



# WELL-BEING on SOCIAL MEDIA

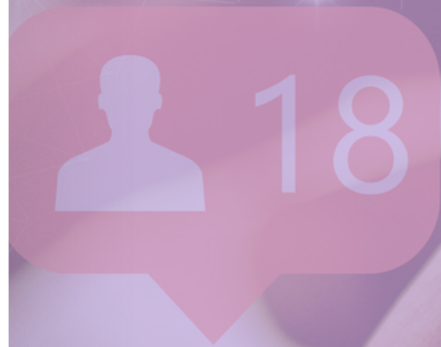
Practical Information Notes of Political Well-Being

**A**

What Can We Do on  
Social Media as  
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Political Struggle  
and Social Media



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**A. What Can We Do on Social Media as Political Subjects?**

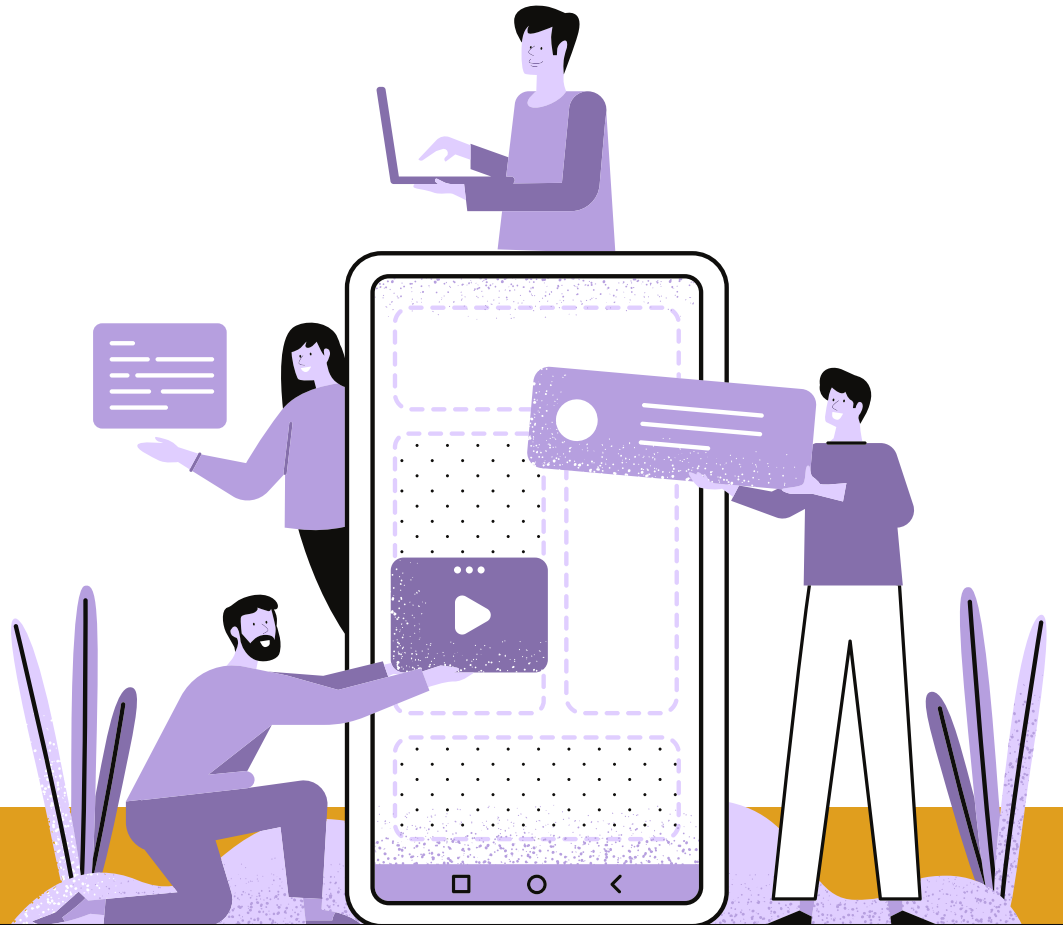
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# A

## What Can We Do on Social Media as Political Subjects?

In today's world, where organizing has become difficult due to both living conditions and the pressure of the current government, social media is the most effective way to hear and announce the alternative, to circulate criticism and comments, and to share ideas and feelings.

For many of us, using this new media is not only an individual way of staying personally connected, but also a political responsibility. In addition to the monopolized media, social media posters/activists have a huge role in ensuring that millions of users, silenced by disinformation, hear alternative voices.

Leaving institutional posts aside, in addition to the posts of journalists, political figures and active political subjects, individual posts that do not seem to be directly related to real politics also find their place in our social media applications' homepage feeds. What we encounter and interact with on social media particularly affects our emotions, shapes our minds and transforms our attitudes. As we post, we cause the same effects on others.

In this sense, as users, we are both sources and consumers; we are both exposers and exposed. Another large group is the silent users. The vast majority of users of social media applications are those who use the application without actively posting. **According to 2022 data, 80 percent of Twitter users have less than ten followers. This shows us that there are millions of people who are on Twitter to receive news and stay connected, not to interact. The posts we circulate on social media are not only seen by those who interact with them, those who use the application by interacting with it themselves; but also by those who are mostly silent for one reason or another, those who have no interaction but want to stay connected.**

*What does it mean to disagree with people with whom you usually agree? How should political actors concerned with emancipation approach internal disagreement? In short, how should we go about critiquing not our enemies or adversaries but those with whom we share emancipatory visions?*

*Because the critique (...) can cut straight to the chase of the specific disagreement, yet must aspire to the comradely ethos.*

**Lukas Sulothuus**

**Comradely Critique**

# To Whom/With Whom Are We Talking?

Let's start by asking ourselves the following questions before we post: If I have the power to create change, in which area/topic can I create this change? How can I create this change? Who can I empower with which kind of posts? For whom can I raise questions? Can I consider this post as an opportunity to strengthen myself intellectually?

**On social media, it should be our priority not to turn into what we criticize in the current political environment.**

We can take it as a responsibility to share effective posts that are not polarizing, raise awareness, provide opportunities for transformation together and do not undermine our well-being. So how can this happen?

**The following principles of nonviolence can be a guide in this regard.**

## **1- Using appropriate means for the purposes**

The ends do not justify the means. On the contrary, choosing the means in line with the ends means that we are already putting our vision into practice. **Whether it involves violence or not, circulating an approach that blocks a common solution sustains the ground that feeds violence. Trying to avoid this approach in our social media posts can be considered as a step we take for the world we dream of.**

## **2- Distinguishing the act from the agent**

Demonizing our opponents does nothing more than creating hostility, or carrying water to the ditch between already established poles. It takes the discussion out of the political sphere. We prefer not to label an agent's behavior as an immutable characteristic of himself/herself or of the identity to which he/she belongs. Instead of targeting people's personalities and identities, we target and describe their actions and reveal the truth. In doing so, we do not antagonize people. In this way, even as we express our stance against what they do with all our fury, we increase the likelihood that they or their followers will change their behavior or even join us.

## **3- Seeking inclusive solutions**

When we criticize, it is useful to also think about solutions and propose them whenever possible. When formulating solutions, we aim to develop inclusive approaches, keep minorities and vulnerable groups in mind, and pay attention not to exclude the followers of the opposing view. When we consider our own and/or others' equally legitimate needs and aspirations in this process, the need for a solution also appears in a different light.

## **4- Refusing both revenge and retreat**

When we post about controversial situations, our aim is not to strike a blow, to intimidate the other person, to score them off, or to make them regret what they said. We do not respond to violence in the same way, and we post from where we stand and based on the truth we know, without seeking revenge or being afraid to express our opinions. On the other hand, this does not mean that we retreat. We create our own third way without getting stuck in the options of either attacking or running away.

## 5- Preferring clarity, transparency and sincerity

We may need privacy to protect the lives and safety of others or ourselves. In such cases, we follow the principles of privacy and confidentiality; we may use pseudonyms, nicknames, fake profile photos. This does not mean being a coward. Sometimes on social media, we display our activism through a persona we create. Expressing ourselves through a persona is not a license to use violent language. As the person who voices a fictional character, we prefer not to use violent language in line with the first principle. **In all circumstances, we aim to be comprehensible by using simple, clear and direct expressions that are not veiled as much as possible.**

## 6- Transforming our anger rather than letting it transform us

Karşılaştığımız pek çok haksızlık, adaletsiz haber, saldırgan paylaşım karşısında duyduğumuz “haklı öfke” sadece anlaşılır olmakla kalmayıp sağlıklı da. Mesele öfkemizi nasıl ele aldığımız – şiddetsizlik yoluyla öfkemizi yapıcı eylem için olumlu bir güce çevirebiliriz. The "righteous anger" we feel in response to so many injustices, unfair news and offensive posts is not only understandable, but it is also healthy. The issue is how we handle our anger. Through nonviolence we can turn our anger into a positive force for constructive action. **Instead of posting reactive content, we can take a step back and calm down, and channel our minds to address the issue in a way that is receivable and comprehensible.**

## 7- Using the power of disengagement

Interacting on social media means staying in constant contact, even when we are debating with our opponents. **If being engaged burdens us emotionally, drains our energy, stresses us out, we can stop engaging so as not to drain our energy.** We can stop sharing posts and stop replying to them. We can unfollow or even block them if we think we are harmed just by being a spectator

On social media, we encounter many users who share subjective and creative posts without using the language of violence. Interacting with these posts, quoting them, allows us to open our minds accordingly. When we do not focus on the language of violence, we realize that the real transformative alternative is there; a non-violent sharing universe with broader options is possible.

Keeping these principles in mind can help us improve in transforming ourselves. We begin not to take criticism personally and not to antagonize our critics. We become more careful about our expressions that may be misunderstood. We can consider the criticism we receive as a ground for dialogue and contribute to our own transformation and we can contact the people we interact with on an emotional and mental basis. Or we can simply ignore the posts we don't like!

## EXERCISE

**Conduct an imaginary debate on an issue with a political group, organization or person with a similar political orientation to yours, but some of whose discourses and approaches you do not agree with.**

Did you have a tendency to emotionalize the other party's political arguments? Were you tempted to say irrelevant things in order to make it difficult for the other party?

Did you think that being right about the subject matter made you right at all levels of the debate?

Did you choose to stop at the point where the discussion became blocked or deadlocked, or did you insist on expressing your rightness?

Did you display an approach that left space for the other party to reconsider their views, to admit mistakes and to repair them?





We can evaluate the recent rise of political correctness in relation to the questions above. People may know more or less about certain issues, they may have difficulty thinking outside the social codes, or they may not have reached sufficient clarity or awareness yet. While focusing on one issue, they may be overlooking another. Can muting, silencing, intimidating the other be considered a win? Transformative political debate happens only when people can express themselves without feeling afraid of being targeted.

## "Whistleblowing and Exposing" as a Political Act

Whistleblowing and exposing can sometimes be confused with each other. Whistleblowing is the act of disclosure by an insider(s) to the judiciary, the press or the public in any other way, of irregularities and practices that are concealed or covered up through power and coercion in power structures taking place within the government, governance structures, large companies in partnership with the state or in the private sector engaged in public affairs.

**Exposure is a tool used in cases where systematic violent practices or behaviors that cannot be resolved through the judiciary cannot be revealed through different communication channels.** It is an act of informing, mostly through social media, in order to demand solidarity from other subjects or to warn those who work with or cooperate with such people or institutions, as well as the public. Especially in cases where there are severe power inequalities based on gender and class, it can lead to the formation of an alternative solidarity and public pressure.

The emotional and mental impact of exposure is very strong for both parties and others in the parties' circles, as well as for witnesses. The fact that this method is not regulated and the roles of those other than the exposing and exposed parties are ambiguous can deepen the problems. In acts of exposure that take place in the social sphere, especially outside the judicial mechanisms, the party with the stronger network and ability to express itself can intimidate the other. Depending on the parties and the balance of power around them, life can go on as if nothing had happened (with the exposer being worn down again and again), or the person who has been exposed can be subjected to a "punishment" that is unpredictable in form and time.

As seen in the 2017 "Me too" movement targeting film producer Harvey Weinstein and in some examples in our country, exposure as a final type of action is a necessary and effective method for acts of violence where there is deep inequality and where social systems like patriarchy allow for normalization and cover-up. **However, due to the severity and extent of its impact and the uncertainty of the political framework and boundaries of practices outside the judicial system, it should not be considered as the first resort.**

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**In conclusion**, the way we interact with each other on social media appears as a microcosm of the world we want to build. Our attitude towards criticism, how we express our rightness, how we respond to injustice, whether we encourage people to go beyond political correctness or whether we adopt an attitude that traps them there, are among the most important factors that shape us, our organization and politics. Can social media be a place of individual and organizational empowerment? It can be. Nevertheless, our primary suggestion is that if you are in a dispute with a person you are acquainted with, you should try to solve the problem by getting together, or if that is not possible, by making a phone call and hearing each other's voices. Seeing each other's faces and hearing each other's voices are important factors that differentiate the process of thinking and coming up with solutions.



## MOVIE / TV SERIES RECOMMENDATION

**Black Mirror: hated in the nation,**  
Dr: James Hawes

**The Hater**  
Dr: Jan Komasa

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- **Beautiful Trouble:**  
<https://beautifultrouble.org/>
- **Carla bergman ve Nick Montgomery, Neşeli Militanlık,**  
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# Political Struggle and Social Media

All obligations under international conventions guaranteeing human rights and fundamental liberties also apply to the use of the internet. In this context, all rights related to freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of assembly, protection from cybercrime, protection of private life and protection of personal data, among others, will be protected on the internet. People, communities, public authorities and private organizations need the internet for their activities. In this respect, the internet is a public service and has a universal utility value. The state has to ensure that citizens have access to the internet at the lowest possible cost.

**In order to use social media politically effectively and comfortably, it is useful to be aware of the legal and technical possibilities and risks.** These possibilities and risks can be about protecting ourselves from others on the internet, as well as about protecting ourselves against corporations and state institutions.

First of all, we all have the right to privacy and protection of personal data. This data can only be collected and processed with consent. Consent can be revoked. Moreover, this consent may not be legally valid if it is obtained by taking advantage of a significant power imbalance between the data subject and the data processor.

**It is prohibited to access personal data from personal devices such as phones, computers, etc. without a court order and with exceptions recognized by law.**

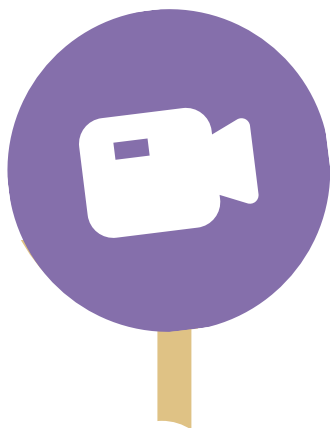
If the automated processing of personal data is of such a nature as to interfere with our private lives, this alone cannot be the basis for any legislative, judicial or administrative decision. We all have the right to access, amend or revoke our personal data, regardless of who is processing it. Moreover, if the data collected is outdated or irrelevant to us due to content or time, we may request the data to be updated or deleted from search engines. However, this right cannot restrict the freedom of research and information and is more limited for public figures.

It is very important to check the reliability of data sources before spreading information on social media. Particularly before getting carried away with striking news, we can use verification and fact-checking websites and platforms such as [en.teyit.org](http://en.teyit.org) and Doğruluk Payı to learn how to verify the news, question whether the news is true or not, and ask for help.

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## VIDEO ACTIVISM

- Video activism, also known as video action, is, in the broadest sense, an effort to mobilize public awareness and create positive social change by using the camera for a social good.
- Video activism is not legally prohibited as long as it does not reveal personal data without permission, does not contain insults, threats or hate speech.



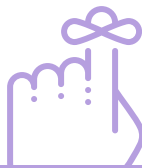
- In the lawsuit filed against the circular issued by the Ministry of Interior General Directorate of Security dated 27/04/2021 and numbered 2021/19 on "Taking audio and video recordings", the 10th Chamber of the Council of State ruled that even in social events, the police cannot prevent people from taking photos and videos. Therefore, there is no ban on taking videos and photographs on the streets in Turkey.

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But at the same time, this information means that there are certain rules for us, too, in the political struggles we are waging digitally:

- We should refrain from using information that may affect a person's family and working life and professional dignity, and health information.
- Right to privacy is fundamental. However, you may use such data with the permission of the relevant person.
- It is necessary to be careful when using information, documents or data related to state secrets (confidential information or documents that, if disclosed, would clearly harm the security, foreign relations, national defense and national security of the state and are state secrets in nature). Whether or not such information has been made public is important in this regard. Acting in accordance with the public interest and the right to access public information can guide you in such cases. You can request such official information and documents from government agencies using the Right to Information Act.
- Be careful when using information or documents relating to administrative investigations by courts or prosecutor's offices and information or documents relating to judicial investigations and prosecutions. In Turkey, the confidentiality of the investigation is fundamental. Access to this information is prohibited to anyone other than the parties to the investigation and their lawyers. Again, as mentioned previously, the publicity of information and its relation to public interest and the right to information carry importance.

- We also have the right to communicate anonymously online in order to exercise our civil and political freedoms without being subjected to discrimination or censorship. **There are no legal provisions preventing the creation of anonymous accounts or accounts with nicknames on social media platforms.**



### REMINDER

**Be careful when using personal data that makes them identifiable in matters concerning the private lives of others.**

For example; data such as name-surname, address, date of birth, ID number, photograph, video, profession, political opinion, religious belief, political activities or trade union activities, income status, telephone number, e-mail address, health status, diseases, DNA and genetic information, fingerprints are personal data.

**As long as there is no insult, threat, targeting, hatred and hate speech; it is free to criticize on social media platforms.** Political figures should be more open to criticism than other citizens. HUDOC and the Turkish Constitutional Court have ruled regarding access blocking, arrest and punishment orders in many cases filed due to criticism on the internet and social media platforms that *"the internet has an important instrumental value in modern democracies in terms of the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular freedom of expression, and that such restrictions are contrary to the requirements of the democratic social order, make freedom of expression unusable in accordance with its purpose and eliminate its effect"*.

# Exemplary judgments from the Turkish Constitutional Court:

- Freedom of expression means the right to have free access to news and information, to the opinions of others; not to be condemned for one's thoughts and opinions and to express, explain, defend, transmit and disseminate them freely, alone or in association with others, in a variety of ways. Therefore, ensuring social and political pluralism depends on the peaceful and free expression of all kinds of opinions. (*Bekir Coşkun \*GK+*, B. No: 2014/12151, 4/6/2015, §§ 33-35; *Mehmet Ali Aydın \*GK+*, B. No: 2013/9343, 4/6/2015, §§ 42, 43; *Tansel Çölaşan*, B. No: 2014/6128, 7/7/2015, §§ 35-38).
- The Constitutional Court has repeatedly stated that freedom of expression under Article 26 of the Constitution and its specially guaranteed form freedom of the press under Article 28 of the Constitution are essential foundations of a democratic society and constitute one of the fundamental conditions for the progress of society and the development of every individual. (*Mehmet Ali Aydın*, § 69; *Bekir Coşkun*, §§ 34-36).
- In this context, freedom of expression and freedom of the press apply to everyone and are vital for the functioning of democracy. (*Bekir Coşkun*, §§ 34-36).
- It is clear that freedom of the press provides the public with one of the best means of communicating and forming opinions about various ideas and approaches on issues of public interest. (*İlhan Cihaner (2)*, B. No: 2013/5574, 30/6/2014, § 63). In addition to the promotion of such information and opinions, the public has the right to receive such information and opinions.
- This includes informing the public about meetings and demonstrations by opposition groups, which is important for the development of any democratic society. Without this, the press cannot play its vital role as a public watchdog. (*Hakan Yiğit*, B. No: 2015/3378, 5/7/2017, § 51; *Kadir Sağdıç \*GK+*, B. No: 2013/6617, 8/4/2015, §§ 49-51, 61-63; *Nihat Özdemir \*GK+*, B. No: 2013/1997, 8/4/2015, §§ 45-47, 57-58).





In conclusion, social media is one of the areas where the fundamental rights and freedoms and political rights of all citizens are protected and practiced. It is certain that social media has an effect that creates public opinion especially for disadvantaged groups based on gender, age, class and body, expands political participation for those who cannot directly participate in political organizations and actions, and makes political criticism visible. But for this, knowing the boundaries where we can protect our own rights and freedoms and where we should stand in a way that does not interfere with the rights and freedoms of others can help us to be safer, more comfortable, creative and in touch with each other on social media.

## REFERENCES

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- **6698 Sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Hakkında Kanun**
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### For more resources:

see **Alternatif Bilişim Derneği yayınları**,  
<https://alternatifbilisim.org/>





[www.politikadaiyilikhali.org](http://www.politikadaiyilikhali.org) 🔍

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