

Sami Çötelî

Cyber Public Sphere and Social Movements

Calling to Cyber Spaces



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For my wife and daughter

Preface

The diversification, politicization of mass media within itself and also societal pressure created by mass media at the social level has caused changes in the social structure. The first change began with the contextual changes of the mass media, and this change led to visible changes in the societies. The concept of the "public sphere" that is used today has highly removed from the definitions of Arendt, Habermas, Oscar, and Kluge and has gained a new form. This new transformation has almost abolished the distinction between the private and public sphere, especially as social media has entered into our life. The things occurred in the private sphere are easily transported to the public sphere and others' private sphere. Therefore, the virtual public sphere has emerged through social media and all other practices on the internet. It appears that activist movements either have begun in the cyber world or that existing activist movements have strengthened by finding supporters via social media and blogs (internet blogs). The public sphere and activist movements that come into existence in the virtual environment, such as social media, is a new experience in terms of societies and they are the sign of how the future will be drawn .

It is obvious that social media is now integral part of our daily lives. It is a place where political and secular ideas spread, as well as being a place where photographs of eaten food, visited places, special relationships and many other special events take place. In this social area each individual has the opportunity to make his own propaganda as if he were on the agora. Shared content represents the position within the virtual life that the individual has built for himself. Social media make it easier than ever to share ideas globally and many charity organizations and political movements use social media platforms to spread their messages and reach their goals. While some of these movements cannot make a lot noise, some can lead to large fluctuations. It even causes a real and positive difference in the world. This study defines the virtual public sphere together with the virtual activism and the network society additions in the light of the public sphere – private sphere debates.

Istanbul, in September 2013

Sami Çöte

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