

Social Media as a Means of Participation in Democracies

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Abstract : Social media is one of the most important and effective means of social interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange their ideas via photos, videos or voice messages. Although there are lots of communication tools. Social media sites are the most prominent ones that allows the users articulate themselves in a matter of seconds all around the world with almost any expenses and thus, they became very popular and widespread after its emergence. As the usage of social media increases, it becomes an effective instrument in social matters. While it is possible to use social media to emphasize basic human rights and protest some failures of any government as in "Arab Spring", it is also possible to spread propaganda and misinformation just to cause long lasting insurgency, upheaval, turmoil or disorder as an instrument of intervention to internal affairs and state sovereignty by some hostile groups or countries. It is certain that social media has positive effects on participation in democracies allowing people express themselves freely and limitlessly, but obviously, the misuse of it is very common and it is quite possible that even a five-minute-long video record can topple down a government or give a solid reason to a government to review its policies on some certain areas. As one of the most important and effective means of participation, social media presents some opportunities as well as risks. In this study, the place of social media for participation in democracies will be demonstrated under the light of opportunities and risks.

Keywords : social media, democracy, participation, risks, opportunities

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