

# Social media and the nation state: of revolution and collaboration

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## Abstract

This article examines the legal infrastructure of social media governance in the politically contested context of contemporary Turkey. It looks at how social media companies (specifically, Twitter and Facebook (FB)) and the nation state (Turkey) have negotiated power in the aftermath of Gezi Uprising in Summer 2013. I argue that while today's concerns regarding online surveillance might echo the calls for a new world information order of the 1970s, the world system model based on the core–periphery distinction has considerably changed. The useful insights of cultural imperialism fall short of explaining the geopolitical context within which Turkey finds itself in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings and the sub-imperial relations within which she struggles to establish hegemony in the region. Findings suggest that the Turkish state tries hard to establish the legal and material infrastructure for these companies' operations. FB is more open to cooperation with the nation state, while Twitter has chosen to legally negotiate with the government. There also seems to be major risk for activists given the contradictory articulation of nation state and corporate interests.

## Keywords

Facebook, cultural imperialism, nation state, social media governance, Turkey, Twitter

## Introduction

This article investigates the relationship and negotiation of power between social media companies (specifically, Twitter and Facebook (FB)) and the nation state (Turkey) in the aftermath of Gezi Uprising in Summer 2013. Two specific debates inform this analysis:

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Turkey's geopolitical self-positioning as a 'role model'<sup>1</sup> in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings, the international communication critiques with respect to media and cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1991/2006). While I draw from the original and contemporary insights of these traditions (Fuchs, 2010; Jin, 2013), there seems to be a more complicated conditioning of media and society relations than assumed here. This original model seems to marginalize the relevance of geopolitical struggles as manifested in places like Turkey. Today's global resistance movements are not necessarily carried out with the assumption that national governments in the South protect its citizens against the advanced capitalist countries of the First World. While contemporary concerns regarding online surveillance might echo the calls for a new world information order of the 1970s, the world system model based on the core-periphery distinction has considerably changed; today's citizens place their global demands not *through* their governments but *from and beyond* them. There is a fluid and complex relationship between imperial (read United States and the European Union (EU)) and sub-imperial zones (read Turkey and the Middle East). In other words, the insights of cultural imperialism fall short of explaining the geopolitical context within which Turkey finds itself in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings and the sub-imperial relations within which she struggles to establish hegemony in terms of sectarian politics based on Sunni Islam.

The roadmap of this article is as follows. First, I situate Turkey in the historical context of the Arab Uprisings. What so quickly gave Turkey 'the role model' of democracy status in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and how did the state position itself in this context? How has Turkey, as 'the role model', been struggling to exercise hegemony in the ever-shifting geopolitics of the 'New Middle East'? What do we make of the contradictory claims of the 'role model' when the new Prime Minister (PM) Ahmet Davutoglu paternalistically says, 'If any journalists are under threat, they can turn to my office and we will provide protection' (CPJ, 2014)? This contextualization will be followed by an analysis of the relationship between social media companies and the Turkish state. By way of examining the interaction between the legal terrain and the societal context, I will demonstrate how the state is forcing social media companies to comply with its own political framework.

While there have been studies on Internet freedom or cyber crackdowns (Comminos, 2011; Howard et al., 2011), we need investigations of how the state is making social media companies comply with its own national legal infrastructure, as well as how social media companies are emerging as serious political actors of US soft power in the New Middle East following the Arab Uprisings (Herrera, 2014). Indeed, despite assumptions that social media companies are neutral agents, they consider themselves and intervene as significant political actors. There is of course a politics to how social media platforms are constructed (Gillespie, 2010) within what one might call informational imperialism. I understand informational imperialism as our contemporary condition where data generate value, surveillance, and resistance. In this sense, informational imperialism reveals the ways in which state and corporate power are interlinked. It brings forward the global character of resistance movements against the national security discourse of oppressive states and how information is vital for political organization.

Then, this article examines the legal infrastructure of social media governance in the highly politically contested context of contemporary Turkey. On one hand, as the social

media advisor to pro-Kurdish HDP expressed in an informal conversation, platforms such as FB are like shopping malls within which activists open a shop. In return, activists bring value. In other words, 'social media governance, both in terms of code-as-law and the rule of policies and user terms, is driven by necessary commercial consideration, namely, monetization' (Youmans and York, 2012: 317) and social media architecture might even solidify oppression within what Jodi Dean (2009) calls 'communicative capitalism'. Because social movements challenging the nation state will be highly impacted by 'changes in platform architecture' of social media, which 'may introduce new or expand previous constraints for activist users' (Youmans and York, 2012: 317), it is important to examine the evolving relationship between social media companies and the state, especially given Turkey's relationship with the United States, the EU, Israel, as well as its own regional aspirations in the construction of a 'New Middle East'.

## Geopolitical relations of the 'role model' and freedom of speech

Since 9/11, the invasion of Iraq, and AKP (Justice and Development Party) coming to power in 2002, Turkey has been hailed as a 'role model' of Middle Eastern democracy by many in the Western press. Yet, after meeting with the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Joel Simon (2014), the Head of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), noted the extremely poor level of political respect for freedom of expression in the country. In this section, I consider the following questions: How had the 'role model' of the region come to occupy this space of 'neoliberal media autocracy' (Akser and Baybars-Hawks, 2012)? How did the ruling AKP, partly linked to anti-imperial roots in relation to the United States and Israel, negotiate politics in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and make 'their peace with Turkey's sub-imperial role in the region, as a bulwark of the NATO order' (Tugal, 2012)? Specifically, these questions can pave the way for situating Turkey in the region by interlinking its economy, diplomatic relations with the region and its own Kurdish problem and help us understand the conflicting positioning of the country in terms of freedom of speech, control of the Internet, and its negotiation of power with FB and Twitter.

According to political scientist Kemal Kirişçi (2013), the 'role model' discourse goes back to the collapse of the Soviet Union when *The Economist* announced Turkey to be the 'Star of Islam' in relation to the need for democratization and reform in the region. The discourse was revitalized during George W. Bush. Yet, it was actively deployed by the Turkish state only after the Arab Uprisings. As Cihan Tugal (2012) argues, 'after a decade of AKP rule, an international consensus has portrayed Erdogan's Turkey as the successful alternative to both secular Arab authoritarianism and the revolutionary Islamism of Iran'.

The key to the AKP's success is in its articulation of 'big business, Pentagon, and Islam' (Tugal, 2007). On one hand, the party came to power right after the economic meltdowns of 1999 and 2001 and achieved economic growth,<sup>2</sup> albeit at the expense of urban inequality. This economic growth cannot be thought independently of the 'record flows of foreign direct investment (FDI)' from the Gulf States. Moreover, despite political ups and downs, Turkey has enjoyed a massive construction economy in Iraqi

Kurdistan. While Turkey's NATO membership is valuable for its relationship to the West, Tayyip Erdogan's populist anti-Israel and pro-Palestine remarks foregrounded Turkey's relationship to the Middle East. After the decidedly pro-EU 2002–2007 years, the AKP's politics took a different path. This path would rely on the discourse of Turkey as a major regional and global player. PM Davutoglu promoted a 'zero problem' foreign policy, which emphasized reintegration with former 'Ottoman lands' and diversification of Turkey's foreign policy goals with the intent of 'bringing a new *pax Ottomana*' (Tugal, 2012) in the region. To that effect, Turkey increased its economic and diplomatic relations with North Africa and Syria and the Gulf. Indeed, 'by 2010, trade with the Middle East and North Africa was substantially greater than it had been in 2002 – up threefold with Syria, nearly fourfold with North Africa, fivefold with the GCC and Yemen and sevenfold with Egypt' (Tugal, 2012). Added to this was 'a welcome relaxation of visa restrictions for Arab-state visitors to Turkey, putting them on a par with tourists from the EU and Russia' (Tugal, 2012). At the same time, Israel is a major part of the geopolitical picture. Despite Israel's Mavi Marmara flotilla offensive and Erdogan's '1-minute' reaction to Shimon Peres in Davos, military and economic relations with Israel have been kept mostly intact.

The Arab Uprisings brought seismic changes to Turkey's relations in the region. With Egypt, the initial strategy was to urge Husnu Mubarak to step down whereas due to Saudi Arabia, Turkey would ignore the suppression of protests in Bahrain. Libya was an example of constant foreign policy fluctuations in that Turkey initially reacted to a NATO intervention but then tried hard to be part of it. Here, we witness a highly contradictory performance of politics in that while Turkey had developed alliances with the Western World and Saudi Arabia, it was also expanding its influence through economy and diplomacy with Libya or Syria. Indeed, despite being on quite good terms with Syria, organizing joint governmental meetings and even Erdogan going on vacations with the Assad family, Turkey's politics took a sectarian shift against the Assad regime in line with Saudi interests in mid-2012. The Syrian conflict has further been complicated by ISIS' regional war with Kurdish forces in Kobane, which presents a difficult case for Turkey because of its own Kurdish problem, the international recognition of PYD (PKK's<sup>3</sup> Syria branch) against ISIS and Ankara's unwillingness to fight against ISIS. Kobane is also a difficult case for the Western world due to its resistance to energy colonialism (Minio-Paluello, 2014). It is self-explanatory to remember that US State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki, during one of the peak moments of Kobane war in October 2014, mentioned that 'there are some strategy objectives that we're focused on. We've gone after refineries. We're going after strategic locations'.<sup>4</sup>

The Turkish state has been negotiating its complex relations with the United States and the EU alongside a series of regional movements including PKK and the Gulen<sup>5</sup> movement – both with transnational aspirations.<sup>6</sup> Gulen movement used to be the primary ally of AKP to reduce the political role of army. Erdogan crushed on the movement's media and financial branches after corruption tapes involving ministers and Erdogan family – arguably by Gulen movement – were leaked (Tugal, 2013a). Finally, the Gezi Uprising of Summer 2013 brought to the fore a youth movement mobilizing around urban commons, media censorship, and citizen rights. More than the other ongoing movements, analysts have highlighted the importance of contested social media presence in the country. In

addition to heavy presence on FB and Twitter, '47% of 15-to-24 cohort got their news from social media – all despite the fact that fixed broadband and mobile broadband rates are currently only about half of OECD averages' (Freedom House, 2014). However, despite these numbers, regulation of the Internet and social media has limited the use of these media by activists and the public at large. As a 'swing state', Turkey 'was only one of only three countries to vote in favor of a new set of International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) that Russia and China had backed and that argued for expanding the state's role in Internet governance' (Freedom House, 2014).

Against this background, let us move on to three cases that examine the struggle over 'Turkey's Internet control regime' (Yang, 2013). These cases reveal important tensions where social media presence relies heavily on US dominated spaces. And yet, Turkey's aspirations and interests seem to be going beyond the United States and are expanding toward the Middle East with neo-Ottomanist feelings which in turn complicates the operations of FB and Twitter aiming to protect and expand their market share in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

### **'The role model': we will eradicate Twitter**

The branding of Turkey as 'role model' has been replaced by skepticism in the Western media due to the political and economic uncertainty in the country. Freedom of speech has been under major threat due to not only media concentration but also the government's concentrated efforts to create its own media (Aladag, 2013) in order to curtail the power of the army and pacify dissident journalists (Kurban and Sozeri, 2012). Even when this article was being written, counter-terror police targeted Fethullah Gulen-linked media – the same outlets that once helped Erdogan attack the opposition. The level of pro-government journalism is such that state's channel TRT promoted this hashtag (#edenbulur, meaning #thoseresponsiblewillpaytheprice) right after targeting Gulen-related media. Social media too have been severely restricted as an outcome of corruption scandals that erupted on 17 December 2013. Following a power struggle between AKP and Gulen Movement, alleged phone talks of Erdogan, his son, and some ministers regarding money transfers and expensive purchases were leaked to the public, along with Erdogan's direct calls to media outlets for censorship. As an outcome, Twitter and YouTube were banned in the country.

However, the state's concentrated efforts in regulating and censoring social media go back to Gezi Uprising.<sup>7</sup> This strict control regime has implications for the future operations of social media companies. Indeed, regulations regarding social media are tied personally to President Tayyip Erdogan, who stated 'If necessary, we will shut down Facebook and Youtube (*Hurriyet*, 2014) and ended up declaring 'We'll eradicate Twitter. I don't care what the international community says' on 20 March 2014. It was only a couple of hours later that access to Twitter was blocked.

As part of this emergent control regime, there are moments to be underlined that reveal how the relationship between social media companies and the state can be reformulated in a highly restrictive way. The following legal cases provide clues about how FB and Twitter have strategically chosen to act in accordance with national policies, even though Twitter is slightly more resistant to cooperation.

### *Case 1: it's the law! – legalizing censorship*

On 19 February 2014, Internet law (5651) was amended as a response to corruption scandals in the country. European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that this law 'lacked a strict legal framework for blocking orders and their contestation', implying that the framework was arbitrarily political (Freedom House, 2014).

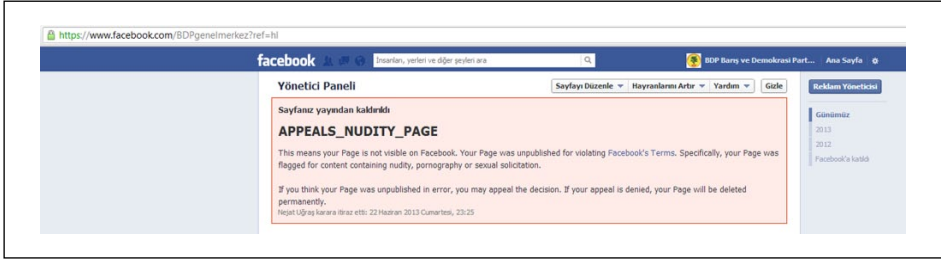
The amendments introduced Internet filtering so that to operate in the Turkish Internet market, one needs to be a member of a new 'Union for Service Providers'. In practice, the Union for Internet service provider (ISP) is able to block URLs as demanded by the state's Telecommunication Information Directorate (TIB) and keeps records of Internet traffic for up to 2 years. Web hosting providers can be blocked even if they are abroad and change their Domain Name System (DNS). Additionally, 'Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms defined as "hosting providers" under the law will also be required to obtain a certificate in order to operate in Turkey' (Freedom House, 2014: 6).

This new law opens the door to what one might call 'centralization of content supervision' where the government will have the final call on what exists online. Indeed, although this organization comprises private businesses, the constituents are told by the government what to provide and not to provide online in terms of content. In other words, there is direct state intervention in content provision within a supposedly free-market democracy (Nebil, 2014).

There has already been a controversy regarding the operations of the Union and one of its members. A couple of days after the Twitter blockage on 20 March 2014, TTNET – the largest service provider and a subsidiary of Turkish Telekom – declared that some customers in certain areas would not have Internet access due to maintenance on 25 March 2014. This created political controversy because 25 March was the day when major tape scandals were going to be leaked, and there were rumors that the largest service provider had already started to act in line with the government and implement censorship (T24, 2014).

This new organization stands at odds with the discourse of social media companies regarding Internet democracy because if a Tweet or FB page is regarded as illegal by the TIB, then the service providers will need to shut that page down. As of now, it remains to be seen as to how the social media giant, FB, could potentially react if 'Union for Service Providers' were to ask FB to shut down a page, especially because FB has millions of users in Turkey. Simultaneously, following the corruption scandal involving Erdogan's corruption charges, Twitter had to accept the government's decision to block certain accounts *and then* engage in a legal struggle with the government. This is by no means unique for Turkey, and similar state interventions take place in India and Europe where social media companies are more likely to accept the state's demands as long as there is no conflict with their profit strategies.

What also emerged as part of the amended Internet law is that the Turkish state started forming a 'Blue Room' through which fake FB and Twitter accounts would be monitored. Here, FB has responded positively to potential collaboration while Twitter did not, and the willingness of FB to comply puts activists and citizens who may want to remain anonymous at risk (T24, 2013).



**Figure 1.** The statement from Facebook regarding banning the BDP page.

Ultimately, the Turkish government is legally transforming the infrastructure cyberspace in its attempt to contain corruption scandals and dissidence through the seemingly benevolent discourse of ‘secure’ Internet and ‘national security’. Indeed, quite vague definitions of ‘national security’ are being used for constraining online and offline protest to the dismay of ECHR, which finds the regulatory framework devoid of sound legal foundations.

### Case 2: FB bans Kurdish pages

Following the dramatic Gezi protests, FB shut down more than 10 FB pages, between 6 July 2013 and 12 August 2013 (Basaran, 2013). These included Kurdish politicians’ FB pages, including BDP (Peace and Democracy Party, currently HDP - People’s Democracy Party) Central Office page. The argument was that this page included the word Kurdistan (Figure 1).

There were also other pages that produced news regarding minorities in Turkey (such as *Otekilerin Postasi* (The Others’ Press) or *Yeni Ozgur Politika* (New Free Politics)). In his interview with liberal newspaper *Radikal*, Richard Allan (Director of FB Policy in Europe), clearly described FB’s policy. FB completely complies with the international definition of terrorism and closes a page if it compliments an organization or a person that is on the international list of terrorism. In this sense, Allan stated that ‘if there is the flag or a symbol regarding PKK, then it is enough for Facebook to decide to close that page’<sup>8</sup> (Basaran, 2013). For FB, what mattered then was the ‘internet laws of the country within which it operates. Otherwise, the nation state has the right to close the website’.

It was not without any reaction this censorship took place. Pro-Kurdish BDP asked former Minister of Transportation, Maritime Affairs, and Communication Binali Yildirim about the link between shutting down of their FB pages right after his statement ‘Facebook has been cooperating with Turkish authorities and we do not have a problem with them’ (*Özgür Gündem*, 2013). BDP’s other questions involved the extent of information sharing between FB and Turkish government and taxation of FB.

Might there be a link between this censorship and FB’s attempts to avoid taxation? One might only speculate on that. However, based on Richard Allan’s remarks, it seems that FB found itself in a somewhat apologetic position after reactions from activists.

First, Allan was accepting that it was their fault to arbitrarily close one of the pages based on claims of pornography. Second, Allan was emphasizing how they would not just rely on algorithms but allocate ‘smart humans’ to decide whether complaints with respect to certain pages are valid. Then, how is it that complaints regarding FB pages of Kurdish parties and other activist groups were specifically expressed in a particular time period and FB simply rushed to close these pages? What makes FB’s intervention controversial is the fact that these shutdowns took place when the Turkish government was carrying out peace negotiations with PKK. Additionally, some of the pages had nothing to do with PKK and were related to BDP politicians. In this sense, FB was choosing not to interpret the political context and prioritizing the interests of the nation state and monetization.

### *Case 3: Gezi Uprising and corruption tapes – inviting Twitter to Turkey*

Gezi Uprising constituted the first moment of regulation crisis of social media companies. The government invited FB and Twitter to open offices in the country. Former Minister of Transportation, Maritime Affairs, and Communication Binali Yildirim stated that FB was collaborating with the government and had units in Turkey, whereas Twitter did not (*Hurriyet*, 2013). He added,

If you have operations in this country, you need to cooperate with the judiciary and police force in relation to criminal cases ... Why don't you be part of Turkish legal system? That would not harm anybody. When a tax officer, a police officer or somebody else contacts us for information, we would like to see your unit in Turkey, which would provide that information. We cannot express our concern via phone, Internet or e-mail given the eight-hour time difference. (*Hurriyet*, 2013)

The relationship between Twitter and the government took a radical turn when the government blocked access to Twitter on 20 March 2014.

The government’s interest in having a Twitter office intensified following the corruption scandal. After the blockage, Twitter sent a legal team to Turkey and Binali Yildirim provocatively said, ‘While Twitter wasn’t initially willing to cooperate, they have now hastily hired a lawyer’ (*Radikal*, 2014). What Yildirim mentioned is important in terms of the learning curve of the nation state with respect to regulating social media companies. When YouTube refused to ban videos insulting Atatürk years ago, the Turkish state filed a complaint regarding copyrights with respect to Atatürk’s voice and images – learning from German officials and hoping that this might actually work – and YouTube now has a representative for Turkey (*Radikal*, 2014).

Twitter ban received a great deal of political attention. Using Twitter despite the ban, former President Abdullah Gul said that appointing a lawyer was a positive step, although this lawyer cannot be described as a representative between Twitter and Turkey (CNN Turk, 2014). Former Minister of Transportation Lutfi Elvan stated that it was encouraging to see Twitter collaborating with the Turkish state by blocking accounts that were subject to court decisions, adding that ‘Twitter needs to open an office in Turkey’ (*Istanbul Haber*, 2014).



During the period it was blocked, Twitter emphasized its commitment to its users. The company stated that no IP or e-mail address would be shared with the Turkish government. It was underlined that Twitter had blocked an account related to former minister Binali Yildirim (*oyyokhursıza* – no vote for the thief) and also filed a counter lawsuit against the local court decision that stipulated the suspension of this account.<sup>9</sup> For the first time in Turkey, Twitter was implementing account suspension on country basis (Country Withheld Content). What Twitter's Law Advisor Vijaya Gadde did was to assure activists that they were not betrayed. Gadde said that two of three claims regarding blockage were 'already against our principles'. However, there was another account that caused 'disagreement', and this account was about corruption claims about a former minister. 'If political statements are concerned with corruption, this is very important for us. Therefore, we filed a lawsuit for that account to be opened', said Gadde (*İMC TV*, 2014; Twitter, 2014). Then, the struggle for social media started where Twitter found itself having to respond to the demands of the Turkish government by not opening an office but appointing Emine Etili as Twitter's Turkey coordinator. Currently, the outcome of this legal struggle is open-ended.

## Conclusion

This article problematized Turkey's ambitions of being a role model in the Middle East and described three moments of social media governance crisis where the state aimed to circumvent major national crises by negotiating with FB and Twitter. The findings reveal that FB is more willing to negotiate and comply with the state, whereas Twitter has resisted as much as it could. One reason behind this difference is the more flexible Terms of Service of Twitter (Youmans and York, 2012: 320). However, this should not mislead us to assume that Twitter is a pro-activist corporation because 'in the first half of 2014 alone, Turkey sent 186 removal requests and Twitter complied 30%' (Freedom House, 2014: 7). Another finding is the significance of material infrastructure with respect to social media governance. The nation state finds it hard to negotiate with these companies especially when they do not have offices in the country. If we remember how important media and technology infrastructure was historically to colonialism and (neocolonial) globalization (Larkin, 2008; Mattelart, 2010), it is instantly clear why the state wants to define and control the emergent infrastructure of social media governance. It is after all through these infrastructures that political actors (via their ascribed roles or assumed responsibilities) are legally captured, coded, and defined. Turkey's major goal, as seen historically and today in the case of Egypt in geopolitical terms (Aouragh and Alexander, 2011: 1347), is to produce the social media infrastructure to solidify its political position without endangering its economic and symbolic position in the shifting geopolitics of the Middle East. Indeed, the current government is already planning to pass yet another Internet law to block online access with highly obscure excuses including 'situations that relate to public safety and national security, general health and morality' (Evin, 2014). This new law will enable the PM to order TIB block access to which appeals can only be made in 24 hours. Some Turkish courts have already demanded access limitations to certain tweets of journalists or controversial Internet figures, if not completely blocking

access to accounts (*Radikal*, 2015). As national security concerns overlap with the monetization desire of social media companies, activists are beginning to recognize the risks of online organization. However, we do know that there is no prescribed and guaranteed path to technological domination, and technological infrastructures *may* actually produce ‘noise’ and ‘distortion’ (Larkin, 2008). Yet, that ‘noise’ needs to be aimed at, and it seems to be a mandatory task for activists to devise new social media platforms independent of national and corporate interests.

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## Notes

1. The role model discourse portrays Turkey as a secular democracy where Islam and liberal democracy can coexist. This discourse had much appeal in the Western media especially after 9/11 and the rise of Islamophobia. This discourse regards Turkey as an antidote to both authoritarianism and radical Islam associated with the Middle East.
2. This economic growth cannot be thought independently of the ‘record flows of foreign direct investment (FDI)’ from the Gulf states. Moreover, despite political ups and downs, Turkey has enjoyed a massive construction economy in Iraqi Kurdistan.
3. Kurdistan Workers’ Party, which has fought the Turkish state for years to gain autonomy and political rights for the Kurdish population in Turkey. Peace negotiations with PKK’s leader have been stalled since mid-2015.
4. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/10/232676.htm>
5. Gulen movement is a charity organization with a heavy presence in politics, security forces and the judiciary. They rose to prominence ‘thanks to their support for Kenan Evren’s military intervention in 1980’ and they ‘benefited from Turgut Özal’s neoliberal policies, which were possible only after the 1980 coup’ (Tugal, 2013b). Since 2002, Gulen movement and AKP worked together to reduce the role of army in politics. These two actors are now competing for political power. When Erdogan declared to close profitable educational institutions (*dershane*) of Gulen movement, corruption tapes – arguably by Gulen movement – were leaked. This was followed by massive police inspections of Gulen movement’s financial and media institutions (Tugal, 2013a).
6. The tension with the European Union (EU) is such that following arrests of Gulen media members, the EU warned Turkey to which President Erdogan replied: ‘We have no concern about what the EU might say, whether the EU accepts us as members or not, we have no such concern. Please keep your wisdom to yourself’ (Orsal, 2014).
7. Since 2007, the government’s interest in regulating the web (Law No: 5651) first used child pornography and then the discourse of ‘secure Internet’ to control the web (Oz, 2011). The final blow came when the government did not even consult social partners in revising Law no. 5651 (February 2013, explored more in detail below).
8. However, BDP’s spokesman Cem Bico made a statement that was contrary to Facebook’s claims regarding PKK and terrorism: The main page came down following the group posting of an interview with BDP’s Member of Parliament (MP) Sabahat Tuncel calling for political autonomy in Kurdistan. There is no mention of armed groups. In this text, you cannot find any specific expression, which supports PKK or terrorism as an activity (Deutsche Welle, 2013).

9. Following the corruption scandal, critics and supporters of the AKP government were involved in an immense social media war. For a detailed discourse analysis of these tweets, see Dogu et al. (2014).

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