

## **Understanding populism and public outrage as a tool of art censorship**

“Freedom of expression” for an artist and “engagement” for the audience in art are considered among the fundamental priorities of art policies. Countries with diverse implementation of their policies differentiate on procedures, implementation, practices and developments to create participatory spaces in arts and culture. These spaces promote mutual understanding and serve for exchanging ideas between the public and art activists. Therefore art has been always named as one the most important spheres of freedom of expression.

Today’s world however sees these spaces and the freedom of expression being more and more under pressure by opposing, populist forces within societies. Especially with the help of social media and fake news or opinionated coverage of art and artists, these forces try to stimulate public outrage to increase pressure on liberal and critical artists.

Even though that public outrage are nothing new, the potentially lethal weapon becomes more dangerous through social media which increases the pressure on and the risks of non-confirmative artists. Populism may thus prevent artists from working on controversial topics as underlined by the many artists who e.g. declared their concerns about displaying their works about the 2013 Gezi movement in Turkey, although many of them actively participated.

Attempting to dominate these creative and communicative areas by stimulating outrage in diverse media channels can be characterized as a hidden form of censorship. To be able to encounter such attacks this project aims at gaining a better understanding of how public outrage against artists in social media works.

We content analyze more than 50,000 social media posts from diverse social media networks related to different Turkish artists, networks, and incubators. We identify different patterns of art-critique as well as anti-art campaigns and show how they spread across social networks increasing pressure on artists by fuelling public outrage. Our results shall help to better understand the dynamics in potentially steered, fake-based campaigning to protect artists and art from manipulation and public outrage so that the freedom of expression of a critical minority can be protected publicly and defended forcefully.

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