



TAMING THE MACHINES

REGULATED DATA - REGULATED ACTIVISM? DIGITAL ACTIVISM IN THE GDPR ERA

PROFESSOR PAYAL ARORA, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM

Discussing Ethics and Information Technologies

About the Lecture

In a favela ruled by the drug lords in Rio de Janeiro, an activist uses Facebook Live to capture the dealings in his neighborhood, putting himself and some of his community members at risk. In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, a few teenage girls Instagram the fashions of the week, unveiled, an act that can be persecuted by the morality police. In Jammu and Kashmir, some activists through the hashtag #justiceforkathua draw attention to the case of an eight-year old nomadic girl who was gang raped, defying the privacy law on revealing identities of minors. These are just some of the many cases that shed light on the gray area between privacy and protest. Contrary to seeking to be protected through anonymity as the bulk of the current research alludes to, some of those at the margins may choose to put themselves at high risk by being visible and heard. The GDPR, rooted in the Western ideology of individual choice and rights, may have created a privacy universalism, begging the question of whether privacy is a privilege and a luxury. This talk draws from a decade of fieldwork and activism among vulnerable communities beyond the West to grapple with the question of whether privacy and activism are after all compatible.

About the Speaker

Payal Arora is the Founder of Catalyst Lab, a digital activism organization and an Associate Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam. She has consulted for the private and the public sector including for UNESCO, World Bank, hp, The Ministry of Jordan, Kellogg and Siemens. She has published about fifty papers and given more than a 125 presentations in 70 cities and 30 countries, including a TEDx talk on the future of the internet. Arora sits on multiple boards including the Facebook Election Advisory Commission, Columbia University's Connect to Learn, and The World Women Global Council in New York. She is the author of several books on the internet and the Global South including the upcoming 'The Next Billion Users: Digital Life beyond the West' with Harvard University Press.

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