

The Role of Online Social Networks in Social Movements: Social Polarization and Violations against Social Unity and Privacy of Individuals in Turkey

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Abstract : As a matter of the fact that online social networks like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace have experienced an extensive growth in recent years. Social media offers individuals with a tool for communicating and interacting with one another. These social networks enable people to stay in touch with other people and express themselves. This process makes the users of online social networks active creators of content rather than being only consumers of traditional media. That's why millions of people show strong desire to learn the methods and tools of digital content production and necessary communication skills. However, the booming interest in communication and interaction through online social networks and high level of eagerness to invent and implement the ways to participate in content production raise some privacy and security concerns. This presentation aims to open the assumed revolutionary, democratic and liberating nature of the online social media up for discussion by reviewing some recent political developments in Turkey. Firstly, the role of Internet and online social networks in mobilizing collective movements through social interactions and communications will be questioned. Secondly, some cases from Gezi and Okmeydanı Protests and also December 17-25 period will be presented in order to illustrate misinformation and manipulation in social media and violation of individual privacy through online social networks in order to damage social unity and stability contradictory to democratic nature of online social networking.

Keywords : online social media networks, democratic participation, social movements, social polarization, privacy of individuals, Turkey

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