

NETWORK CULTURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA AT GLOBAL AND LOCAL SCALE

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Rapid expansion of digital technologies over the past fifty years has led to significant changes in every aspect of life. While television broadcasting and satellite transmission were supporting transformation of the world into a global village, worldwide proliferation of the Internet usage has increased the acceleration of communication and removed boundaries of time and space. Since the mid-1990s communication has gained new dimensions with the emergence of electronic communication networks. In 2000s there has been remarkable transformations through fast spreading of networks. With transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, the masses have begun to communicate through social sharing networks, and among individuals with the involvement of institutions and various sectors, multidirectional collective sharings have begun to form cultures worldwide.

Frankfurt School criticism on mass culture was declared in 1945 emphasizing the relation to cultural hegemony. Today, it seems that new dimensions of mass communication brought by the internet and social media have reversed this criticism. While the criticism was aimed at the hegemony of power focused on those who directed the masses through the control of publishing and broadcasting, everyone is an artist, everyone is a producer and at the same time, everyone is a consumer, today. At this point social media has emerged as an alternative for traditional media and it has been a collective power worldwide, composing a new language, new society and new way of communication.

NETWORK CULTURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Manuel Castells who is one of the well-known theorists working on social changes related to computer and communication technologies, calls the society which has been formed by new dynamics of information age as “network society” (Castells 1999, 2000, 2009). Castells examines communication systems in industrial and information societies, he states that communication systems of the industrial society have a central structure which have been distributed among the masses via unidirectional communication (i.e. from one center to many directions). On the other hand,

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communication systems of network society are horizontal networks which include interactive message exchanges at a global scale such that they are multidirectional - from many to many directions- synchronous or asynchronous. Expansion of the Internet, mobile communication, digital media and social software tools have led to the development of interactive networks which provide connection at local and global scales. With the emergence of Internet and social networks lately mass communication has changed significantly in the digital era. Castells has stated that within this period mass communication transformed into mass self-communication and it has generated a creative mass audience at a global scale.

In network culture messages reach global audiences through internet connections and computer networks. "It is multimodal, as the digitalization of content and advanced social software, often based on open source that can be downloaded free, allows the reformatting of almost any content in almost any form, increasingly distributed via wireless networks. And it is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many"(Castells, 2007: 248).

With increasing acceleration in processes, social media has had a significant role in network culture. In brief, social media is defined as web based services which enable individuals to compose an open or half-open profile in a limited system, to list profiles of other users who are connected in the same system, to survey and to follow connecting lists of themselves and also other users. While technologies and users offered features of social sharing sites are substantially similar, culture of social sharing sites are different from each other. Some of them provide support to maintain relationship between individuals who know each other, while others give a chance to individuals who are strangers to each other to come together for common pleasure, interest, political views and activities. While some social network sites have cosmopolitan member profiles, others have members who speak a common language, who share a common base such as race, religion, gender, national identity (Boyd&Ellison, 2007). Briefly, social media is a comprehensive term which defines software tools which have shared user generated contents. Social media includes network sites, blogs, wikis, and also phograph and video sharing sites and RSS feeds pages.

History of social sharing sites began with SixDegrees.com which was built in 1997 and had enabled users adding profiles, listing friends and surfing in the lists of the friends. From 1997 until 2001, sites such as AsianAvenue, BlackPlanetand, MiGente were built, which provided possibilities to users for creating personal and professional profiles. Then next step came in 2001 with Ryze.com which allowed users to build business networks. Providing connection between friends, Friendster had driven the market in 2002 and the number of users reached three million in the first 3 months. It followed the sites Myspace, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, Classmates.com, Jaiku, Netlog in 2003. And in 2004 Facebook, which has been the most widespread network in the world, was founded to provide communication between students at Harvard University. More than half of 19.500 students had become the members of the network in the first month. Today the number of members has exceeded 800 million around the world. In 2006, one of the remarkable sites, Twitter came into the market and also it managed to

attract a high number of members. Except from major sites mentioned, there are hundreds of social sharing sites which have taken form around diverse interests and hobbies on a local or global basis. Addressing different masses and interest groups through various contents, these sites could be examined under the headings such as publishing, shopping, gaming, networking, location basing, sharing, discussing, etc.

Although internet is an old technology which was developed in 1969, it has reached one billion users worldwide only in the last ten years. One of the reasons for this rapid increase seems to be the development of mobile communication tools in recent years; while the number of mobile phone users was 16 million in 1991, this number exceeded 2 billion in 2006. Convergence of the internet and mobile communication has led to the spreading at the internet and social networks. Today, connection to internet and social networks is provided via computers and laptops, and also mobile communication tools such as tablets and smart phones. People have been establishing their own mass communication systems through networks over new communication forms such as SMS, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, wikis (Cas-tells, 2007: 246).

SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE SPREADING

To be able to realize the dimensions of social media which is described as a revolution in communication, it is useful to consider the statistical data in the field. Let's make these three statements why social media is described as a revolution? In which countries and cultures is this phenomenon is widespread? How network preferences of people are decided?

According to the statistics, participation in social networks is rapidly increasing. Global adaptation of networks effects interaction among individuals, communities and societies; convergence between online and offline worlds comes forward. Social networks provide people new digital experiences offering them business opportunities and social contacts almost without any limitations of geographic locations. Clicking on a news in Twitter, connecting to a company over LinkedIn or choosing "like" in Facebook, people have constantly been draw into social media.

A report published by the Nielsen company declares that users of social network and blogs among active internet users has reached 80 % of the population in the USA. According to the data of the company, which defines popularity of social networks as a "global consumer phenomenon", while participation to the networks is growing on the one hand , the time spent on networks is also increasing on the other hand (Nielsen Report, 2011).

Also a comScore report released in December 2011 provides impres-sive results on the worldwide usage of social networks. Accordingly, social network sharing is the most popular online activity in the world. Measurements of October 2011 proved that 1 minutes of each 5 minutes spent online at global scale was spent in social networks, and 82 % of internet users, whose total population is 1,2 billion, have participated in social networks worldwide (comScore Report, 2011).

Table 1: Top 10 Global Markets by Average Social Networking Hours per Visitor (October 2011)

	Average Hours per Visitor Spent on Social Networking Sites
Worldwide	5.7
Israel	11.1
Argentina	10.7
Russia	10.4
Turkey	10.2
Chile	9.8
Philippines	8.7
Colombia	8.5
Peru	8.3
Venezuela	7.9
Canada	7.7

Source: comScore Media Metrix¹

Likewise, studies of comScore have provided remarkable data on the time spent on social networks. The visitors from Israel who have been the first among all countries to spend time in the networking sites; they have spent average of over 11 hours monthly. Israel is followed by Argentine with 10,7 hours, Russia with 10,4 hours and Turkey with 10,2 hours, respectively. Worldwide all users' average time spent on social networks is 5,7 hours.

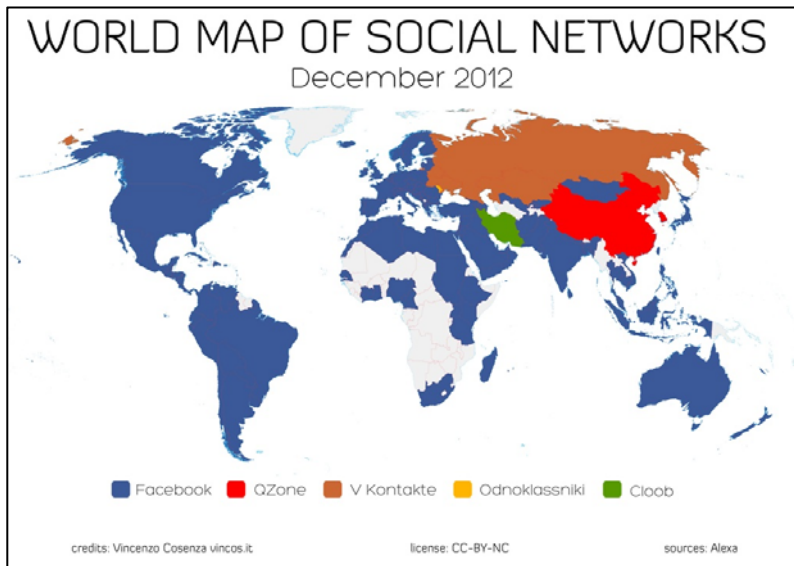
In addition, the data shows that social networks have been used not only by young people, but also by all age groups. So, dependence on social media worldwide has become a new area of study.

COUNTRIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PREFERENCES: THE GLOBAL LEADER FACEBOOK

Social networks are platforms where people around the world have been pulled into and have been increasingly interactive. Another outstanding question with regard to social media is how these sharing sites, which are in a vast number and variety, show distribution by country. Since the first sharing site opened in 1997 until today, hundreds of sites have been opened with different contents and target groups. While in some countries local networks are on demand, global active networks come forward in others. Therefore, competition between various networks continues.

¹http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2011/12/Social_Networking_Leads_as_Top_Online_Activity_Globally

Picture 1. Map of Social Networks, June 2012



Source: Google Trends for Websites²

In considering social networks worldwide it is clear that Facebook is the frontrunner with its member quantity and distribution areas in different countries. Also the map in Picture 1 shows leadership position of Facebook through expansion in the world.

According to the research report of comScore published in October 2011, Facebook has reached 55 % of all network users at a global scale (comScore Report, 2011). The Vincos data dated December 2011 indicate that in 127 out of 136 countries where social media measurements were realised, Facebook is in the first place; it maintains its leader position with more than 800 million active users. Although Facebook has positioned behind the local networks in the countries such as Brazil, India, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam in June 2010, it has taken the first place one year later except in Russia, and has sustained rapid expansion on the globe. Apart from China where Facebook is forbidden, local social networks *V Kontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* in Russia are the few networks who could compete with Facebook. Europe, with 223 million users; the USA with 219 million users and Asia, with 202 million users, are the continents where Facebook is the most widespread (<http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/>).

²<http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/>

Table 2: Top 3 Social Networking Sites (December 2011)

December 2011			
Countries	1	2	3
Australia	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
Austria	Facebook	Badoo	Twitter
Belgium	Facebook	Badoo	LinkedIn
Brazil	Facebook	Orkut	Badoo
Canada	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
Denmark	Facebook	LinkedIn	Badoo
Finland	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
France	Facebook	Badoo	Skyrock
Gernany	Facebook	Wer-kennt-	StayFriends
India	Facebook	Orkut	Twitter
Italy	Facebook	Badoo	Twitter
Japan	Facebook	Mixi	Twitter
Netherlands	Facebook	Hyves	Twitter
Norway	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
Portugal	Facebook	Orkut	LinkedIn
Sweden	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
Russia	Odnoklassniki	V ontakte	Facebook
Spain	Facebook	Tuenti	Badoo
United Kingdom	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
United States	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn

Source: Google Trends for Websites³

This data indicates that Twitter and LinkedIn in all countries, and Badoo and Twitter in Europe follow the competition for the secondary position.

A remarkable development is the emergence of microblogs as a significant power in social networks. 1 of every 10 internet users worldwide uses Twitter and Twitter has grown at a rate of 59 % in the recent years. Sina Weibo in China, which is one of the popular microblogs also grown at a rate of 181 % with the last year and it was 10th

³<http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/>

largest social network worldwide in October. Also, Tumblr has reached to 12th largest number of users with audience size grow the rate of 172 % (comScore Report, 2011).

In view of the data it is remarkable to observe that only one social network gathers people and cultures from almost all regions of the world in a platform. Currently, if Facebook were a country, it would be the largest in the world, as Qualman (2012) has stated. Such as country, has a population of more than 800 million, which is constantly growing and is ethnically and culturally most diverse, as its people are also able to cross geographies and boundaries easily and constantly communicate and interact at a global and local scale. In such a large country, when a message or news appears on the screen, it receives comments or reactions from audiences at the far edges of the world, where both cultural local groups of its own as well as multiple can react simultaneously worldwide.

Developments indicate that networks begin to gain importance as a power in local communities in many countries, on the one hand and they take effective roles to generate world public opinion on many subject on global scale, on the other. Therefore, it will be useful to examine the effects of social media at local and global scales.

SOCIAL MEDIA AT GLOBAL SCALE

Manuel Castells emphasizes that the most important feature of the network society is being global. While the industrial society has many different and contrasting manifestations around mainly rural and traditional societies with an industrialized core from America to Russia, from Japan to England, the structure of network society is global. Providing communication simultaneously over networks has an unitive impact. Network organization in each society privatizes culture itself, on the other hand protects it at global scale (Castells, 1999, 2000, 2009).

The concept of globalization can shortly be summarized as economic, social and cultural transformations which occur through the coming together of different cultures with various effects over a long period. The process is based on communication of people in different regions of the world and goes back to the migration of first humans (*Homo Erectus and Homo Sapiens*) from Africa and has reached today's computer age where information is digitalized. As Hopper (2007) has stated, during this long process, there are three main cultural periods defined Premodern (untill 1500), modern (between 1500-1945) and contemporary (1945-present). Each period was linked to the process of globalization with its technological innovations, politic and economic improvements, social transformations and institutional changes.

The contemporary period which has been from 1945 until today, has been marked by advances in transportation technologies and developments of the infrastructure. Particularly, the improvements such as configuration of airways, roads and railway networks worldwide, by containers shipping transportation, rapid increase in the number of vehicle has facilitated contact between people at a global scale. So, on the one hand cultural flows through people, ideas, goods, symbols and images has been intensified and became widespread, on the other hand the number of people travelling

from one place to another has also increased. As a result, forms of global cultural interconnectedness have deepened globally.

Other significant aspects of the contemporary period of globalization are the advances in communication and information technologies. Especially, innovations in the areas of telecommunication, computerization and digitalization have provided and made international communication cheaper and instantaneous. Activation of satellites and fiber-optic cables has enabled more frequent access to televisions and radios worldwide. Through the expansion of the internet global communication has come into prominence. Communication over internet has provided the opportunity for people in different geographic locations to overcome the limitations of location and distance, and to come together in cyberspaces simultaneously (Hopper, 2007: 29).

In this context, it is possible to assert that social networks enable cultural interaction for different segments of societies, and from this aspect add new perspectives to cultural globalization. The most significant improvements of social media are to bring together a large number of people who cross over geographical borders and share the same interests, and to provide the opportunity for interaction as a feature of Web 2.0. Therefore, instead of one-sided communication of the previous periods, this period is marked by a multisided and simultaneous communication.

In questioning the cultural dimensions of globalization, statements have been made that cultural interaction and consumption (through the usage of communication devices) which has been realized by the elite segments of different societies previously, was now spreading among lower social classes which are experiencing the interaction and consumption at a popular level (Hopper, 2007: 29). Contribution of social media at this point is inevitable, namely centrality and class differences are overcome through the interaction feature and all classes of society have been positioned as actors in the forming of a global culture.

Examining the relationship of globalization and culture, Featherstone and Lash (1999) have stated that understanding of the global processes is only possible in association with complexity, temporality, disorderliness, context and connection. Certainly, this structure which takes form through multisided interactions is a complex form. Featherstone emphasizes that circulation of images of world's music, sports and news in the Western media, access to internet, reaching food and consumer goods from all over the world in supermarkets and shopping malls create the feeling of a global culture, but this is much rather related to a common cosmopolitanism of consumer culture (Featherstone, 2006: 389).

Featherstone has stated that 'emergent global culture can be seen as far from being the culture of nation state writ large, despite various globalization projects arising from nation states, or cultural and religious movements, to provide an all-embracing integrative culture' (Featherstone, 2006: 390). Castells (2009) also says, instead of arising a homogeneous one global culture, there is rather a fragmented culture which has pointed historical cultural variety.

Social media is global, because its expansion area is the globe, there are connected structures along the globe and they are talking about transformation of cultures via

interactions of these structures. While people are communicating with their own friend groups, they are following each other constantly on the one hand, they are creating global connections, and at the same time information flows are speeding up in business field, on the other.

Contribution of the social media to global sharing varies; while some sharing sites generate information data banks at global scale, some support global politics; while some open the business world to all professionals globally, others turn their sites into places of action for common values of humanity such as ecology, peace, human rights. In this sense, social media has profoundly been active for creating common sharing such as global consciousness, global discussions and enlightenment. Social media has been functioning in informing, and molding public opinion and has been organizing globally. In these sites the world public behaves like a nation that has common targets, they almost represent a single nation in the world.

Some sharing sites whose number of members has increased and are active at global scale could be examined. For example, *Wikipedia* which was founded in January 2001 came forward as a significant sharing site being a world open information source (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>). *Wikipedia* is a free encyclopedia which has been composed of contributions made by any person as an author or editor. It has grown rapidly and transformed into a giant structure which embodies 48,000 active editors working on 3,800,000 articles in more than 100 languages. Thousands of people from all over the world have been changing the encyclopedia every day by adding new information to develop the content of *Wikipedia*. In this structure many people from around the world behave cooperatively and generate a common place by using the interactivity feature of web 2.0.

Another networking site that tries to create a global public opinion in world politics is *Wikileaks* (<http://wikileaks.org/>). The site was founded in 2006 as a non-profit organization, it has leaked out important news and information concerning world politics to the public and aimed at creating a real democratic global order in this way. By releasing hidden diplomatic documents, war, torture and crime news of governments and confidential activities of institutions in the fields of trade, finance, ecology, and health worldwide and exposing 92,000 documents which held the American army in the Afghanistan war between 2004 and 2009, the site attracted wide attention. *Wikileaks* has opposed global problems such as war, crime, censorship, ecological destruction and drawn attention of world public to protect democratic values.

LinkedIn is also one of the leading networks which has been addressing the business world and has been one of the five sharing sites with the highest number of members at global scale (<https://www.linkedin.com/>). This is the world's largest professional business network which was founded in 2002. According to reports, *LinkedIn* has over 135 million registered users from more than 200 countries (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LinkedIn>). Member individuals and institutions of the site have found appropriate employees or businesses via this site by following the

global environment, they have managing their business in the 'global village' by crossing geographical borders.

Activism is a remarkable movement in the social media that has addressed global audiences to create a common culture. In many network sites, activist movements have been organizing and setting up groups or sharing information or visual materials. In this way, collective consciousness and support have been called.

While this article was in the process of being written, a striking movement has been initiated by Israeli peace activists. In the period, when political relation between Iran and Israel were stressed and were spreading news that Israel would bomb Iran, a civilian Israeli activist opened a page in Facebook with the heading *Israel-Loves-Iran* and published a statement against war saying "Iranians, we will never bomb your country. We love you" (<http://www.facebook.com/israellovesiran>). The page was opened on the March 19, 2012 and attracted huge number of people from Iran and Israel, and also from all over the world, who are against war; the number of members reached 54.000 in only 20 days. Many messages from different countries and languages flowed to the page, leading to the opening similar pages such as *America Loves Iran*, *Germany Loves Iran*, *Poland Loves Iran*, etc. The movement grew and began to create a global public opinion. Obviously, social media has been a civil power against the governments of Israel and Iran. Through social media borders of nation states have been blurred, states and nations have been improving their transnational relations.

Özgür Uçkan stated that digital activism has boomed in the period of web 2.0 and social networks have been the favorite environment of this kind of activism. Being comprehensive and profound, offering effective participation tools and offering the possibility for global interaction make the social media an efficient environment for activists (Uçkan, 2010). Uçkan (2012), underlines that in recent times movements such as "Los Indignados" in Greece and Spain, plunders in Israel and London, and actions such as "Occupy Wall Street (OWS)" have been transformed into occupation movements across the globe and the internet and social media have had a serious role in all.

Efficiency of the social media at global scale would be followed in numerous networks. Evaluation of examples proves that through the power of Web 2.0 interaction, people's proceedings result dissolving of the nation state borders which were blurring through development of transportation and communication technologies previously. Instead of national citizenship "*global citizenship*" has come forward as a new kind of citizenship. From now on, people are being talked about as citizens of a global village who have been acting together in many different areas.

Cifuentes, Merchant & Vural (2011) have indicated that Web 2.0 has encouraged individuals, through collective intelligence, to think about world problems and to act as global citizens. Social network sites such as Wordle, You Tube, Wikipedia, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Delicious and Blogger have emerged as media tools that provide sharings for global citizenship related ideas, thoughts and concepts. Web 2.0 has

ensured that people came unite around certain targets and ideologies through social media.

Another subject of discussion that being “global” through the social media has brought about a new sense of belonging. As radio, television, press and novels had likewise played an important role to create national middle classes, also social media has played a role in creating a global middle class. While national media produce a national status around middle class identity, global media is the creator of a new global subjectivity. People are imagining themselves as part of the emerging global class through the integration of English into local dialects, consumption of foreign media and products and are forming new habits related to global culture. Participation in the global culture is expressed via connection to the international social networks beside cosmopolitan consumption practices (Polson, 2011: 148).

SOCIAL MEDIA AT LOCAL SCALE

The relationship between globalization and cultural transformation bring up new questions regarding the relation between local cultures and the social processes. As mentioned above, with the developments at global scale, whose cultures haved create new common values and forms, global and local cultures have witnessed two-way trans-formations.

Examining transformations within the globalization process De Sousa Santos (1999) states that the process has introduced mainly four forms in cultures: the first form is globalized localism. In this form, cultures are under the influence of sovereign American culture, which means Americanization, McDonaldization, which defines the expansion of American fast food chains, and the proliferation of American popular music, English becoming widespread as a sovereign language. Second form is localized globalism which covers the changes that occur via the realization of transnational mandatories in local cultures; institution of free trade, touristic usage of local values such as historical treasures, religious ceremonies, arts and wild life, changes such as being an ecological garbage dump, conversion of sustanaible agriculture into exportable agriculture via ‘structural regulations’, ethnicization of business places put local cultures under requirements of global powers. The emerging third form is cosmopolitanism. With improvement of relations between various countries and structures, global alliances have been developed through NGO’s, environment groups, trade unions, world federations, and north south dialogs. Finally, the fourth form is the common heritage of humankind. Worldwide emerging issues such as the ozon layer depletion, destruction of the Amazon rainforests, antarctic ice melt, biodiversity loss, common global problems unite the world citizens (De Sousa Santos, 1999: 217-218).

Evaluations of De Sousa Santos are based on the sovereignty of center countries order and the orientation of the periphery countries around that order in the cultural area, as it has also been experienced in economic, political and social areas. Although some mutual influences exist, rather it is the subject of periphery countries to be under

effects of center countries, mainly under the influence of American culture. Although De Sousa Santos has introduced significant evaluations, new dimensions which have emerged through the expansion of the social media necessitate the examination these evaluations today.

Featherstone (2006) opposes seeing cultural globalization as equal to Americanization. Although the media, as speaker of consumption, spreads Coca-Colanization, Disneylandization and McDonaldization at global scale, using brands and icons of consumption culture, and increases the sovereignty of English in areas such as law, business, education and the internet, there are also various trends against this view. Featherstone calls attention to the emergence of China as an essential power in the areas of finance, media and the internet through its diasporas and global communities and similarly, he underlines the success of the Japanese media and culture in the areas of popular music, television dramas, animation and emphasizes the developing new regional cultures. Moreover, he also points out the emergence of various religious and other movements out of the West (Featherstone, 2006: 390).

Breaking of the central structure of the traditional media through interaction feature of the networks has led to significant results. The crashing of the transmitted message chain from a center to audiences, and from sovereign cultures and powers to other cultures at the same time, namely one sided message flows, were broken. Therefore, the development of cultural effects in the form of the expansion of sovereign American and Western cultures is not valid in social media. From many to many sided cultural flows in the social media produce a much more complicated set of multiple responses.

In this context, an important cultural transformation at local scale is the integration of local languages into the networks. As mentioned earlier, the sovereign language worldwide was English in the globalization process. Although this was the case in the internet environment, it seems that this situation has begun to change in recent years.

Hatem Ali (2011) has presented a research regarding the effectiveness of communication technologies in the developing countries, indicating that utilization of communication technologies is possible for local cultures only if they could overcome the digital divide whose one of the most important factor is the language barrier. According to the World Economic Forum 2002 report, three-quarters of the all websites in the world are in English. So, it is clear that the internet provides more communication opportunity for people who speak English, while it limits internet usage in countries where English is not the native language or is not widely used. While some cultures perceive hegemony of English as a threat against their own cultures, others take limited advantages of the internet because of the lacking contents in their own languages. Acceptance of the internet technologies in countries where English is not in use, is only possible with the existence of sites and contents in their own languages (Hatem Ali, 2011: 200).

With regard to language integration considerable advances have been improved in recent years. At global scale active social network sites have noticed that it is only possible through integration of local cultures, so they have begun to add language preferences into their features. Today in many networks who are assertive at global

scale such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, world languages have been increasingly presented for users, so local cultures make sharings using their own cultural values existing in global networks.

Usage of local languages in social networks has been increasingly becoming widespread. As Castells quoted the same situation is monitored in blogs; blogs are multilingual international communication spaces, where English was dominant in the early stages of blog development. In March 2006 for less than a third of blog posts were in English; 37% of blogs were Japanese and followed by English (31%) and Chinese (15%). Spanish, Italian, Russian, French, Portuguese, Dutch, German, and most likely Korean are the other following languages (Castells, 2007: 247).

An actual example which indicates importance of the content in local languages has been blogs in Egypt. When internet was opened in 1993 in Egypt, its language was English and pioneer web pages were addressing professionals and high-educated people who could speak English. In the beginning of 2000's, the internet was out of use of 97 % of Egyptians because of not knowing English. At that time, popular blog platforms like Blogspot gave the possibility for users to publish Arabic content, and so politic activist groups such as '*Kefaya*' and bloggers who are against the government generated Egypt first blogs who use Arabic content. While first blogger groups were communicating their friends and people in the West who speak English, the other blogs which were founded in the years between 2003 and 2005, headed towards Egyptian audiences. In a short period between the year 2003 and 2007, the number of blogs which was previously 40, increased 1400 through prevalence of Arabic content (Hatem Ali, 2011: 208). Disappearance of the language barriers supported considerably more participatory culture in social media, and it increased sharings of information among the Egyptians. The social networks exist as a global media on the one hand, they give possibility for representation of local cultures, support development and sharings of local cultures, on the other. These statements prove that social networks has stand against the hegemony of American culture and language.

Democratization movements in the Arabic semi-island in 2010 has also indicated the significant role of the social networks in the local cultures and nation states. Social media has been one of the most important tools for local cultures to be able to reach global communities, and also to support national unity and organization. It has provided online communication and offline organization between people taking advantages of communication speed.

The movement which is called 'Arab Spring' and invoked a series of rebellions, had begun in Tunisia after the death of 26 age old Muhammed Buazizi, who burned himself after the discussion with the police that he was selling vegetables unauthorizedly. In the process, internet and social media platforms has taken the attention after people poured into the streets to protest the Buazizi's death. Subsequently, springing to Egypt the movement was flamed up through revolutionary messages published in the social media platforms. Various groups who were founded with the aim of calling democratic order, such as "*6 April Youth Movement*", "*We are All Khaled*", "*National Association for Change*" reached Egyptian people using social

media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In the first day of protests 85.000 Egyptians flowed into Facebook to participate the “Revolutionary Day”, and also “6 April Youth Movement” 90.000, “We are All Khaled” over 40.000 followers attracted. In two weeks Egyptians created 32.000 Facebook groups and 14.000 Facebook pages. With shutting off the internet for five days across the entire nation to stop the flows of coordination and communication over social media by Egypt’s president Hüsni Mübarek on January 28, 2011, the incidents were exacerbated further. After prohibition Facebook had the highest number of active users in Egypt, the number of participants in demonstrations increased ten fold. While demonstrations were continuing in Tahrir Square, famous Egyptian rhetorician Amr Khaled had transmitted Arabic messages to his 2 million Facebook followers. Finally, 18 days later than protests had begun, 30 years’ authoritative regime was collapsed in Egypt (Hatem Ali, 2011: 187).

The role of social media in Arab awakening is remarkable. Sassen (2011: 578) stated that revolutionary movement in Egypt was mobilized not only through social media, also took action through the networks of the mosques and television broadcastings of Al Jazeera. Social media gave Egyptians the feelings of power which they have not had previously, people carried their collective power into the streets by organizing social media. In recent times, social media demonstrated similar effects in the countries such as Tunisia, Libya and Iran that has proved the significant role of social media in the developing countries.

Although during the times when internet was not existing spreading of news had taken time, the news from Tunisia and Egypt had spread simultaneously worldwide. Afterwards, the governments of these countries has experienced the loss of reputation in international area only in a few days that would be possible at least in a few week previously. The governments who had security intelligences, tanks, cannons, and guns has stayed helpless against the masses. By using the same language, Arab users has met in the common platforms of social media and has spread the rebellion in a wide geographical area (Halıcı, 2011).

Kodrich & Laituri (2011) has evaluated the significance of communication speed feature of social media through a natural disaster. After the Haiti earthquake in 2011, sharing of disaster news through social media such as Facebook and Twitter and rapid information flows supported the resque works at local scale, substantially. On the other hand, the sharings on social media reached to the global audiences, and provided support to Haiti from all world.

As Özgür Uçkan has mentioned, one of the most effective dimensions of the network organization has been the actions in local environments. Especially, the actions of local communities who were organized in the cities or towns, could increase the effects of networks at a regional, national, global scale (Uçkan, 2010).

RESULTS

As Manuel Castells has emphasized ‘we are indeed in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive. True, the medium, even a medium as revolutionary as this one, does not determine the content and effect of its messages. But it makes possible the unlimited diversity and the largely autonomous origin of most of the communication flows that construct, and reconstruct every second the global and local production of meaning in the public mind’ (Castells, 2007: 248).

In this context, social media has emerged as a new form of interactive communication in the network culture, that the way and the speed of communication has been more effective than its content. Although this culture is global in its structure, also it has taken tremendously effective position at local scale. On the one hand, people from different geographical locations around the world from different religion, language and cultures have come together as if they were citizens of a single country, and they have moved around common ideals. On the other hand, the features provided by that platforms strengthened the common values of local communities. The social network culture has supported the cultural globalization, and it has broken the cultural structure of hegemonic globalization providing participation from the base, giving chance for equity, and supporting diversity, at the same time. Social media has been a considerable medium providing simultaneous, participatory and fast communication around the world and has manifested new dimensions for the global and local cultures.

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