, 17 October, 1 November, 20 November and 26 December) I located the posts made on these dates and downloaded all the comments made on these posts allowing for a week lag so that I did not cut an ongoing conversation. I downloaded 430 posts in total. The number of posts per page in a given day may vary between 0-21. There are 44 active pages in the top 50 list as indicated in Table 1. Among these 44 pages, 29 of them posted at least once in one of the five days selected. Most of the comments are made within the first two days but in some occasions the conversations continued for a couple more days. These dates did not coincide with a national holiday or a major prescheduled political event. However, this does not mean that there weren't any major political events that might trigger political conversation.

On September the 6th, for example, a military armory exploded killing soldiers. On November 1, a hot debate on the news was the hunger strike of some of the Kurdish prisoners. These instances and their influence on Facebook discussions also reflect fast-moving political agenda on the news in Turkey, and helps us capture the “ordinary”(Yumul and Özkirimli 2000). In this sense it is more useful to use random date selection strategy rather than trying to focus on either politically loaded days or trying to avoid all major political events.

The selection of the Facebook pages for data collection is based on the ranking provided by socialbakers (see appendix for further information and the full list). I focused on the top 50 most popular Facebook pages from Turkey based on their ranking in 29 August 2012. Based on

the content of the Facebook page (main motivation to like that particular page) I divided these pages into the categories of Entertainment, Sports, Overtly political pages.

The way comments are made on Facebook form nested data. Each comment is nested in a conversation and each conversation is nested in a post. Each post is nested in a public Facebook page and those pages are also nested in the categories I formed: entertainment, sports, overtly political. For coding this data, I took comments as the unit of analysis. I coded over 80.000 comments. The comments are coded if they are political. If they did not have a political content no further coding is done. Every comment is coded for each variable which means that one comment can be coded as civil, outraged, encouraging dissent and responding to someone all at the same time.

Reliability and replicability can be a serious concern in content analyses. Replicability means that different analysts can reproduce the same coding. A political science PhD student whose native language is Turkish helped me out to test this criterion. She coded a sample of 100 political comments and coded for all the variables. We reached 93% reliability score.

This paper employs a mixed methods approach. In order to demonstrate the relationships and general trends among and within the Facebook groups I make comment-level analysis and present post level percentages of variables. I also used logistic regression to tease out the effects of variables on deliberative talk. In the quantitative section, the unit of analysis is the comment in order to show the relationship among the characteristics of a comment and how these characteristics differ among page types. In the qualitative section, on the other hand I would like to demonstrate the dynamics of conversations in order to highlight how we come across deliberative talk. This enables me to capture the way conversations are made and deliberative talk is produced, beyond the comment characteristics.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Outcome Variable: Deliberative Talk

This variable is a combination of two variables; deliberation status and response. The discussions I presented in the literature review emphasize reciprocity and engagement with different ideas as the most important features of deliberation. Deliberation status focuses on whether political talk is encouraged, whether inclusive wording such as “my friend, my sister/brother” is used, and whether a political point of view that is not supported by the page in general or the user in particular is encouraged to be presented. This measure focuses on presentation of a dissenting view, not necessarily ideological differences.

Response variable on the other hand indicates whether that specific comment is made explicitly in response to a comment made earlier by another user. In doing so I measure if the comment is engaging with another position in a meaningful manner. The absence of explicit discouragement will be the key in my analysis of deliberative talk.

As a result, deliberative talk is a dummy variable that measures deliberative talk as a comment made in response to someone and whether it is not explicitly discouraging the presentation of different ideas.

a) Deliberation Status

This variable measures the degree of encouragement of deliberative talk in a given political comment. The comments can be discouraging deliberative talk (coded as 1), neutral (coded as 2) or encouraging deliberative talk (coded as 3.) I consider a comment encouraging if the words like brother, sister, friend, fellow user/fan is used to facilitate conversation. It would

also be encouraging if people are supported to discuss further or if an opposing ideological position is engaged with in an encouraging manner in response a comment made earlier. On the other hand, I consider negative content that alienates users from discussion, threats to ban someone or threats to leave the Facebook page as discouraging. This is important to distinguish deliberation and “echo chambers” as discussed in the literature.

b) Response

This is a dummy variable that indicates whether the comment is written specially in response to someone usually the user who wrote a comment previously in the same post.

Reciprocity is defined as one of the key elements of deliberation as discussed by many scholars including Freelon (2010).

Co-Variates

a) Civility

It takes the form of insulting or verbal fighting which affects the way the norms and the tone of conversation is established in conversations. It is coded as a dichotomous variable: 0 indicates incivility, 1 indicates civil talk. Most of the scholars studying deliberation and political talk consider civility a necessary condition but depending on the context uncivil language might also be used to encourage deliberative talk.

b) Us/Them Distinctions

In-group solidarity is an important element in trying to understand the nature of conversations on Facebook pages. Political homogeneity in groups are considered to be a disadvantage for deliberation and yet the perception of sharing a common ground might be a motivation for encouraging deliberative talk.

There are two types of us /them distinctions. These distinctions might refer to an out-group (that is a group which is not part of the specific Facebook group in question.) It could also refer to an in-group pointing out the differences among the members of the Facebook group. The former is coded as 2 and the latter is coded as 1. The absence of any us/them distinction is coded as 0.

c) Outrage

Outrage is tied to the negative emotional responses that work against the ideal conditions of deliberative talk, which is usually attributed to a rational (i.e. not emotional) position as I discussed in the literature review. Outrage is defined as a “form of political discourse involving efforts to provoke visceral responses (e.g. anger, righteousness, fear, moral indignation) from the audience through the use of overgeneralizations, sensationalism, misleading or patently inaccurate information, ad hominem attacks and partial truths about opponents, who may be individuals, organizations or entire communities of interest (e.g. progressives or conservatives) or circumstance (e.g. immigrants).” (Sobieraj and Berry. 2011) In this study presence of outrage is coded as 1 and its absence is coded as 0.

d) Strong Emotional Support

It is a dummy variable that indicates whether the comment contains a strong emotional support to the main line of the argument made in the initial post or strong emotional support to the political position taken by the group. The threshold for this variable is quite high but the presence of users who show absolute emotional devotion to a certain position would discourage critical talk. (i.e. “You are the sun to me!”)

e) Criticism of the Facebook Page Administrator

This is a dummy variable coded for whether there is a direct criticism to the admin of the Facebook group for a certain post.

f) Rowdiness

This is a dummy variable that combines two variables I mentioned above: civility and outrage. The position I criticized in the literature review suggests that deliberative talk should not have the characteristics of outrage or incivility. Consequently, this variable combines the cases where there is incivility or outrage in a given comment. (no collinearity between variables) Since civility and absence of outrage are considered to be the tenants of rational-critical deemed necessary for the Habermasian understanding of deliberation, it is important to scrutinize how deliberative talk fare in relation to rowdiness.

Descriptive Analyses

Among the comments coded in this study roughly 10% is political. (see table 4) In the case of these political comments 84% were civil. Furthermore, 4% of the political comments is a comment of outrage, 2% contained strong emotional support for the Facebook group. 3% of the comments were explicitly encouraging and 6% were directly discouraging deliberative talk. Discouraging comments are twice the number of encouraging comments so in general one would come across discouragement of deliberative talk more frequently.

The table below shows the distribution of the characteristics of political comments among the Facebook page types. More than half the comments analyzed here are made on the entertainment pages yet those pages did not host many political comments. Sports pages on the other hand rank the second both in terms of the volume of comments in general and the proportion of political comments (6%.) Not surprisingly there are more political comments on

overtly political pages (57%) but not all comments made on the overtly political pages are political.

Table 4. Facebook Page Type Characteristics in Comment Numbers

	Entertainment	Sports	Political	Total
Political				
no	40.026 (98%)	25.765(93%)	4525 (43%)	70316 (89%)
yes	924(2%)	1793(7%)	6111(57%)	8828(11%)
Deliberation status				
discouraging	99(11%)	143(8%)	288(5%)	530(6%)
neutral	793(86%)	1517(85%)	5699(93%)	8009(91%)
encouraging	30(3%)	131(7%)	128(2%)	289(3%)
Outrage				
no	583(63%)	1022(57%)	3864(63%)	5469(62%)
yes	341(37%)	771(43%)	2247(37%)	3359(38%)
Civil				
no	120(13%)	141(8%)	1143(19%)	1404(16%)
yes	802(87%)	1652(92%)	4971(81%)	7425(84%)
Us/them				
none	777(84%)	1509(84%)	4773(78%)	7059(80%)
ingroup	45(5%)	134(7%)	1099(18%)	1278(14%)
outgroup	100(11%)	153(9%)	238(4%)	491(6%)
Strong emotional support				
no	888(96%)	1782 (99%)	4470(73%)	7140 (81%)
yes	36(4%)	13 (1%)	1639(27%)	1688 (19%)
Response to Someone				
no	722(78%)	1299(72%)	5278(86%)	7299(83%)
yes	202(22%)	495(28%)	833(14%)	1530 (17%)
Criticism of Page Admin				
no	871(94%)	1494(83%)	5975(98%)	8340(94%)
yes	53(6)	299(17%)	136 (2%)	488(6%)
Deliberative Talk				
No	774(84%)	1410(79%)	5492(90%)	7675(87%)
Yes	150(16%)	383(21%)	620(10%)	1153(13%)
Rowdy				
No	560(61%)	1010(56%)	3668(60%)	5238(59%)
Yes	364 (39%)	783(44%)	2447(40%)	3594(41%)

Highest percentage of deliberative talk is in sports pages with 21%. Entertainment pages follow sports pages (16%) and deliberative talk goes down to 10% on overtly political pages.

Reciprocity is also one of the key characteristics of deliberative talk. The table also suggest that

responsiveness is highest in sports pages (28%) while overtly political pages have the lowest percentage of responsiveness, half of what we see on sports pages (14%). Entertainment pages on the other hand are positioned somewhere in between with 22%.

Rowdiness on the other hand is quite a common feature among the Facebook types but sports pages still lead the page types with 44%. Strong emotional support for the page in the political comments is almost an exclusive characteristic of the overtly political pages. This might indirectly work against deliberation which I will discuss in the qualitative section.

Posts

Since the comments I analyze are also nested in the posts it is useful to look at how these characteristics are distributed as percentages at the post level. Table below demonstrates this distribution by including the posts with more than 25 political comments as an indication of a meaningful length of a conversation. With this threshold I have 58 posts (10 entertainment, 8 sports, and 40 political). This table confirms the same overall trend observed in the comment analyses.

Table 5. Posts with Significant Number of Political Comments with 25 Political Comments Threshold

type	Average # political comments	%encouraging	%rowdy	%response	%criticism(admin)
Entertainment Average	72	4	35	20	4
Political Page Average	147	2	30	14	3
Sports Page Average	203	8	45	28	4

The averages at the post level also confirm the point I made earlier. Average percent of explicit encouragement of different perspectives is highest on the sports pages with 8% compared to the 2% on overtly political pages and 4% on entertainment pages. On average,

rowdiness is somewhat common on all the page types even if the sports pages host the highest percentage of rowdy comments.

The table above also suggests that the percentage of responsiveness on average is the highest in sports pages. People on sports pages responded to each other twice as much compared to overtly political pages. These findings suggest that we might find more deliberative talk on sports pages once a political conversation starts.

Rowdy Deliberative Talk

Depending on the context, incivility and even a discourse of outrage might go hand in hand with deliberative talk. In order to demonstrate this point I combined the variables of civility and outrage and called it rowdy. Below table demonstrates cross tabulation of rowdy with deliberation status as well as deliberative talk.

Table 6. Rowdy Deliberative Talk

Deliberation Status	Sports		Entertainment		Political	
	Rowdy	Non-rowdy	Rowdy	Non-rowdy	Rowdy	Non-rowdy
Discouraging	120 (84%)	23 (16%)	85 (86%)	14 (14%)	238(83%)	50(17%)
Neutral	623 (41%)	894 (59%)	277 (35%)	516 (65%)	2177 (38%)	3514(62%)
Encouraging	38 (29%)	93 (71%)	2 (7%)	28 (93%)	27(21%)	101(79%)
Deliberative Talk						
no	615 (44%)	795(56%)	312(40%)	462(60%)	2200(40%)	3292 (60%)
yes	168 (44%)	215 (56%)	52(35%)	98(65%)	243(39%)	377(61%)
Total	781 (44%)	1010 (56%)	364(39%)	558 (61%)	2442 (40%)	3665(60%)

Table above suggests that there are quite a few instances where we see rowdy political talk combined with the encouragement of deliberative status. Also, the fact that a comment is rowdy does not automatically discourage deliberative talk. In majority of the cases those rowdy comments were neutral in terms of deliberation status. There is also an interesting difference between the sports pages and the overtly political pages. While 5 % of the comments on sports

pages were instances of rowdy talk that explicitly encouraged deliberation, only 1% of the comments in the overly political pages fell into this category.

Furthermore, logistic regression results suggest that holding other variables constant rowdiness does not have a significant negative effect on deliberative talk on sports pages while it continues to have some effect on entertainment and political pages.

Table 7. Logistic Regression

Deliberative Talk	For all groups	Entertainment	Sports	Political
rowdy	-.40*** (.07)	-.68** (0.22)	-.24 (.13)	-.42*** (.10)
emotional support	-1.73*** (.15)	-2.05* (1.02)	-.55 (.77)	-1.78*** (.16)
Us/them				
in-group	0.07 (.10)	.94* (.38)	.46* (.21)	-.11 (.13)
out-group	1.07*** (.11)	1.19*** (.29)	1.17*** (.19)	.98*** (.17)
criticism	-.35** (.13)	-.52 (.44)	-.33 (.16)	-.42 (.29)
page type				
sports	.38*** (.10)			
political	-.23* (.10)			
constant	-1.57*** (.09)	-1.52*** (.11)	-1.30*** (.07)	-1.75*** (.05)
Observations	8828	922	1791	6105

Legend: * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Coefficients are presented above with standard errors in parentheses.

[I ran lrtest to test the fitness of the model. The additive model with all the variables I have (new deliberation variable, rowdiness, emotional support, usthem and criticism) was the best fit. Moreover, there weren't any significant interaction effects between the co-variates.]

In the general model, holding other variables constant rowdiness and strong emotional support have a negative association with deliberative talk. Compared to the entertainment pages,

sport pages look like a more likely ground for deliberative talk. Overtly political pages on the other hand are less likely to host deliberative talk compared to the entertainment pages. If I change the reference group to overtly political pages, both entertainment and sports pages are shown to be more likely to host deliberative talk compared to political pages.

When I calculate the odds ratios based on the above table, the odds ratio of deliberative talk is 3 to 1 if there is out-group us/them distinction compared to making no us/them distinctions. Strong emotional support on the other hand decreases the probability of deliberative talk considerably. The probability of deliberative talk is 0.17.

Most important finding for the comparison of logistic regression results for different page types (demonstrated in the last three columns of the above table) is related to rowdiness. As I have suggested in the above paragraphs that in general rowdiness seem to have a negative association with deliberative talk. However that association becomes insignificant in the sports pages. This confirms my second hypothesis. Rowdiness might not discourage deliberative talk depending on the groups contexts.

Table 8. Predicted Probability of Deliberative Talk by Page Group

	Margins	Standard Errors	
Entertainment	.13***	.010	
Sports	.18***	.008	
Political	.11***	.004	

Table above shows the predicted probability of a comment to be deliberative. The probability is highest for the sports pages while it is the lowest for the overtly political pages. Hypothesis 1 suggested that we are more likely to see deliberative talk in non-political settings because the basis of the group would not be political so there would not be an incentive to create “echo chambers.” Hypothesis 1 is confirmed: We are more likely to find deliberative talk in

non-political settings, especially sports. However, it is somewhat partially confirmed because the predicted probability of a comment to be encouraging deliberative political talk on entertainment pages is not very different from the overtly political pages. As I discussed in the qualitative section, the difference between the sports and entertainment pages lies in the degree to which politics is considered to be an appropriate topic for conversation.

If the group identity is not based on politics and political talk is not looked down upon, we are more likely to see deliberative talk compared to overtly political pages. This is the case with sports pages.

In conclusion, based on the results of descriptive analysis and the logistic regression results there is support for two of the hypotheses presented in the conceptual framework. If there is a group identity that is not based on politics (as in the case of sports pages) and political talk is not deemed inappropriate we are more likely to see deliberative talk. This likelihood is demonstrated in relation to overtly political pages (where the basis of the page is political) as well as the entertainment pages (the page is not based on a political position but political talk is not particularly encouraged)

Moreover, contrary to the expectations of the rational critical model of deliberative talk, incivility and discourse of outrage do not necessarily preclude deliberative talk. It depends on the norms of talking (or in this case commenting) on a given setting. As in the case of sports pages one can find rowdy deliberative talk. Discourse of outrage and incivility as characteristics of comments do not have a significant relationship with the comments that encourage presentation of different ideas not represented by the main line in the group or not supported by one's own views. Rowdiness is not necessarily against the norms of talk set by the users in these sports pages, consequently we see rowdy deliberative talk on sports pages.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This part of the paper takes a conversation analysis approach. It approaches the data as a collaborative construction of conversation that is naturally taking place. (Heritage and Greatbatch 1986; Krippendorff 2012) The texts do not have a single meaning but are subjected to numerous perspectives, which are shaped through the conversation itself. In this respect the norms of the Facebook page, the norms attributed to the topic in that specific Facebook page as well as how the comments are embedded in conversations matter. However, this paper does not focus on the audience reception but rather focuses on the characteristics of conversations which are “context shaped and context renewing.” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990) The conversations in the Facebook pages determine and reflect the norms of talk on these pages and as I will demonstrate below there are mechanisms of compliance with those norms while being simultaneously challenged and negotiated.

When and How Appropriate it is to Talk about Politics

As Eliasoph indicates, political conversations are shaped/ governed by the people following certain etiquettes which “implicitly [take] into account a relationship to the wider world: politeness, beliefs, and power intertwine in practice, through this sense of civility.” As I argue in the conceptual framework, what would be considered incivility or outrage might be part of a proper/ acceptable etiquette in some contexts. Soccer fans are for example notorious for the use of uncivil language especially when chanting in the stadiums.¹¹ On Facebook it would still be acceptable to use somewhat uncivil language especially when talking about the

other teams. I have demonstrated in the quantitative analysis section that on soccer pages incivility does not correlate with a lack of deliberating talk.

There are mixed feelings among the Facebook users on sports pages about the appropriateness of political talk but discussions continued even when some users indicated that they did not find it appropriate.

“Don’t be a partisan on a soccer page. This is the page of Galatasaray. If you want to do politics go to the page of CHP, go to the page of AKP, go to the page of MHP. You are making foolish comments. You will accuse the prime minister even when you slide and fall. [even when it is just an accident] It is enough to make a saint swear. Be reasonable!”¹²

Here the soccer club’s page is not seen as an appropriate place to comment on politics. Still, despite this comment some of the users continued to discuss politics on the same post and they did not suffer any retribution. This might have a signaling effect on other users. Continued political discussion even in the presence of such a criticism would indicate that a lot of people don’t agree with that comment and it is ok to talk politics on that specific page.

An example from Entertainment pages also demonstrates instances where a page’s administrator can also start a political conversation and yet most of the users might choose to ignore the political content. On October 17, an entertainment page that specialize on jokes, funny photos and videos post a joke with the title of “if oil/gas prices go up like this...”. The post was a picture of an empty highway where there are two silhouettes over looking the picture: a man and a girl. The man tells the child “years ago when oil prices were below 10 TL there used be cars going down this road.” This triggers some political conversation about price increases, corruption, economic policies and apathy of the citizens to take action. After some political

comments (22) the conversation on the post turned into quotidian greetings and chat among the users.

These examples illustrate an overall trend I observed in the conversations I analyzed. Most of the users consider entertainment pages as inappropriate venues to discuss politics. Political conversations might not be picked up or in some cases just declared to be inappropriate. However, in sports pages there were mixed feelings and mixed practices. When a political issue is brought up in most of the instances I analyzed people would respond (though not always). Especially when the issue is a contentious and sensitive one, some users would also voice their concerns that the sports pages are not the place to do partisan politics. However, even when there were such interventions conversations continued in a heated fashion, which indicates an openness to discuss politics.

Us/Them Distinctions and Inter-Ideological Conversations

There are different types of in-group us/them distinctions. In the first type the in-group distinction might be made in order to maintain the group unity. “This is how we are.” On the other hand, in-group us/them distinctions might also be made by highlighting the differences among the members of the in-group. The way these distinctions are used also give us clues about the nature of inter-ideological conversations.

In certain instances of boundary drawing, “us” could refer to a within group differences. It might mean Turkish Galatasaray fans versus Kurdish Galatasaray fans or pro-AKP Galatasaray fans vs anti-AKP Galatasaray fans. Again in reference to armory explosion and the claims that PKK might be the culprit, discussions about the meaning of being Turkish and Kurdish arose.¹³ This outburst was followed by further discussions about the “Kurdish issue” as a side conversation while people just cut the conversation to announce their condolences for the

families of the soldiers who died in the explosion. This highly controversial conversation did not lead to threats of banning from the page even if the tone of the conversation remained to reflect heightened emotional responses and outrage.

In-group solidarity might also be invoked to appease what is perceived to be polarizing discourses and encourage deliberative talk:

“Why the word Tanrı is bothering you friends? When you say Allah does anyone put pressure on you to not use Allah. Not everybody has to think the way you do??”¹⁴

In a similar fashion who “we” are as Galatasay fans or as Turkish citizens can be invoked to overcome the ongoing discussion threaten the solidarity of the group:

“Well, brother, there are non-Muslims among the martyrs as well and they use Tanrı, why are you such bone heads, ok we say Allah but they say Tanrı, we are all talking about the same creator.”¹⁵

Intra-ideological conversations on the other hand might show themselves on overtly political pages. On the page of Mehmetcik, one can observe a very frequent usage of “kardesim”(brother/sister) especially in nonpolitical posts. Common denominator in this page is the experience with the mandatory military service: these are either people who have done or are currently doing their military service or have relatives who are conscripted. The overall tone of the talks is very strongly Turkish nationalist and the most common outside group (which is usually mentioned with a discourse of outrage) is the Kurdish separationist group of PKK. In one of the conversation threads on September 6, people discuss their opinions of nationalist policies of the two right wing parties, MHP and AKP:

Mhp Mhp that is all you mention. We have seen both MHP and AKP. Martyr after martyrs. Without discovering the real truth you took over all the police and the military. If you are the sultan, come on hang apo! [leader of PKK who is currently in prison]¹⁶

However, even intra-ideological conversations might be deemed inappropriate in overtly political pages and comments can be deleted:

“You know very well how to delete the comments you don’t like. I didn’t hold the opposition party responsible for what has happened. This is not something you can mention and pass with a couple of words. If needed, you will take the millions who voted for you to the streets. CHP is not the place to laze around.”¹⁷

This is an indication of a comment deleted before, on the grounds of its intra-ideological content even if it was not a direct attack on the party in question. As can be seen in these examples, us/them distinctions are made in quite an intricate way. Both in-group and out-group references might be used to encourage inter-ideological conversations. Likewise they might be used to discourage such conversations as well. The way these distinctions are made might signify inter-ideological or intra-ideological stances and may indicate whether those positions are welcome in a given conversation.

Indirect Discouragement of Deliberative Talk

Indirect discouragement might take the form of strong emotional support especially in overtly political pages. One example is the conversations that take place in Prime Minister’s page. On November 1st there were two posts about Prime Minister’s meeting with the Turkish president and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. There were no visible criticisms but the comments were marked by euphoria and strong emotional support to the Prime Minister. Comment after comment users were writing about their veneration of the persona of Erdoğan. It seems that the norm on this page is set so that even if somebody wants to ask for a certain favorable policy they frame it after glorifying Erdoğan. In such cases where there is such a strong support and in-group solidarity, even intra-ideological questioning does not exist.

Example of a strong emotional support would be:

“Look at the divine light on their faces, my friends. Their faces shine not like the moon but like the sun in August.” [indicating that it burns very brightly as a sign of divinity]

Consequently, even if there is some ideological fragmentation on the overtly political pages it is mostly in the form of intra-ideological questioning. In some cases even this intra-ideological questioning might be discouraged by the dominance of strong emotional support for the ideological line or the party leader. There is not much room for inter-ideological conversations.

Rowdy Deliberation on Sports Pages

In my discussion of us/them distinctions I already suggested how group identity might be deployed for deliberative talk. In one of the instances I mentioned above a user refer to his fellow fans as “brother/sister” and “bone heads” at the same time because they made us/them distinctions earlier in such a way as to discourage a certain political position.

“Well, brother, there are non-Muslims among the martyrs as well and they use Tanrı, why are you such bone heads, ok we say Allah but they say Tanrı, we are all talking about the same creator.”

This is one of the examples of how rowdiness could be part of deliberative talk that encourages inter-ideological dialogue and engages with different political positions.

These types of comments especially come up when uncivil and/or outraged discourse threaten the perceived unity of the group. On Besiktas’s page, as a response to the heated discussions about who to blame for the explosion in the military armory when a user called another one stupid [which might have silenced that user] another fan responds:

“Don’t do this my friends. We all are suffering. Don’t do this. How many sacrifices should be made for us to wake up, this is not the place. 25 lives. Our brothers are gone, our heroes are gone, don’t do this.”

In the same conversation, there were also instances of a discourse of outrage that started a parallel conversation about what the fans themselves can do about the situation:

“What can Besiktas do for the martyr, in other words what can we do, can you tell me? Just condolences and condemnation, I am sick and tired of hearing these two words. We no longer have a heroic Turkey but a helpless Turkey.”

Similar conversations occurred in Galatasaray’s and Fenerbahce’s pages as well. For example, on Fenerbahce’s page, in one of the instances some people were discussing the organization of a symbolic march for the dead soldiers. Some others were blaming the government oversight when a user made the following comment: “God willing, this nation will wake up [from ignorance]” which received a skeptical and yet positively engaging response:

“You wish my brother/sister! You [keep] wish[ing] as long as this government stays in power!”

This is a clear case of outrage in the form of overgeneralization and reflection of anger and yet this comment was used in an engaging manner which contributed to the encouragement of deliberative talk.

In conclusion, in this section I tried to show the complexity of discursive boundaries established, maintained and reproduced on the Facebook pages. Depending on the context and the norms of acceptable behavior on a Facebook page discourse of outrage, incivility and us/them distinctions might be used for the encouragement of deliberative talk. Breaking news, as a contextual characteristic is important to consider when political talk in non-political platforms are analyzed and yet the presence of breaking news does not guarantee political talk. (see appendix) In general, entertainment pages are not considered to be appropriate venues for political discussion while the presence of political talk on sports pages is a controversial topic.

The difference between these two attitudes, on the other hand, help us understand why we are more likely to see deliberative talk on sports pages but not on entertainment pages as I discussed in the quantitative analysis section. If political talk is seen as inappropriate (as in the case of Entertainment pages) then deliberative talk as a form of political talk would not be encouraged either.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: CLUB MODEL AND FACEBOOK PAGES

Scholars who study deliberative democracy put a lot of emphasis on the importance of political talk. The way people talk about politics shape and reflect how they think about politics as well as how they practice politics. Talking politics is also a discursive act, which is closely tied to the discussions of political engagement. There is, however, an important concern when it comes to the analysis of political talk that people talk about politics with like-minded individuals creating echo chambers, the boundaries of which is heavily guarded by group dynamics. Since deliberative talk occurs quite rarely, do we expect to see it diminish further as a result of echo chambers?

Maybe not. I argue that we can analyze the way political talk takes place on Facebook pages like a club model. Influential insiders shape the conversation and create/enforce the norm of conduct through their practices. Moreover, just like different types of clubs, they are also quite different in how they accept outsiders to become insiders. Surprisingly, from the perspective of political talk, the pages that actually are related to real clubs (sports clubs pages) are the ones that seem to be the most inclusive.

The term club model is used in the international relations literature in reference to how international organizations work.(Keohane and Nye Jr 2002) In some cases, international organizations work as a club of negotiators. In such club-like organizations a group of very influential actors come together and negotiate the rules of the game. For example, in the second half of the 20th century, “issue areas” start to emerge within the international organizations. While some of them are open to all, some others require certain accreditation qualities, which are

determined by the members who are already in the club. Vertically, in these latter types of issue areas the interaction is concentrated within the club even if that club is part of a larger organization. This has a horizontal effect as well. Even in the national domestic politics of the members of the organization, the club carries a lot of weight on the specific area because the decision the club makes is presented to the citizenry as a *fait accompli*.

The Facebook pages I discussed above work quite like the club model. These pages are open to public; they are open to all Facebook users. There are no formal rules that would turn them into clubs in the sense that participation is not subjected to predetermined criteria. However, if we look closely at the way interactions occur, the regulars of the page indeed turn them into clubs where those who do not comply with a certain criterion is heavily looked down upon and discouraged to participate in different ways.

As the scholars who support echo chambers argument suggest, deliberative talk is quite rare especially in overtly political pages. However, we can also find deliberative talk in non-political pages. Sports pages are more likely grounds of deliberative talk than the overtly political ones when political conversations are picked up. As I have discussed earlier sport pages do not represent a dominant political ideology. They are not affiliated with a certain political party. The discussions that occur on these sports pages reflect inter-ideological conversations much more than the overtly political pages. In contrast to the focus in the literature, the analysis suggest that we are more likely to find deliberative political talk in sports pages even if deliberative talk is rare to come by in general.

What type of deliberative talk we see is the next question. When we allow deliberative talk (that encourages, tolerates and engages with inter-ideological questioning) to reflect characteristics of outrage and incivility we see the cases of rowdy deliberative talk especially on

sports pages. That has a lot to do with the accepted norms of behavior on these pages. The tendency in the literature to insist on the criteria of civility and rationality in political discussions is an important constraint on the analysis of everyday life political talk because it disregards the possibilities and repertoires of speech acts in different everyday life contexts. As I have demonstrated in the previous sections we can also see rowdy deliberative talk that would include elements of incivility and outrage and yet would still encourage inter-ideological questioning.

In other words, we are more likely to come across deliberative political talk on the pages that are not based on politics exclusively if political talk is seen appropriate to be held. In the cases I analyzed sports pages fit the bill unlike the entertainment pages. Due to the nature of talk on those pages we are also more likely to see rowdy deliberative talk, which makes inter-ideological questioning possible unlike the overtly political pages. I emphasized the importance of context throughout this paper. Considering the fact that the perception of Turkish political scene is quite polarized, I would expect to see deliberative talk in different political contexts as well.

Nevertheless, there are certain limitations to this study. Due to privacy concerns I could not gather data on the Newsfeed flows which might give us clues about the nature of political talk a user is exposed to in her own Facebook circle (Facebook friends.) If we were able to monitor Facebook Newsfeed activities we could have also seen which posts a user choose to respond to. That exposure/ response dynamic as well as the type of posts the user herself creates could also provide an additional context of political talk, which goes in parallel to the political talk on public pages.

In addition to scrutinizing the parallel political talk between public pages and private circles, it would be also interesting to see the overall distribution of political talk over a long

period of time. Under which conditions political talk starts in non-political settings? In doing so, scholars can analyze what sorts of topics trigger political talk and how the tone of political talk differs in relation to the topics of discussion. In this paper I captured a fragment of political talk in relation to unfolding events. I demonstrated that we see deliberative political talk in non-political venues. The type of deliberative talk may differ in different Facebook pages based on the norms set by the group following a club model type of dynamic. Still the question remains to be explored as to what type of deliberative talk is more likely to occur in relation to group solidarity and the political topic.

In this paper I also did not make any claims about the degree of solidarity in these pages. Is there a difference between the strength of solidarity found in sports pages vis-a-vis entertainment pages? Does it affect the acceptability of political talk? If there is a strong group identity that is not based on politics (as in the case of sports pages) we might be more likely to see deliberative talk. Perhaps in-group solidarity is not as strong on entertainment pages compared to the fandom of sports clubs. What also remains to be seen is how deliberative political talk fares when there is no strong group identity and the basis of the page is political. Unfortunately my data did not provide such a case to be analyzed.

My findings also have some practical implications for deliberation. In order to capitalize on the potential of deliberative talk as an important component of strengthening democratic culture and practices, we need to pay more attention to non-political venues. This includes paying attention to different features of potentially deliberative talk, inter and intra-ideological discussions as well as the contextual dynamics. Finally the approach I take here would help illuminate the mechanisms through which people talk about politics.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Top 50 Facebook Pages in Turkey

Rank	Likes	Name	category	description
1	7,601,828	Galatasaray	sports	sports club (soccer)
2	6,118,335	Fenerbahçe	sports	sports club (soccer)
3	3,754,130	Beşiktaş	sports	sport club (soccer)
4	3,649,846	Okey	entertainment	game
5	3,734,061	Emre Aydın	music	singer
6	3,691,187	Cem Yılmaz	entertainment	comedian
7	3,529,068	Atatürk	politics	first president of the Republic of Turkey
8	2,925,498	MaNga	music	music band
9	2,850,958	Her Gün 1 Yeni Bilgi	entertainment	trivia
10	2,945,796	Hz. Muhammed	religion	prophet [Islam]
11	2,644,632	Çok Güzel Hareketler Bunlar	entertainment	comedy show
12	2,676,736	Mehmetçik	politics	support for soldiers/army
13	2,478,458	İzlesene.com	entertainment	TV series & movies
14	2,490,798	Alex de Souza	sports	soccer player
15	2,280,106	Beyazıt Öztürk	entertainment	comedian
16	2,359,640	Sıla	music	singer
17	2,291,366	Edebiyat kulübü	literature	literature club-daily quotations
18	2,500,669	Dr.Mehmet Oz	health	doctor
19	2,048,888	Arda Turan	sports	soccer player
20	2,304,901	Aşk Tesadüfleri Sever	entertainment	movie
21	2,054,668	Volkan Konak	music	singer
22	1,968,676	Namaz	religion	praying
23	1,904,668	Avea	commercial	mobile operator
24	1,825,439	Engelliler için Elele	campaign	campaign to support the disabled
25	1,876,392	Kurtlar Vadisi	entertainment	TV series
26	1,831,495	Felsefe Kulübü	philosophy	philosophy club-daily quotations
27	1,779,799	Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu	entertainment	TV Series
28	1,678,671	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	politics	Prime Minister
29	2,155,897	Beren Saat	entertainment	actress
30	1,540,613	Müzik Keyfi	music	music
31	1,594,920	Teoman	music	singer
32	1,517,810	Can Yücel	literature	poet
33	1,439,962	Zapkolik	entertainment	TV series & movies
34	1,482,549	Mynet Çanak Okey	entertainment	game

35	1,577,958	Pis Yedili	entertainment	TV show
36	2,042,516	Turkcell	commercial	mobile operator
37	1,375,598	Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu	politics	leader of the main opposition party-CHP
38	1,348,358	komik ve ilginç videolar	entertainment	funny videos
39	1,547,776	Tuba Büyüküstün	entertainment	actress
40	1,369,353	ultraaslan	sports	soccer fan club
41	1,266,516	Komedi Dükkanı	entertainment	comedy show
42	1,263,559	Çikolata	food	chocolate
43	1,338,578	Ersin Korkut	entertainment	comedian
44	1,504,988	Nokia Türkiye	commercial	mobile phone company
45	1,457,472	hacı kop devir kopma devri	entertainment	funny videos
46	0	Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri	politics	Turkish army
47	1,269,490	Gripin	music	music band
48	1,648,590	Volkswagen Türkiye	commercial	automobile company
49	1,256,436	Halil Sezai	music	singer
50	1,264,754	Gökhan Türkmen	music	Singer

Source: <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-pages/turkey/> (ranking 29 August 2012, number of likes 20 November 2012)

The page ranking 18 on the list will not be considered in the analysis because the page is categorized from Turkey due to the ethnicity of the person but it is closely related to an American TV show on health. It is followed by some Turkish users as well but they are much fewer than the total number of users who liked the page so the page wouldn't be in top 50. Beyazıt Oztürk's page (ranked 15), Beren Saat's page (ranked 29), and Çikolata (ranked 42) do not post and Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (ranked 46) no longer exists. Kurtlar Vadisi (ranked 25) is a popular TV show and Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu (ranked 27) is a sequel. These two pages are merged on Facebook so the total number of pages is dropped down to 44.

Table 2. Pages and the Frequency of Political Comments

page	political		Total
	no	yes	
CemYilmaz-Dec26	52	0	52
ArdaTuran-Dec26	139	0	139
ArdaTuran-Nov20	382	0	382
ArdaTuran-Sep6	155	0	155
Besiktas-Dec26	348	7	355
Besiktas-Nov1	195	0	195
Besiktas-Nov20	244	2	246
Besiktas-Oct17	415	0	415
Besiktas-Sep6	370	88	458
CGHB-Dec26	36	0	36
CGHB-Nov1	94	0	94
CGHB-Nov20	55	0	55
CGHB-Oct17	76	0	76
CanYucel-Sep6	45	0	45
CanakOkey-Dec26	175	0	175
CanakOkey-Oct17	57	0	57
Edebiyat-Dec26	849	0	849
Edebiyat-Nov1	1,517	6	1,523
Edebiyat-Nov20	1,118	16	1,134
Edebiyat-Oct17	1,217	10	1,227
Edebiyat-Sep6	427	194	621
EmreAydin-Sep6	11	65	76
Felsefe-Dec26	355	10	365
Felsefe-Nov20	379	5	384
Felsefe-Oct17	398	45	443
Felsefe-Sep6	180	77	257
Fenerbahce-Dec26	1,274	2	1,276
Fenerbahce-Nov1	717	4	721
Fenerbahce-Nov20	1,115	3	1,118
Fenerbahce-Oct17	422	0	422
Fenerbahce-Sep6	1,502	306	1,808
Galatasaray- Oct17	2,670	55	2,725
Galatasaray-Dec26	4,107	2	4,109
Galatasaray-Nov1	2,354	20	2,374
Galatasaray-Nov20	4,508	45	4,553
Galatasaray-Sep6	3,390	1,145	4,535
GokhanTurkmen-Dec26	34	0	34
GokhanTurkmen-Nov20	61	0	61

GokhanTurkmen-Oct17	16	1	17
Gripin-Dec26	24	0	24
Gripin-Nov1	27	0	27
Hacikop-Dec26	2,261	9	2,270
Hacikop-Nov1	7,347	158	7,505
Hacikop-Nov20	4,875	0	4,875
Hacikop-Oct17	8,708	46	8,754
Hacikop-Sep6	2,075	22	2,097
HalilSezai-Nov1	30	0	30
HalilSezai-Nov20	31	0	31
Izlesene-Dec26	702	0	702
Izlesene-Nov20	241	0	241
Izlesene-Oct17	40	0	40
Izlesene-Sep6	1,639	154	1,793
Kilicdaroglu-Dec26	8	106	114
Kilicdaroglu-Nov1	5	117	122
Kilicdaroglu-Nov20	7	247	254
Kilicdaroglu-Sep6	3	490	493
KurtlarVadisi-Dec26	236	4	240
KurtlarVadisi-Nov20	153	0	153
KurtlarVadisi-Sep6	206	0	206
Manga-Nov1	33	0	33
Manga-Nov20	14	0	14
Mehmetcik-Dec26	692	977	1,669
Mehmetcik-Nov20	2,392	1,672	4,064
Mehmetcik-Oct17	361	490	851
Mehmetcik-Sep6	703	885	1,588
Namaz-Dec26	20	0	20
Namaz-Nov1	36	0	36
Namaz-Nov20	73	25	98
Namaz-Oct17	109	137	246
Namaz-Sep6	66	14	80
Okey-Dec26	432	0	432
Okey-Nov1	302	0	302
Okey-Nov20	1,407	10	1,417
PisYedili-Dec26	675	0	675
PisYedili-Oct17	195	0	195
PisYedili-Sep6	137	0	137
RTE- Nov1	32	492	524
RTE-Dec26	8	65	73
RTE-Nov20	5	273	278

RTE-Oct17	5	121	126
Teoman-Dec26	15	1	16
Teoman-Nov20	43	0	43
Teoman-Sep6	35	0	35
TubaBuyukustun-Nov20	15	0	15
Ultraaslan-Nov1	45	0	45
Ultraaslan-Nov20	705	2	707
Ultraaslan-Oct17	394	0	394
Ultraaslan-Sep6	103	87	190
Ultraslan-Dec26	211	25	236
VolkanKonak-Nov1	47	0	47
VolkanKonak-Nov20	885	0	885
VolkanKonak-Oct17	25	0	25
Zapkolik-Nov20	12	0	12
Zapkolik-Sep6	7	91	98
Total	70,316	8,828	79,144

Table 3. Political Comments by Dates and Facebook Page Types

Date	Entertainment	Sports	Political	Total
December 26	24	36	1148	1208
November 20	31	52	2217	2300
November 1	164	24	609	797
October 17	102	55	748	905
September 6	603	1626	1389	3618
Total	924	1793	6111	8828

ENDNOTES

¹ Earlier versions of this paper has been presented in American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in New York (2013) and European Consortium for Political Research Meeting, Bordeaux, France (2013). I would like to thank UNC European Union Center of Excellence for the conference travel grant.

²“We have been sadly informed that as a result of an explosion in Afyonkarahisar, 25 of our soldiers became martyrs and 4 of our soldiers have been wounded. We ask mercy from God for the martyrs, wish quick recovery for the wounded.”

Afyonkarahisar'da meydana gelen patlamada, 25 askerimizin şehit olduğunu, 4 askerimizin de yaralandığını büyük üzüntüyle öğrenmiş bulunuyoruz. Şehitlerimize Tanrı'dan rahmet, yaralı asker ve sivil vatandaşımıza acil şifalar dilerken, şehit ailelerine başsağlığı ve sabır dileriz.

³ <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/turkey> [retrieved on 13 February 2014] (Turkey ranked seventh on October 4, 2012 according to same website)

⁴ <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/02/13/emerging-nations-embrace-internet-mobile-technology/>

⁵ <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/02/13/emerging-nations-embrace-internet-mobile-technology/>

⁶The ranking is taken from socialbakers which is a marketing company focusing on the social media analytics. It claims to track more than 10 million Facebook pages all over the world and is treated as a relatively credible source of social media trends.

⁷Not all pages make posts, they might be dormant so the pages I have data on and the complete list of top 50 are not the same. For further discussion, please see the data section of the quantitative analysis.

⁸Some of the most interesting discussions under study in this paper occurred in those pages in the form of rowdy deliberation. All three of the major teams I discuss here were established at the turn of the century (Besiktas 1903, Fenerbahce 1908 and Galatasaray 1905) in the Ottoman Empire. In the Early Republican period soccer was an elite sport. Galatasaray and Besiktas started as gymnastic clubs and the former was restricted to the students and the alumni of Galatasaray high school. However, this elite basis of the early days of the sports teams changed dramatically over the 20th century. The membership to these sports clubs no longer requires any other affiliation. They are mainly known for their soccer teams, which are referred as the “big three” due to their success in the national soccer league (they almost have a monopoly on the championship in the last decades). Soccer and fandom is mostly discussed in relation to the identity building performances (Gigone and Hastie 1993; Maass and Arcuri 1996; Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Lüthgens, and Moscovici 2000; Wittenbaum, Hubbell, and Zuckerman 1999), violence(Gigone and Hastie 1997; Nemeth and Rogers 1996), or nationalism / racism among soccer fans and the sports press.(Gökacti 2008; Haslam, Oakes, and Turner 1996; Kassimeris 2011; Martin 2004; Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Testa and Armstrong 2010; Wittenbaum, Hubbell, and Zuckerman 1999). Soccer and politics is also studied from the perspective of usage of soccer references by the politicians(Hendriks 2006), collective memory construction of the fan groups(Hacısoftaoğlu, Akcan, and Bulgu 2012) or

distinct identity positions taken by certain fan groups. (Erhart 2013; McManus 2013) There are also a few studies which look at soccer and its fans as a reflection of broader societal differences and conflicts (Gastil 2000; Goodin and Dryzek 2006) or the intersection of oppositional politics, protest and soccer (Edwards and Smith 1996; Gaines, Kuklinski, Quirk, Peyton, and Verkuilen 2007; Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006).

⁹34 is the traffic code of Istanbul which symbolizes the slogan used by some of the fans during the Gezi Park protests: "Istanbul United." It is very significant since there used to be violent clashes and bloodshed between the fans of the "big three" especially in the 1990s. I also need to open a parenthesis here specifically for Carsi fan group. A in Carsi's name is written with the anarchist symbol and it also incorporates some leftist discourses and causes. Its slogan is Carsi, her seye karsi. (Carsi, against everything). In line with the Ultra movement they are also against the commercialization of soccer. However, the leftist slogans and leftist positions in politics (through the banners and slogans they use in the games) are not always consistent and sometimes it blended with ultranationalist and religious discourses. Here are a few references on the political tensions in the tribunes and how some soccer fans protested by chanting anti-government slogans and how some other fans opposed it.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/spor/2013/09/130923_bjk_gs_tepkiler.shtml (access 26

January 2014); <http://skorer.milliyet.com.tr/kadikoy-de-tribunler-karisti->

[/fenerbahce/detay/1754326/default.htm](http://skorer.milliyet.com.tr/fenerbahce/detay/1754326/default.htm) (access 26 January 2014);

<http://skorer.milliyet.com.tr/tt-arena-da-siyasi->

[gerilim/galatasaray/detay/1752112/default.htm](http://skorer.milliyet.com.tr/galatasaray/detay/1752112/default.htm) (access 26 January 2014)

¹⁰Ultras refer to a broader movement that is named in Italy in 1950s and influenced European soccer fan culture in 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Ultras are defined as a devoted fan group mainly known for colorful stadium choreography in support of their team, sometimes associated with fanaticism and hooliganism. However, most ultra groups declare that they embrace the anti-racist, anti-nationalist and anti-capitalist values since racism and capitalism ruin the game, which is supposed to be a game for all. (Kennedy and Kennedy 2013).

¹¹A similar campaign was initiated on Twitter. It drew support from some Beşiktaş fans with the campaign called “BEŞİKTAŞLI adının başına TC Yazıyor.” (Besiktas supporters write TC in front of their names) Based on the references used in the calls for that campaign the discourses was along neo-Kemalist lines. The removal of TC was considered to be a symbolic attack to the republic by AKP administration. On the Twitter campaign members of Çarşı were quite visible in their calls.

¹²Uncivil slogans, especially cursing, and violence in the stadiums has been a concern of the Turkish Football Federation. (TFF) Turkish teams in the past received penalties from the Union of European Football Federations (UEFA) in the form of monetary penalties or in some instances Turkish teams had to play matches without spectators. Recently TFF declared that they are introducing a zero-cursing policy to the stadiums by enforcing stricter penalties. (<http://spor.haberturk.com/futbol/haber/914826-tffden-surpriz-degisiklik>[retrieved 14 February 2014]).

¹³6 September 2012. Galatasaray. “bu *futbol sayfasında particilik yapmayın burası galatasaray sayfası siyaset yapacaksan git chp nin akp nin mhp nin sayfasına aptal aptal yorumlar yapıyorsunuz ayaginiz kayip dusseniz basbakan yapti diyeceksiniz insani dinden imandan cikarmayin el insaf ya*”

¹⁴Bir damla göz yaşı döktünüz mü, Roboski de Battaniyelere sarılmış, katır ile insanların karışmış yanık etlerini görünce? ozeman roboskideki 33 gencecik dah cocuktular kimse buna tepki ver ede türk halki gözünü kapati medayallar sustu sizin o basbakniz cikti medaya karsisina dedi yaslnis anlasilmama oldu hic bir ölüm kaza deyil onur almimisin herneysen herseyi gerillad bulmayin önce kendi devletinizin derin pisliklerini arstirin ondan sonar gel burda artislik yap daha kac gün eval sizin devletiniz dedi bir kac asker öldüdiye keyfimizi bozamyiz meclisi topliyamayiz niye demsin çünkü ölen asker onun evladi deyildi onun yüreyi yanmamis öyle der onun icn birakin bu fasa fiso laflari vatn sag olsun didiginiz sürec dah cok canllar yanacak BİR TÜK CIKSAYDI DESEYDI BARIS ISTYIYORUZ BU GÜN HIC BIR ANNE AGLAMIYACAKTI..... ????

¹⁵“tanrı cumlesı neden sizi rahatsiz ediyo arkadaslar sizler alah dediyinizde kimse alah demeyin diye baskı yapıyormu sizlere. herkes sizin gibi dusunmek zurunda deyil.???”
(Galatasaray, September 6)

^{16cc}tanrı cumlesı neden sizi rahatsız ediyo arkadaşlar sizler alah dediyinizde kimse alah demeyin diye baskı yapıyormu sizlere. herkes sizin gibi düşünmek zorunda deyil.???"

(Galatasaray, September 6)

¹⁷mhp mhp takmışsınız mhp ye akp nizide gördük şehit üstüne şehit aslını gerçeğini bilmeden asmadınız kesmediniz ülkedeki tüm kamuları polisi tsk yı ele geçirdiniz sultansınız ya buyrun apo elinizde asın

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