Position Paper: Misconceptions & Discriminations in the Software Decision Making Process in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Today’s burgeoning software profoundly sells hardware; and is critically definable between Free Livre/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) and Proprietary Close Source Software (PCSS). Therefore, this paper argues how and why Turkey has locked-in PCSS, and particularly investigates outcomes and reasons for not using FLOSS in Turkey’s state apparatus in order to demonstrate techno-politics of Turkey. The study used secondary sources of data obtained from Turkey’s public reports, in particular parliamentary written questions and responses reports generated between 2004 and 2013, and studied by Critical Discourse Analysis. Although Ministries in Turkey have repeatedly declared that there is no obligatory protocol(s) and agreement(s) with PCSS and that there is no vendor lock-in issue as criticized in the media and parliament, the evidence, particularly pragmatic techno-sociological perspective has steered State-Scapegoatism that builds-in Obsolescence and indicates that there is techno-politically protected PCSS’s hegemony, particularly Windows monopoly.

Keywords: Free Livre/Libre Open Source Software, Obsolescence, Proprietary Close Source Software, State-Scapegoatism, Techno-Politics

INTRODUCTION

Sociologically speaking, today’s technologies are invisible and ubiquitous; and, they are arisen as an integral part of our lives, such as wearable technology and can be distinguished between hardware and software. Nevertheless, today’s software is burgeoning to profoundly sell hardware in general purpose computing - e.g. present technology has no responsive function whatsoever without software applications, such as Operating Systems (OSs) or the Internet. This makes software an interesting but sophisticated phenomenon. Concordantly, software is also critically definable between Free Livre/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) and Proprietary Close Source Software (PCSS). The software literature perceives FOSS as a running movement that has been motivated by a variety of agencies (voluntaries, governments, etc.) and influences of technological accelerating since the 1980s. FOSS is in an indignation commissure and a powerful phenomenon as artefact and human re-shaped each other to lead a better future (Weber, 2004). As evident in the literature, many authors seem to join the stream by viewing FLOSS as a new social movement because sociologically, not philosophically, “information doesn’t want to be

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free, people do” (Doctorow, 2013). In the sociology of technological singularity, why FLOSS is critical has been eloquently clarified by Peters,

*Open cultures*” [FLOSS] “become the necessary condition for the system as a whole, for the design of open progressive technological improvements and their political, epistemic and ontological foundations. (2013, p.49)

For those of us interested in analysing the sociology of technological knowledge, if we agree with the above quotation, then we should ascertain whether or not Turkey has locked-in PCSS, and if so, how and why has Turkey ended up to fundamentally study outcomes and reasons for not using FLOSS in the state apparatus in Turkey. This paper uses a peculiar case study for the purpose of demonstrating misconceptions and discriminative motives behind the decision making process in techno-politics of Turkey. Techno-politics refers to an emergent property of technology, policy and management, in which each element has particular purpose(s) of existence, but when they are joined together, multiplicities of relatively complex interactions are ensued. Therefore, the overall aim and contribution of the paper is to increase an understanding of the underlying socio-political imperatives behind the techno-politics of Turkey in the specific context of PCSS.

To realise the aims of the paper, this study is structured into six sections. In terms of methodology, I clarify how the data is studied based on critical discourse analysis. I shall then argue that while Ministries in Turkey repeatedly declare that there is no obligatory protocol(s) and agreement(s) with PCSS and that there is no issue on vendor lock-in as claimed in the media and parliament, the evidence indicates the plausibility of techno-politically protected PCSS’s hegemony, particularly *Windows monopoly*. After inquiring on how pragmatic philosophies of technological movements have failed to ascertain the logical necessity of technological liberation in techno-politics, I extend my arguments to illustrate why Turkey has ended up with this way. Consequently, this study asserts that Governments in Turkey should be guilty of what is analogous to techno-politics, namely the rejection of valid technological knowledge between FLOSS and PCSS since their approaches to techno-politics is based on pragmatic techno-sociological perspective (e.g. de-facto governance), but negative externality of that perspective is certainly driven by state-scapegoatism that builds-in obsolescence. Thus, it has become seemingly unfeasible in meeting present and future needs. Indeed, someone may still postulate that Turkey never wants to be a controller of her techno-politics (adapters) and remain a pure controlled (adopter), as many other similar individual-nations.

Brief introductory note, Turkey has had a novel Linux project, which is FLOSS based OS, and the mother of the Internet-based technology. The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey - the Turkish National Academic Network and Information Centre (TUBITAK-ULAKBIM) from 2003 to 2012 localised/developed Pardus-Linux which is a nationally distributed Linux-based OS-distros. Since then, the Pardus-Linux project has been deliberately converted into Pardus Debian, as a sufficient solution of FOSS in Turkey. From 2004, there have been instances where Pardus-Linux has been publicly used as leverage to obtain better deals from Microsoft. For instance, in 2012, Microsoft made 5TL reduction for each licence in the scope of the Fatih Project which is the current and future technological educational project. Nevertheless, the journey of the Pardus project is controversial due to simulator/detrimental interferences from the Governments. For example, it is unclear why Pardus has not achieved its objectives and become Pardus Debian; or why Pardus has been deliberately used as leverage, etc. These are other research questions that need to be addressed carefully.
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