

Alternative Media and Participation

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January 2014 ISBN 978-2-9601157-4-1

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PARTICIPATION IN RADICAL MEDIA IN TURKEY IN THE 1970S

An attempt to trace the roots of the history of radical media in Turkey can arguably start with a number of socialist-oriented publications that were published during the first years of the 20th century, corresponding to the last period of the Ottoman Empire. The first radical media channels appeared within the circles that were initiated by Bulgarian, Greek, Armenian, Jewish and Turkish socialists that identified themselves as left-wing or socialist (Tunçay, 1967) in the Rumelian cities of the Ottoman Empire as well as in Istanbul and Izmir. A significant part of the radical media practices in Turkey, whose very first outlets include *İşçiler Gazetesi* (*Workers' Journal*), *İştirak* (*Associate*), *İnsaniyet* (*Humanity*), and *Medeniyet* (*Civilization*), has been continued within the socialist circles till today.

Throughout the history of radical media in Turkey, the 1970s appear to be the period during which socialist publishing was at its most powerful stage. These years witnessed the rise of social opposition in Turkey, the strengthening of extra-parliamentary

opposition channels and the widespread and effective mobilization of radical left-wing movements that were aiming for change with revolutionary means. Many of the socialist movements were referred to with the titles of the journals they published, and these journals were one of the main tools that allowed the movements to mobilize themselves during this period. Socialist journals of this period can be framed as similar to those that John Downing (2001: 67-69) terms the “Leninist model” in radical media literature. In other words, the socialist movements of the 1970s in Turkey carried out their radical media activities with a Leninist perspective. Our main thesis in this article, in which we will strive to lead a discussion on radical media and participation through *Devrimci Yol* (*Revolutionary Way*), a journal that used to have the highest sales rate in Turkey during the 1970s, is that the Leninist media model does not close its doors to the channels of participation that are viewed as a fundamental aspect of radical media practices, but it organizes these channels in its own style.

Leninist Model and Participation as a Radical Media Perspective

Media practices of the new social movements that became widespread in the West in the 1960s and 1970s had an important role in shaping radical media literature. Theorists and scholars who took these practices as their point of departure (Downing, 2001; Atton, 2002; Vatikiotis, 2004; Bailey et al., 2008) have determined three basic criteria when defining radical publishing: the ownership structure, the production process and the content of the text. Accordingly, radical media have generally a non-profit

collective ownership structure, a horizontally organized production process, and aim to include political ideas that the hegemonic discourses exclude. However, these criteria posit a number of constraints in terms of understanding the problem of participation in the working class press that extends far back to the new social movements of the working class and socialist radical media practices. Historical references of the perspective named the “Leninist model” will be of help to overcome these constraints.

Emerging as a communications model propounded by Lenin in his quest to organize the socialist struggle that began in Russia before the October Revolution, the Leninist model of radical media has generally been mentioned and evaluated in regard to the practices of the 20th century communist parties. These assessments criticize the publication practices of communist parties due to their monolithic, over-centralized structure that privileges the party elite and their organization which is closed to participation (Downing, 2001: 67-69). However, as John Downing also warns, although the Leninist perspective -embodying agitation and propaganda- is open to criticism, it contributes to the radical alternative media in terms of creating a movement that aims for social change (2001: 69). When the texts in which Lenin discusses the issue are considered, it can be suggested that the Leninist radical media comprises the following basic principles: first of all, the Leninist radical media, just like other radical media practices, require a non-profit collective ownership structure located outside the commercial networks. It promotes a revolutionary call in

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Radical Media, Leninist Model,

Revolutionary Way, 1970s, Printed Media

the face of a hegemonic political discourse, and, regarding its features, has parallels with the radical media criteria listed above. However, it differs in terms of its organization with respect to the production process. The reason for this differentiation is that the Leninist model of radical media has a democratic centralist structure rather than a horizontal organization that excludes hierarchy. In this model, publications are considered to be an organizing tool for the entire socialist movement. In this context, political agitation and propaganda activities are conducted in order to develop working class consciousness, and publications constitute a channel for transmitting the political perspective developed by the movement to the masses and sharing experience, strength and resources among the masses. This way radical media also help the struggle led throughout various regions of a country in order to attain collectivism at a national level (Lenin, 1998: 182-183).

It could be argued that in this model participation occurs at the levels of content production and distribution of publication. More specifically, participation in socialist publications is rendered possible in a number of ways including interference/contribution possibilities for readers in forming the content of the media via letters, evaluation articles, local news and a collective effort as regards to the finance and distribution of the journal.

General Features of the *Revolutionary Way* Journal

The *Revolutionary Way* journal was published in Turkey between the years 1977-1980 by the *Revolutionary Way* movement,

one of the strongest and widespread radical left-wing movements of the time. *Revolutionary Way* is a political movement that aims to achieve a revolution in Turkey and foresees an armed people's war for its realization. It has positioned itself on a Marxist-Leninist line independently from either side of the Communist Party of China-Communist Party of the Soviet Union polarization, which was the subject of a significant divergence for the worldwide socialist movement of that period. Despite setting the goal of becoming a political party in the first place, *Revolutionary Way* has been unable to reach this goal and instead, preserved its form as a widespread popular movement that has been active in many regions of Turkey. The popularity of the movement has also influenced the circulation of its journal, which became one of the best-selling socialist publications of its time. Indeed, some of its issues did sell more than one hundred thousand copies (Yazıcı, 2013: 214; Pekdemir, 2007).

The first six issues of the journal were published every two weeks on a regular basis; however, this regularity could not be perpetuated with the later issues, and the journal was published on a monthly basis until 1980 although with a number of disruptions (36 issues were published in total from the publication of the first issue on May 1st, 1977 until June 1980, yet only three issues were published in 1980). Aside from the paper shortage that accompanied the major economic crisis in the country, the main reason for the disruption of its publication was the ban implemented as a consequence of the martial law introduced throughout various regions of Turkey

after 1979. The reason for the closure of the journal were the ban on all socialist publications in the country enacted by the National Security Council, founded after the 1980 military coup d'état, as well as the arrest of a significant number of founders, members, and sympathizers of the *Revolutionary Way* movement.

Revolutionary Way stands out as a journal that combines the two otherwise distinct publication approaches which were adapted by the leftist movements in Turkey in the 1970s, namely theoretical publications that addressed the militants of movements on one hand, and popular newspaper/magazine publications that addressed the masses on the other.

Channels of Participation in the *Revolutionary Way* Journal

It could be said that the main venue of the *Revolutionary Way* journal, in which participation is relatively limited, comprises articles that perform the function of "guideline", which was termed by Lenin (1998: 180) and which constitutes one of the fundamental missions of the Leninist media. For a Leninist movement, publication is a tool for addressing the societal groups to incorporate into the movement, addressing at the same time from within the movement itself coordinating the activists/sympathizers and organizing the movement at ideological, political and organizational levels. Examining the content of *Revolutionary Way*, one can conclude that guidance is provided through political analyses on the first few pages, theoretical debates and polemical writings on the middle pages, and then the educatory texts for activists, and texts that explicate

the rules that activists have to abide by during mass practices, in its final pages. All of these texts were written by the editorial board, namely the founders of the movement, and were published anonymously. These texts appear to be the ones in which the reader/writer dichotomy is the most apparent throughout the journal.

It could be claimed that the part of the production process that is the most open to participation pertains to the readers' letters as well as texts that facilitate the sharing of the experiences of struggle through local news. One-third of the texts in the journal were written by those who identified themselves as activists, sympathizers, partisans, workers, peasants, students, prisoners and representatives of various non-governmental organizations. This indicates a relative plurality of writers in the journal on the one hand and a spatial plurality on the other. Those that greeted the journal's invitation as a sincere one and that lived in rather distant provinces, counties and villages where it was difficult to make oneself heard, and those attending high schools in remote places, as well as those in prisons where the system had established a tight regulation founded a way to join the movement through their accounts, and this way contributed to *Revolutionary Way's*. The journal was seen then not only as a media organ but as a medium for rhetorical interaction as well. This situation is compatible with the basic functions of the Leninist model of radical media. Because, according to Lenin, communication led by revolutionary goals in cities through publications becomes the guiding principle; through which the exchange of experiences

is accomplished; and a success achieved in a region is announced as an example for the other regions to work better as the scope of the organizing activities is widened. This way comrades living in different parts of the country are granted the opportunity to benefit from one another's experience (1998: 182-183).

Finally, the collective organization of financing and distribution as well as content production can be cited as an important channel of participation that breaks the publisher/reader dichotomy and contributes to the maintenance of a relative equilibrium among the leaders, members, supporters, and sympathizers of the movement. Mass street sales, distributions in the slum areas and in university campuses and activities that contributed to the financing of the journal such as nocturnal gatherings of solidarity rendered the readers of the journal active agents by breaking the producer/consumer dichotomy and made its publication activity an indispensable aspect of its political praxis. This situation is consistent with the thesis that historically, radical media cannot be considered separately from social struggles, and, we can add, neither can it be excluded from participatory practices.

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FEMINIST MEDIA IN TURKEY IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

Women from different political ideologies in Turkey have formed a collective subjectivity based on "women's experiences" for thirty-five years. Women have organised several campaigns, published journals and magazines, established various associations, shelters, and libraries to look for equality with men, to set up solidarity among women for their rights and against all-pervasive male dominance, and to make their voices heard.

As is cited by John D. H. Downing (2001: 18-19), Sheila Rowbotham directs our attention to the fact that "all movements in resistance to humiliation and inequality" discover, nurture and communicate their wisdoms and visions. These movements, in fact, require creating their alternative ways and forms of communication. Thus, it is no coincidence that Stella Ovadia (1994: 55-57) identifies the moments of the Turkish feminist movement from 1975 to 1994 in terms of feminist magazines and journals. Both Şirin Tekeli and Ayşe Düzkan & Meltem Ahıska argue that there have been two strategies adapted by feminists to construct their identities in the media (Düzkan & Ahıska, 1994: 145-167; Tekeli, 1989: 34-42): (1) to edit special issues for journals or prepare special pages at leftist newspapers, and (2) to directly publish their own independent journals. The latter has created the most widespread platform for women to speak up for their rights in Turkey (Mardin, 1996: 22). Feminist media as a social movement media, quite different than its radical leftist

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**Feminist Media, Magazines, 1980s,
Gender, Printed Press**

predecessors in the 1970s, brought forth the gender oppression both beyond and with the economic, and it is more in line with “self-management tradition” where “neither party, nor labour union, ... , nor state, nor owner is in charge” (Downing, 2001: 69).

The questions that guide our general outlook in this short essay on the traces of feminist alternative media in Turkey in the second half of the 1980s and in the 1990s are:

-How have feminists considered the issue of relaying women’s words on media in Turkey?

-Have they applied different strategies to make their multiple voices heard? (Köker, 1997).

Different factions within the feminist movement published diverse journals at different time intervals in the late 1980s and 1990s. Here, we take into consideration *Feminist* (1987), *Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs* (Socialist Feminist Cactus, 1988), *Mavi Çorap* (Blue Stockings, 1993), *Eksik Etek* (Missing Skirt, 1994), *Pazartesi* (Monday, 1995), *Roza* (in Kurdish, Pink 1996).¹

The survival of these journals depends on volunteering practices of women to construct a common vocabulary and a somehow common voice for a group belonging, not on professional interests. Thus, financial

¹ For the online archive of three of them, see <http://www.pazartesidergisi.com/> *Pazartesi* (106 issues from March 1995 to Nov 2005), *Feminist* (7 issues: March, May and October in 1987, March 1988, March and August 1989, and March 1990) and *Kaktüs* (12 issues: May, July, Sept, Nov, 1988, Jan, April, June, Sept, Dec 1989, Feb, March, Sept, 1990). For *Eksik Etek*, see Atakul, 2013.

pressures as well as work overload have led women to prepare short-lived media with a limited number of issues.

In the first issues, the narratives focus more on the process and the milieu of production, collaborative work and fulfilling friendships rather than on publication policies and principles, which exemplifies the more participatory and perhaps intimate nature of feminist media as social movement media (e.g. *Pazartesi*, 1995: 1). Against the hierarchical organizations in the media sector, these narratives have been among the efforts of promoting a collective identity of women. Another instance of such efforts is the refusal of professional roles that sometimes resulted in ironic cases as in *Eksik Etek* (Missing Skirt) where the name of the journal was recorded as the name of the chief editor that was expected to sign documents as the responsible person (*Eksik Etek*, 1996: 2). A refusal of the commercial media’s personalisation of the collective movement also directed women to use only their first names (Köker, 1997: 36-7), which also implied the refusal of using fathers’ or husbands’ surnames, the denial of patriarchy.

In feminist journals under consideration, no special pages were devoted to particular areas of expertise, indicating a tendency against specialization (Köker, 1997: 37). Each and every subject related to women’s life found place in the publications such as institutional and daily problems in working life; domestic violence; male dominance over women’s bodies; local, national and international examples of women organisations within unwritten “her story” (unlike “histories”

written from the perspective of men instead of women); representation of women in popular culture; reactions against the division between modern and traditional women; evaluations of the politics of Muslim women communities and assessments on Turkish political circumstances. Among them, two particular issues were more manifest in alternative women journals: domestic violence and political organisations of women (Köker, 1997: 38). In the late 1980s, *Feminist* and (Socialist Feminist) *Kaktüs* mediated the discussion of strategies, preparation of campaigns, and their announcement. “Campaign for Solidarity against Domestic Violence” in 1987 and “Purple Needle against Sexual Harassment” in November 1989 were among their early campaigns.² Then, in the 1990s, *Mavi Çorap*, *Eksik Etek*, *Roza* and *Pazartesi* helped organising meetings for women’s groups. In the same decade, Kurdish women’s journals and gay and lesbian journal, *KaosGL*, made a cross-cultural contribution to the women movement by focusing on ethnicity and sexual tendency (Köker, 1997: 41, 39). The

² As is stated in the Socialist Feminists’ website, anniversaries of those campaigns were celebrated in 2007: “Starting with the festival organised in honour of the 20th anniversary of the Campaign for Solidarity against domestic violence, a series of activities which bear the specific colour and stamp of feminists were launched. This festival was followed by a support campaign for sex workers who were candidates to parliament in the general election of July 22, by the Purple Needle campaign, re-activated after nearly two decades, by the “line of political resistance” set up by feminists prior to the adoption of the Social Insurance and General Health Insurance law and other actions. The politics behind these campaigns and actions took its aspiration from a feminist standpoint that considers male dominance as all pervasive and aims to set up women against this problem as a collective political subject. A radical, subversive feminism started to make its voice to be heard again.” (Socialist Feminist Collective, 2008).

last crucial point about content is that, as a rule, none accepted advertisement.

Just like their counterparts in other countries, the form of the journals shows the differences and variety of the women’s movement. Women used cheap but quality papers, mostly colourful, sometimes underlined, maybe with an ornamental strip. They were more like women’s notebooks with original layouts.

Alternative women journals were mostly published in Istanbul. Between 1928 and 1994, 90% of all were from Istanbul, 5% in Ankara, 3% in Izmir (Mardin, 1996: 27). Thus, feminist media in Turkey were not produced at the local level. Most of them could not enter the national distribution network of periodicals - with the exception of *Pazartesi*. Their distribution was either via subscription or via using personal contacts to arrange particular selling points, mostly book stores.

In recent years, “many women’s groups have mobilized for causes such as the empowerment of women against domestic violence, the denouncement and punishment of honour crimes, the improvement of women’s employment, and for making participation in schooling attainable for women, through various modifications strengthening women’s status in the constitution and laws, which enhance women’s position.” (Socialist Feminist Collective, 2008). Today, feminists go back to the old days to get mobilized and struggle against the government’s policies about abortion and about prioritizing family over women’s rights along with continuing to combat domestic violence

and honour crimes. Thus, we must add, enhancing women's position in Turkey under conservative government's rule has become a much harder task and feminist media³ should have much to offer.

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³ *Uçan Haberler* (Flying News) and *Amargi* as recent instances of feminist media are covered in this booklet by Esengül Ayyıldız in her essay and by Hatice Çoban Keneş in the interview with Aksu Bora.

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BIA AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Independent Communication Network (ICN-BIA) was founded in 2001 by the representatives of TTB (Turkish Medical Association) and TMMOB (Union of Chamber of Engineers and Architects), independent journalists and local journalists, and journalism scholars who were seeking to constitute a news platform alternative to the mainstream media (Alankuş, 2011). The main question in this short essay is whether BIA also constitutes an alternative to the mainstream in terms of audience participation.

BIA and audience participation can be divided roughly into two phases in terms of BIA's change of course in its history. In its first phase, the focus was on local journalism, and then BIA turned its face to create citizens' media (Rodriguez, 2000) that was based on ethically and politically responsible rights-based journalism.

In BIA's first phase, participation was thought of in terms of strengthening local newspapers, local radio and TV stations in order to change their role from speculative/event-based national news supporting platforms of the mainstream media to a direct and pluralist news production outlet in their own terms. This change aimed to make their own voices heard nationwide more frequently and in more news reports of their own choice. Supported by a range of internationally funded projects, which also secured BIA's independence from governmental and corporate influence, considerable part of BIA's first phase was also devoted to instructional seminars organised in several regions of Turkey, and reaching approximately 1300 local journalists.

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After three years dedicated to the establishment of the basis of independent journalism via an independent network, a search for a new understanding of BIA's operations emerged. In one of the booklets of BIA's education series, *Media and Ethics*, Sevda Alankuş (2005: 59; see also 2013) developed the concept of "ethically and politically responsible journalism". This was understood as a practice that would go against conventional rules of Turkish mainstream journalism, and its ethical codes, by assuming that mainstream news reporting typically neglected human, women's and children's rights both because of its routine priorities and its *modus operandi*.

Thus, in its second phase, BIA put its efforts in promoting a new, dynamic understanding of journalism that focused on rights by promoting the concept and practice of human, women, children-rights-based news reporting with a particular focus on the last two that "refer not only to following up rights violations and re-framing the news in its entirety from women's and children's rights perspectives, but also re-defining conventional news reporting practices" (Alankuş, 2011) and codes. In this second phase, the focus of BIA's educational seminars and books included media monitoring, and radio and news production, that were established especially to support local media that do not have enough human and technical resources for those productions. Topics included rights violations that were examined through routine and investigative reports, made accessible on BIA's online news website, bianet.org.

"Rights-focused reporting", "peace journalism", "citizens' media", are concepts that BIA has articulated first in Turkey and are all political

choices against the widespread violation of rights that require a long-term commitment. The Bianet news platform does not acquire its force from "unbiased" reporting and pseudo-objectivity but from its commitment to rights-focused reporting and its trustworthiness. In fact, audience participation is not considered as an easy way up to use interactive technologies that most of the mainstream media, copying alternative media experiences of once, claim to provide. Instead, journalistic training and educational materials, along with the solidarity within an already existing left-leaning political community of journalists and scholars, are thought to be the real instigators of participation.

Ahmet Taylan's (2012) extensive study on Bianet mainly takes its definition of participation from the first phase as it contains interviews with local journalists (414-469) along with the project coordinators and editorial staff working at BIA News Centre in Istanbul (369-414). However, there were not only local journalists but also volunteers from different parts of the world, who simply dropped by or sent e-mails to the BIA News Centre in Istanbul to report news. Moreover, the educational network of BIA was extended to communication students in later years. An instance with a considerable impact is the project, "From the Classroom to the Newsroom" which has been organised annually since 2007. Here last year students of communications attend the extensive five-days-long seminars and visit alternative media and rights organisations. Workshops are carried out by communication scholars and journalists every summer. Students prepare their multi-media assignments consisting of right-focused news items at the end of the course. Those students

and their close contacts then keep providing news to bianet (some students even initiated their own news websites such as <http://jiyan.org>). Besides, BIA opens a space for investigative reporting practice for communication students that cannot find a room in the university or faculty publications and helps to establish a kind of "participatory community".

Although this network mainly consists of faculties of communication graduates that show instances of participatory practices in the Bianet news production process, there is also one particular group that prevails when looking at the structural aspects of participation, namely the women's movement (for these dimensions of participation, see Carpentier, 2011: 15-135). Activist women not only send news reports and visual materials, but they also intervene into the editorial decision-making process of bianet.org (Kejanlıoğlu, et al., 2012).

The Turkish political history and its legal framework have not allowed social movement media to live its full course or community media to flourish. BIA's attempt to set up a volunteer and participatory community of citizens' media under such conditions, even if it is still limited, led to hear voices of several underrepresented groups, and thus to think that "another communication is possible" (Çelenk, 2007).

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VIDEO ACTIVISM IN TURKEY AS A CASE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA PRACTICE: GEZI RESISTANCE IN FOCUS

Social movements throughout their history not only discover new means that are most suited to the nature of the idea they try to propagate, but also develop creative methods of propagating their oppositional stance. Since the end of the 1960s, easier access to devices with recording capacity has helped video activism to find a prominent place within the radical/alternative media repertoire of social movements. Since the late 1970s, the spirit of guerrilla television has continued taking up new forms through street tapes, home videos, oral histories, ethnographic tapes, process tapes, and nonfiction explorations of political, social, and cultural themes (Chapman, 2012: 42). Video activism has developed as a form of activism which aims at extending the participation of the people and making the voices and the demands of the activists heard, and is contrasted with the mainstream media, accused to be either blind to the reporting of social demonstrations or for conveying their messages crookedly. Finally, the widespread use of new media and Internet broadcasting eliminates the problem of distribution, which used to be an important obstacle for alternative practices.

Although the relationship between socialist movements and alternative media in Turkey dates back to the beginning of the

20th century, feminist, environmentalist, anti-militarist, ethno-political, LGBT movements and human rights advocates have delivered a considerable alternative media output both in press and online since the 1990s. The diversity in quality of these outputs is significant. Video activism already had a place, though limited, in the media of social movements in Turkey, and video activist groups such as *Karahaber* and *Balıkbilir* (Doğanay & Kara, 2013), whose members were mostly students, recorded the footages of various protests and shared them in social networks and websites. However, it is with the Gezi Park protests in Summer 2013 that video activism emerged as a widespread social opposition media practice.¹

During the Gezi protests a great number of independent activists shared their video streams on social networks as a response to the mainstream media that opted for a broadcasting policy hampering proper flow of information. Demonstrations were recorded via amateur or professional cameras and via cell phones. Thousands of people from various age groups and formations shared thousands of video streams as of June 2013. Live broadcasts were online starting from the first day of the demonstrations. These videos and broadcasts not only made the police violence against the protesters visible, but also conveyed different forms

¹ The initial protest in Istanbul opposed the urban development plan, which would end with the replacement of Taksim Gezi Park with a shopping mall and possible residence. The protests sparked with the brutal eviction of the park and the police's attack to the protestors with tear gas and water cannons. Subsequently, the protests have spread across Turkey and broadened into anti-government demonstrations.

of protest and demands of the protesters.

In this essay, we focus on the types of video activism that emerged during the Gezi protests. We intend here to set a starting point for further research on the potential of video activism in enlarging the public discussion via creating alternative media of the social movements. Accordingly, we specify a set of agents that recorded and broadcasted footages of the Gezi protests from the first day onwards. We used face-to-face interviews and correspondences with a particular subset and attended various meetings held by video activists.

Footages from the first day of the Gezi Park resistance onwards were recorded personally by protesters, yet an excessive and continuous recording effort followed the brutal intervention of the police. Mainstream media neglected this brutality on the third day of the occupation of the park (the night of May 31, 2013). Thus, an initiative by the activists to create their own media became urgent. A media desk, a live-broadcast coordination centre and a field studio had already been established in Gezi Park on the second day after the intervention, and workshops on the principles of video activism and on the methods of safe video recording, as well as live broadcasting had been organized. Video activism, though initially mostly by personal attempts, became organised or semi-organised in due process to maintain coordination and to classify and store the footages. Establishing the visual memory of the resistance created a number of formations which collected video streams to document police brutality

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Video Activism, Social Movements,
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and store the footages in a partially classified manner. These include websites as Istanbuldaneoluyor.com, everywheretaksim.net/tr, occupygezivids.tumblr.com, delilimvar.tumblr.com or groups such as *videOccupy*, *çekimyapankadınlar*, *ekip mat*. Meanwhile, new live broadcasting groups were formed, including: *Ankaraeylemvakti*, *ÇapulTv*, and *Naber Medya*. Those who recorded and shared footages personally; those who recorded and stored footages, and those who didn't participate in the demonstrations but recorded videos streams from their homes and balconies for evidence should also be mentioned. Broadly speaking, one may argue that workers of the film sector, scriptwriters, documentarians and students of faculties of communication were present in the 'field'. We may, consequently, refer to the post-Gezi situation as the 'multi-video activism' on the grounds of the multiplicity of the agents, channels and incentives throughout the incidents.

The agents of the multi-video activism can be divided into three categories: 1) those people or activists filming during the Gezi protests who turned into video-activists; 2) those who were previously engaged with video activism and carried it into new forms or organizations during the Gezi protests; and 3) live broadcasters and those tended to alternative television broadcasting.

Those who belong to the first group were mainly from the circles related to video activism prior to Gezi. Some of them, started with recording the demonstrations in which they participated personally. Another group consists of documentarians, students

of cinema and television departments or professionals. The members of these groups had shooting experiences beforehand but those experiences were mainly designed to represent realities that were previously fictionalised, planned or edited. During the Gezi resistance, they were at the scene either to document what was happening or because they were participating in the demonstrations themselves and felt the necessity to record them. Most of the agents adapted video-activism as a form of activism during the course of the demonstrations not only to protest the attitude of the mainstream media but also to document the police brutality that they faced. Some shared footages immediately, yet others collected these footages to make a documentary later or to constitute the visual memory of the incidents. However, in all cases, the filming agent was aware of her/his importance in the so-called 'logistic support' for the demonstrators as the third eye. Such a presence may pose a possible future legal 'threat' for those who exercise excessive violence and for those who take people into custody for no reason; and may create control over the level of violence.

Initially activists were hesitant about the use of cameras since they used to be associated with the police or the mainstream media, but in due process, this tool took new meanings. Activists and video activists became acquainted with each other. The shared footages triggered the public awareness about the demonstrations and invoked new activists to participate. Camera as a motivator for the activists was recognized as an 'activist' itself. At that

point, the filming agents turned into a video-activist rather than an ordinary footage recorder or camera owner. Video activists started to position themselves as activists and appeared either in front of or behind the barricades instead of being side by side with the press. The filming agent's previous knowledge and choices about the position of the camera or editing also evolved. The agents started to see the demonstrations or the field as an activist, and not through the professional perspective of the filmmaker.

The second group contains those who are already video activists. Members of this group attended the demonstrations with a consciousness that filming is activism in itself. Most of them being university students or graduates, these agents participated in the Gezi Park resistance in the initial phases and recorded personally; but after the violent intervention of the police and the popularization of the incidents, came together and started recording and sharing more systematically. *VideOccupy*, for instance, was formed due to the coordination needs among the people who were interested in video recording and who were present in the Park but not necessarily knew each other. The footages were broadcasted on their blogs and on web TV channels. Once they were broadcasted, the audience also shared them in various Internet sites and social networks.

Another type of video activism practice that took place during the Gezi resistance is the live-broadcasting. The experiences of *Naber medya* (nabermedya.tv), *AnkaraEylemVakti* (eylemvakti.tv) and *ÇapulTv* (capul.tv)

are prominent examples in that group. Live broadcasting activists consider live broadcasts as a means to overcome disinformation and misinformation since live broadcasts have, in the words of broadcasters themselves, the power to "represent what happens at the moment as it is." The activists produced live broadcasts to maintain coordination. They believe that live broadcasts have an effect of keeping the resistance upright. According to the activists, live broadcast may encourage those who are watching to participate in the demonstrations as new agents. In that respect, live broadcasting has a substantial contribution in video activism. The live broadcast activists consider the presence of a live broadcasting camera as a means to prevent police brutality. Accordingly, even if the police could confiscate the cameras of video activists or break them, the footage was already broadcasted live, recorded, and shared with the public. Another common point about the importance of live broadcasting is that the editing phase is by-passed in the video streams and a trust relationship develops between those who participate the demonstrations and those who record images. This relationship also determines the attitude of revealing (or hiding) the faces of the demonstrators during the live broadcast. Such a decision is personally made by the filming agent and is mostly based on personal trust relations and on the possibility that the demonstrator may or may not be harmed legally because of the live broadcast.

These experiences of multiple video forms of activism are important for six reasons.

First of all, these experiences revealed the fact that the mainstream media are not the only source of information for citizens. In that respect, mainstream media had the difficulty to sustain their policy of total negligence of the incidents. Secondly, through its mediation, the demands of the resistance became visible in the national and international arena, and they were consequently placed on the public agenda. Thirdly, it revealed the police brutality and mediated a control mechanism over it, at least partially. For instance, the murderer of Ethem Sarısülük, who had been killed by a bullet from a police gun in Ankara, was identified thanks to the video streams recorded by one of the demonstrators. Fourthly, it encouraged the participation in the demonstrations, helped people from different perspectives and identities to be a part of the demonstrations and reinforced the legitimacy of the opposition. Fifth of all, it can be considered as an initial step into the construction of the memory of the social opposition in Turkey: there are tens of thousands of streams of the Gezi resistance that wait to be classified in the archives. Access to each and every one of these streams not only keeps the common memory of the opposition upright and alive but also plays an important role in forming a common language. Finally, these multiple video activisms that emerged and spread out during the Gezi protests portray the plurality and the multitude of the voices of the opposition.

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CRITICAL ACTIVIST MEDIA OF WITCHES: FLYING BROOM

This essay focuses on the communication media established by the Flying Broom Women Reporters Network and on Flying Broom as a critical-activist media movement in the counter public sphere of the women's movement in Turkey. This network, in which the women are activists, narrators and journalists, is investigated as a sphere of resistance and a new communication activism experience.

This essay is based on a larger study on the alternative media, social movements and women's movement in Turkey which contains in-depth interviews with the editor in chief of the Flying Broom Women Reporters Network and observations from conferences organized, or participated, by activists of the organization as spokespersons. Another data source www.ucansupurge.org, is the web site of the organization.

Flying Broom and the Women Reporters Network as a Counter-Public Form

Founded in Ankara in 1996, Flying Broom gives communication a central role in an environment where the women movement has developed a significant counter-public sphere form that aims to influence public policies. It has established its own links with an increasing number of women's organizations and taken a prominent role in different protest forms. According to Selen Doğan, an activist and Editor in Chief of the Flying Broom News Center (interview, 2012), these are the main activities of the organization:

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Women Media, Journalism, Local Media, Gender Studies, Media Literacy

1. The Flying Broom Women's Communication and Research Association, which aims to work in the field and expand the use of communication tools to the grassroots. It extends its works from Ankara to other cities and regions by holding regional meetings. It also uses a number of initiatives to engage with its audiences,

2. The Flying News Bulletin, which started to be published in 1998, two years after foundation of the organization. Exactly as a women's bulletin, this journal contains articles by, and about, women in Turkey and global examples of women activism. Flying News has an important role in the alternative media context in Turkey established by the women movement,

3. The Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival,

4. ucansupurge.org, the web site that was created in 2002, which both serves as the organizational web site and as a common communication platform in the form of a "women's news web site". The activities of other women's organizations, all women-related matters in question, news of women reporters from the regions, as well as announcements, news and outcomes of performed works are published on the web site.

from masculine discourse of the news reproducing the gender stereotypes and, thus, to enable women to write the articles on their own agenda from a women's perspective.

The creation process of the Women Reporters Network is an example of the cooperation between people from the academic world, social movements and, when necessary, local agents. In this sense, it may be interpreted as a result of the association of experiences and knowledge, as well as practice and theory. By organizing interviews, meetings and visits with women's organizations, occupational organizations, local authorities and branches of the public administration in eight pilot cities selected from all regions of Turkey, the Flying Broom team started to announce that women reporters networks will be established and that they needed volunteer women to communicate the local agenda of women. These announcements were also communicated via local media, governorates and municipalities.

The only criterion that was taken into account during the selection of women reporters and the editorial process was to report the news from a "gender mainstreaming" perspective by paying attention to the language used in those reports. The first training session was given in Ankara to women coming from eight cities (one woman from each city). This training included topics such as the basics of newsgathering and writing techniques, media ethics, women's media, and women's organization. Academicians from Ankara University's Faculty of Communication made important contributions to this training. The Istanbul-based non-governmental media

organization Bianet was also involved in this training by explaining the concept of alternative and independent media. Training sessions continued to be organized as long as funds were available and a total of ten sessions were given until 2009. Thus, the candidate women reporters gained the ability to create the women's agenda by combining the academic information they learned during this training with the knowledge based on the experiences in different areas (academic knowledge, knowledge based on the experiences of women reporters from mainstream media, knowledge based on the experiences of activists in women's organizations and experiences from their own daily life etc.). All those processes were conducted on a volunteer basis.

As to the profile of women reporters in the Women Reporters Network, this included high school students, retired bank employees, and activists working in associations, university students or reporters from local media.

It has to be emphasized that at the beginning news writing was deemed as a big deal and, thus, education- and publicity-based self-confidence was poor in women. This, without a doubt, supports Le Guin's claims indicating that the literacy is dominated by an elite group of men as a privilege for power means (Le Guin, 1999; 43). The first disincentive in participation to communication practice is indeed the acceptance of an instilled knowledge imposed on women that have no ability to explain, write or communicate their experiences from their own viewpoints and to become publicly visible from their private sphere when confined to home.

From the viewpoint of Flying Broom, "there is no need to graduate from university, live in big cities or to be sophisticated to report news. You only need to look, see and communicate what you see." says Selen Doğan (interview, 2012).

Peter Dahlgren emphasizes that citizens use journalism as a resource to get involved in the culture and politics of society and, thus, journalism is not only an integrative power but also serves as a common platform for discussion (Dahlgren, 1996: 3). Moreover Dahlgren also states that a strong orientation towards individualization and lifestyle politics, rather than collectivism, exists. In fact, a culture of citizenship requires people to experience themselves as a member of political communities and to feel that their involvement in society is meaningful (Dahlgren, 2005: 324). When considering the opinions of Selen Doğan on her concerns about the elimination of obstacles for the involvement in communication media in this scope, the work that communication/news organizations such as the Women Reporter Network perform is remarkable. Discourses and criticisms generated in such counter public spheres are clear interventions into the dominant bourgeois public sphere and, in this context, into the public policy domain..

Publicity also acts as a political communication means (Türkoğlu, 2010: 240) but neither publicity nor political communication exist in a single form. Various forms of publicity are heterogeneous, different and variable and also may engage with, and intervene in, each other. For example, issues addressed by Flying Broom such as child brides, incest and gender

The seeds of the Women Reporters Network were also planted in this continuum. Works on an independent news network were initiated to break the dependency of women from mainstream media and

mainstreaming may engage with issues in the counter public sphere of the LGBT movement and such social movements, which are limited to non-visible parts of the community, may extend to the main public sphere and become visible.

The communication space built by Flying Broom is an important component of the communication media available in the sub-contrary public sphere of the women movement. This communication space consists of regular broadcasting on women issues through a web site as well as radio programs, the periodically published Flying News bulletin, the film festival and its related publications (catalogue, brochure, bulletin etc.), broadcasts in selected mainstream media (e.g. a radio program on the Turkish public broadcaster's channel TRT Radio 1, and a column in *Hürriyet Ankara*, the local supplement of a popular newspaper), and local radio and TV channels. Flying Broom, thus, emphasizes that the main point is to reach the potential audiences also through dominant mainstream and local media, but without compromising the basic principles or allowing intervention into the contents, and to make use of the available spaces to tell the women's point of view.

Such attitude allows for an opportunity to become visible and to create an impression in a larger arena of the public sphere by using mass media as "stepping-stones" as necessary. Thus, crucial matters such as child brides and incest relationships may leak out of the dark covers from the communities where they buried under. Refusing and deferring the mainstream media implies to neglect and lose the potential viewer/

reader population (Fuchs, 2010: 176). In this case, social movements reach to mass media via radical media. In other words, a function of activist media is to change the dominant mentality in mass media and to intervene in the system, not to completely abandon the mass media (Atton, 2002: 491). The subject matter of this study, the Women Reporters Network has an important practice to which this theoretical evaluation corresponds. A Diyarbakır-based reporter of the Women Reporters Network, Naşide Buluttekin, was the first to report the so-called "NÇ case", where a 13 year-old girl was raped by 26 men in Turkey. The attention of the mainstream media has been drawn to this matter after it was published on the Flying Broom Women News website. Likewise, the same woman reporter followed up and reported the case of Şemse Allak, who died as a result of honour killing.

Conclusion

A citizenship journalism model, which is independent from institutions and political influences/pressures, defies the production model of elite journalism. Anyone can be a narrator/author without having a specific education or expertise. A common person can be journalist, and thus, citizens can also practice journalism. Individuals or groups directly affected by specific problems can become journalists or at least positive subjects of journalism. Usually, such journalism practices are a part of protest movements. Consumers turn into producers, and the viewers become active (Fuchs, 2010: 176). Thus, the distance between the reader and the writer is closed, the reader also turns into a writer and writing expands the area of freedom of reporting

news by going beyond its borderline of being a specialty occupation. That's what exactly the Women Reporters Network is: an area where citizen women reporters are narrators and writers, and communicate the stories and incidents from the suburbia and the grassroots, not from the centre.

From this point of view, the presence of a critical activist media form, which we may also consider as a sub-contrary public sphere, that intervenes in the public debate with its questions, criticisms and interventions, is important. Such media approach makes matters which are not shown on mainstream media visible, defies the mainstream media approach, expands the media sphere, helps to make sub-contrary public spheres more visible and ensures the expansion of the discussion topics into a wider public sphere.

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CONTESTING URBAN PUBLIC SPACE: STREET ART AS AN ALTERNATIVE MEDIUM IN TURKEY

In this essay, we mainly look into the interplay between various ways of communicating political ideas and the production of street art works by disclosing a number of decisive historical moments within the making of an oppositional political aesthetics in Turkey. By doing so, we particularly aim at underlining the communicative potential of urban public space as a site of alternative political medium. We also consider the proliferation of diverse forms of street art (graffiti, stencil, poster, performance, ready-made and installation) in the context of changing political milieu.

The appearance of graffiti in Turkey dates back to the student movement of the 1960s. As named by the activists themselves, “going out for drawing/writing on the walls” (*yazıya çıkma*) was a common political practice for various groups at that time (Şenyapılı, 2012: 19). This was understood as a way of expressing their identities and disseminating their political messages. About 10 years before the military coup in 1980, apart from the rarely seen movie or theatre posters, walls in the streets were almost free from ads, commercial banners and billboards (Aysan, 2008: 9). This provided an ideal communication platform for revolutionary students and other political groups. They used to change an ordinary wall into a colourful propaganda medium over a night. Considering that the

electronic communication channels were almost inaccessible for disseminating radical ideas, the walls then became the primary media for revolutionary propaganda. Just before the military coup in 1980, all the street walls in big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara were covered with political posters and graffiti (Aysan, 2013: 217).



1. Ankara, 1970s (Aysan, 2013: 246)



2. Ankara, 1970s (Aysan, 2013: 217)

In Ankara, “Middle East Technical University” (METU) was such a centre for the production of propaganda material during the period (Aysan, 2013: 12). The members of the “METU Society of Socialist Thought”, one of the main political student groups, were actively

discussing their ideas, political strategies and planning for demonstrations. In order to communicate their ideas they wrote slogans, designed posters, made drawings and put them up on the walls at midnight.



3. A Cafeteria at METU, 1977 (Aysan, 2013: 237)



4. Karl Marx within METU Logo, 1975 (Aysan, 2013: 227)

When all available means of organised radical politics were exterminated by the military junta following the coup, a wave of depoliticisation and consumerism began to spread into the public culture in the 1980s. In line with the changes in the political-cultural context, a new strand of graffiti art, which was more personal this time, began to arise. The graffiti crews or individual artists

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replaced political organisations. Graffiti works that appeared from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s can be seen as the acts of “point shooting” or “banging” against the uniformity of urban life. The graffiti crew S2K (shot-2-kill) and its founder Tunç Dindaş, known as “TURBO”, was the most significant representative of this period. Contrary to the political motives in the 1970s, TURBO’s passion for graffiti started with his enthusiasm for the break dance and popular films (Erdoğan, 2009: 77). Widely known works by TURBO popularised the usage of graffiti in television commercials and magazines (Küçükşayraç, 2011: 22).



5. S2K & TURBO, 1990s (Küçükşayraç, 2011: 22).

In recent years, “Istanbul’s hip and lively Beyoğlu district” (Schleifer, 2009) became the focal point of street art. According to a research conducted in 2009, all the way through Yüksek Kaldırım Street, the major centre line between Karaköy and İstiklal Street that is about half a kilometre, there were 817 street art works (Erdoğan, 2009: 120). Some of the stencils were quite provocative: “One stencil artist was regularly spray painting an image of Festus Okey, a Nigerian immigrant killed in police detention in 2007” (Schleifer, 2009).



6. Festus Okey

Cins (Çağrı Küçükşayraç) is one of the leading graffiti artists of the last decade who not only considers his works as “art” but also questions what is “political” about them. *Cins* featured in a street art documentary, *Urbanbugs* (2010), and wrote an MA thesis on his own works. This how he identifies his works: “Now, when you look at the streets, you see that is arranged and organized by the state. Besides, we see the billboards of big companies everywhere. They are actually aware of the power of the streets. They capture everywhere through putting billboards around. And we are trying to take the streets back by means of our work” (Urbanbugs, 2011).



7. Cins, 2008 (Küçükşayraç, 2011: 22)

With the proliferation of stencil and sticker art in Istanbul, a sort of intra-familial dispute has gradually emerged between graffiti writers and those who produce stencils and stickers identifying themselves as “street artists”. As featured in *Urbanbug*, street artists criticize graffiti writers for not producing political works and limiting themselves to just writing their tags on the walls. On the other hand, graffiti writers identify themselves as the forerunners while calling street artists as newcomers.



8. Tags from İstanbul



9. Stencils from İstanbul

When we turn our sight to Ankara, a couple of street art collectives becoming more recognizable and visible in recent years

should be mentioned. For instance, a group of street artists calling themselves *Küf Project* (Mold Project) was among the key figures of the rising political protests against Mayor Melih Gökçek and his controversial administration ruining urban fabric.



10. Urinal Installation by KÜF Project, 2011

Ankara'nın Avareleri (Wanderers of Ankara) is another anonymous art collective, initiated by the art students living in Ankara. They are critical against the market economy and particularly use billboards to install some fake ads. In doing so, they reclaim public spaces that have been commercialised.



11. Occupied billboards by Ankara'nın Avareleri

Vandalina, is “a fresh street art collective initiated by a small group of friends in Ankara, hopes to raise awareness of social issues.” (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 28th January 2013). Every month they choose a social issue in order to produce stickers about it and place them on subway stations or over the glass train doors. As *Vandalina* shares the stickers for easy download through social media, anyone can download, cut and later place them wherever s/he wants, and become a part of the collective (Güler, 2013). The most famous work of *Vandalina* was about the increase in the number of women murdered in Turkey.



12. *Vandalina*'s stickers

Our last but foremost case is about *Occupy Gezi*, an uprising started in Istanbul, in order to contest the urban development plan of the government for Gezi Park in Taksim Square. The protests that began within the park quickly triggered nationwide anti-government demonstrations. They also “ignited a flurry of creative production that resulted in a variety of posters, banners and street art.” (Kayabalı, 2013). Gezi provided us a sight where we can witness the juxtaposition of political resistance with

imaginative street art creating a huge body of remarkable works. Here, due to space limitations, we can only focus on a couple of these.

The organising potential of social media was at its peak during the protests. *Twitter* was one of the main information channels while traditional media outlets unashamedly buried into silence. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan unwisely labelled *Twitter* as a troublemaker. Following Erdoğan's statement, the stencil of the *Twitter* bird wearing a gas mask with the hashtag of #occupygezi started appearing on the walls. The gas mask was already an everyday object of protestors and therefore the bird with the mask stood for a criticism against the over usage of teargas by the police forces. Like the bird, the widespread appearance of the stencil of a penguin also wearing a gas mask was a reference to the Turkish media which did not cover the violence against protestors and especially to CNN Turk which broadcasted a TV show on penguins while the civil protests and police violence were at their peak.



13. *Twitter* Bird



14. Penguin

Prime Minister Erdoğan used the word “*çapulcu*” (*looter*) to insult protestors. “*Çapulcu*” was immediately transcoded as an identity to be embraced and proudly declared. New terms and tag lines such as “*Çapuling*”, “*Çapullers*” and “*Everyday I'm Çapuling*” created by activists were appropriated by the street artists and embedded in the stencils.



15. Prime Minister Erdoğan

While protests were growing, the artists quickly responded to the images distributed via social media regarding what had been happening on the streets. Some of these gained iconic status and were repeatedly reproduced by a countless number of contributors. The image of a policeman

spraying tear gas to a woman wearing a red dress rapidly became the most recognized symbol of the protests. Its variety of stencils was reproduced on the buildings, walls and pavements. As highlighted by Kayabalı (2013), in this stencil image, the woman in red was illustrated bigger than the policeman in order to symbolize the growing resistance while the violence was getting brutal. Another image was about the girl standing in front of a water cannon opening her arms and revealing her torso. This image became a symbol of non-violent resistance against the police force and was displayed on a variety of printed or digital posters.



16. *The Woman in Red*



17. *The Woman Exposing Her Torso*

Not only the stencils and graffiti but also the performances were remarkable during the

protests. Among these, “the standing man” and “the dervish with a gas mask” deserve a close attention. These were good examples showing how art and activism could merge.

Ziya Azazi performs the dervish in the occupied Gezi Park and many other places. In his performance, Azazi whirled with a gas mask and dervish costume. Photographs and videos of the performance were quickly disseminated via Internet. The whirling dervish then became one of the most well known icons of the resistance.



18. The Dervish with a gas mask



19. “Come Along!”

Another iconic street artwork during the protests was “the standing man”. Erdem Gündüz stood in silence for more than 7 hours in the middle of Taksim Square on 17th June 2013. This performance soon adapted by regular people living in various cities and turned out to be a form of civil disobedience. The performance underlined that body is not only a site where the knowledge-power nexus is reproduced but also a site of resistance. Therefore, in a Foucauldian sense, body always entails the possibility of a counter-strategic re-inscription. The act of standing also created a kind of shocking effect on the police, as they could not know how to react against a man who was just standing.



20. The Standing Man



21. Standing Citizens

What we witnessed at *Occupy Gezi* was not solely irony, humour or the art of resistance but many people met with police brutality as well. Seven people died and many others were injured. Ethem Sarsısluk was one of the seven. A street artist who drew a painting of him on the stairs of a crossover in Ankara was also the creator of a portrait of Erdal Eren who was undeservedly executed by the military junta in 1980. By painting Ethem’s portrait, the artist created a visual link, recalling the rebellious spirit of the 1970s.



22. Ethem Sarsısluk



23. Erdal Eren

It is true that Gezi can be seen as the revival of civil resistance in Turkey. However, it cannot directly be identified as the rise of the spirit of '68. The movement was very spontaneous and the political commitments of the protesters were very diverse, lacking the lead of organized political institutions. Therefore, comparing various protest movements in history with Gezi would be misleading. Occupy Gezi shows us that the communicative potential of street art manifested itself in such a spontaneous way maybe for the first time in Turkey. As we tried to highlight in this essay, the streets were once again reclaimed as the legitimate sites of social communication and political interaction but this time, with different linkages.

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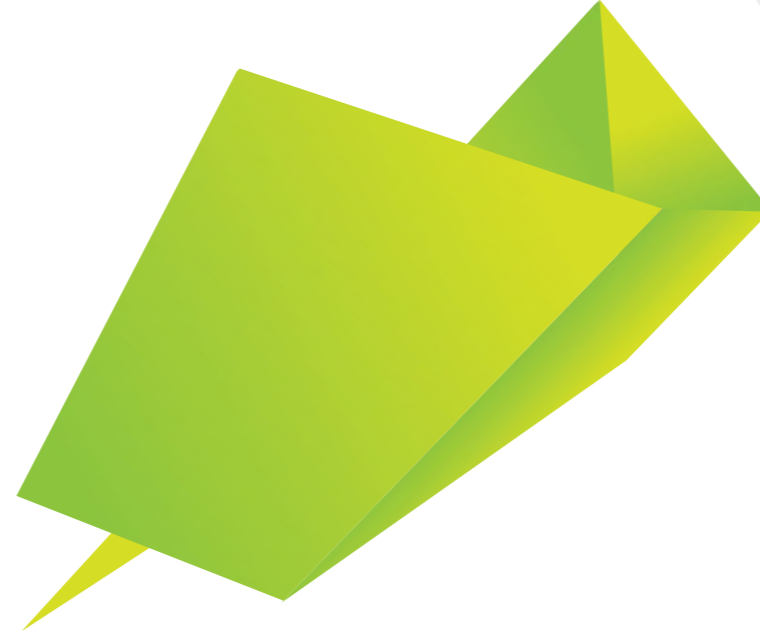
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Keywords

Feminist Media, Social Movements, Printed Press, Local Media

FEMINIST MOVEMENT, FEMINIST MEDIA FROM *YETER* TO *AMARGİ*

How would you evaluate your feminist media practices in terms of alternative participatory media? Can we talk about it within your own feminist adventure? For instance, from one of the first Turkish feminist magazines, Socialist Feminist Kaktüs (Cactus), to today's Amargi? Can you share your experiences about participatory processes?

I wrote in *Kaktüs* yet don't know their participatory practices well. However, I can start with our first publication, *Yeter* (*Enough*). As a group of women we used to gather on Thursdays in Ankara in the late 1980s. This Thursday group in 1988 decided to prepare a fanzine, *Yeter*. Two friends in this group were collecting the texts, then photocopied and distributed them. We prepared 12 issues in this way. This publication was more like a mirror, to see our reflections.

Were they the first moves in feminist publishing?

Yes. There were campaigns in Istanbul but our Thursday group in Ankara was smaller in size and it was our first feminist publication experience. It was more participatory than the successive ones. Everybody in the group was talking about issues, and we were all asked by our friends to provide a text. It was a kind of rule of thumb way in the production process.

Was there a limited access to this publication?

No, not at all. Copies of *Yeter* were even distributed in Germany. We had a lot of subscriptions. People also sent essays, photographs, drawings, and cartoons. Then, the magazines, *Kaktüs* and *Feminist* were launched at almost the same time in 1988-89, which made us very excited. *Feminist* was more like a fanzine, having pink pages and handwritten pieces, whereas *Kaktüs* seemed very serious. We considered our previous experience like a child play yet these two as real publications perhaps because of the writers involved in them, or perhaps because of their seriousness in political orientation. I was reading *Feminist* but wrote periodically in *Kaktüs*. We even sold its issues in Ankara. Well, when one thinks of publishing, the first process she considers is mostly editorial, yet it is also about printing, distribution, sales, accounting... Nobody considers the backstage of the publication process; indeed, publishing is hard, very hard.

If we go on with the recent magazines in which you are involved, how did you decide to start publishing them, with whom? Who contributed to them, how? How do you encourage women to participate in it?

Amargi is a product of Pınar Selek's and my efforts. *Amargi* was a cooperative in Istanbul. They used to call themselves "Women Academy". I went to Istanbul to meet them, did not know any one of them personally, including Pınar, and asked them to prepare a non-academic journal. They were so cool and did not call me back for 2-3 months. Then, one day Pınar came to Ankara to talk about the journal proposal. So, we started preparing *Amargi* in 2005 with the support of the *Amargi*

Cooperative yet it was independent in its operation. Distribution and management of subscriptions belonged to the cooperative. We got ads from a foundation/private university via personal relations and thus, financed the first year. We were two at the beginning yet soon we became 12-13 people constituting the editorial board. Board members were very different from each other; Pınar was the centre of attraction. We managed to deal successfully with vast differences among us and released the first issue in March 2006.

How did you set up the editorial board?

Some were members of the cooperative but mostly personal dialogues set the scope of it. We had not talked about which feminist line we would pursue. Instead, we tried to avoid academic debate and to focus more on the field. Real knowledge was there to gather from the women in the field, from feminist activists and organisations, or simply, from the feminist movement itself. Thus, we wanted to fill the gap between theory and practice. Even though I work at a university, my academic identity is behind my activist identity. Fatma Nevin Vargün is from the Kurds' movement, I am from the feminist movement, and so is Pınar Selek. Moreover, this emphasis on the field opens up the possibility of looking at cities other than Istanbul and Ankara. There are a lot of women in smaller cities who do not call themselves feminists yet work in the field to strengthen women's position. Now, we have contacts with them via *Amargi*.

How do you provide access to Amargi and how did you make and maintain those

contacts? Do these women send their written pieces to Amargi?

Not only did we make those contacts via *Amargi* but via İlknur Üstün, an excellent organiser, as well. There has been a "women coalition" consisting of more than 120 women organisations since 2002, and its members travel a lot. İlknur takes copies of *Amargi* with her wherever she goes. For her, it is not like only a feminist journal but something that represents herself. So, we get news about women from everywhere in Turkey. We ask women to write, they don't. We call them and ask again, they don't. Then, we go there, record their talk and transcribe it. That is the way it works. Women do not write except those who are used to writing and go on doing it. This transcription is crucial for a feminist journal as it makes what they make visible. When 30 women with purple bandanas march in Taksim, Istanbul, the newspapers report it yet in Afyon or Niğde there are women working at municipalities to strengthen women for years, nobody knows their labour. *Amargi* is trying to fill this visibility and knowledge gap. If you looked at *Amargi*'s subscription list, you would be amazed to see how wide its access is. Among more than 400 subscriptions, only 50 of them at most are known at the feminist movement.

Do you ask subscribers to write?

We want them to write but do not ask all of them directly. We need to get organized in a particular way to do so. Actually, we are going to organize workshops. This is part of our job as editors. Now, we are only a few people in Ankara and Istanbul who make all the editing and design.

Who decides what to publish?

We are not participatory in this sense because we usually decide on it in the last week. There are some checks and balances such as a need for having a strong piece to open up a special file in the journal; however, we eliminate at least one if we have three pieces on the same subject. We launched a website which covers the pieces we had to eliminate from the printed version. I decide to a large extent. It is not a process to share. Sometimes there are very controversial writings. For instance, there was a piece on sex labourers, which was very critical of feminists; we had long discussions about it and finally decided to publish it. We do not look for consensus. During editorial meetings, we sometimes got very harsh criticisms. We changed the name of the editorial board in the last issue; it is more like an advisory board now. The crew has been in Ankara for 4 years, a young crew. And an editorial board seemed very bureaucratic. So, from the last issues onwards, we give only the names of the contributors to that issue.

What about campaigns, organising public campaigns and their impact over political decisions? Can you talk about your experiences?

Amargi has never been such a journal. However, when we think of the feminist movement in general, it was organised around feminist journals for a short time. This is a controversial issue. *Kaktüs* and *Feminist* were such centres, so was *Pazartesi* to some extent. However, *Pazartesi* aimed at popularizing the movement rather than organising it. We organised a campaign

against harassment though it was not public but via circulating a bulletin among us. Then came the purple needle campaign. I do not recall a campaign organised in *Pazartesi*. Sometimes political movement and impact are not so visible. Perhaps making a woman in Şırnak or Varto (editors' note: places in the south-east of Turkey) not feeling lonely has political implications. She could be encouraged to do something that she would otherwise do not. Sharing ideas, sharing knowledge or building sisterhood is what we are trying to do.

Is it difficult for an alternative medium to survive? For instance, Kaktüs could live only from 1988 to 1990. They said they could not get organised.

It was not the problem of the journal but of the socialist feminists. *Pazartesi* for instance lived long. I told you *Amargi* has been published for 8 years and still goes on even though it has no external funds.

Amargi's first year was funded by an advertising insert from a foundation university, you said. After then, how did keep financing it?

We got an Amnesty International's publicity once but there are no other sources of finance than subscriptions and sales. We have more than 400 subscriptions, 1000-1100 sales all over Turkey. The distribution is awful though. We print 1500 copies and if the distribution was proper, we would sell them all.

What is a feminist alternative-participatory medium in your imagination?

I am not a romantic in terms of participation, not only in media but in politics as well. There are no such colourful realities. Who does the job also gets the power in the feminist movement. Horizontal organisation, participation... I have not experienced them at all. I am not sure whether they are possible. In *Amargi*, there is a crew and its members are not equal. I am 50 years old and have been in the feminist movement for 30 years; let's say there is another one, 25 years old. Recently, an 18 years old woman joined us as a trainee and blamed us for applying age hierarchy at the workplace. Well, it could be a warning as I sometimes go blind after putting so much effort in the journal. Our relationship is not based on the journal but on trust. We can get emotional, we quarrel. People joined the journal one by one. Some of them liked it and stayed, some left. Now we are 12-13 women at the Ankara office. We did not talk about a model of organisation or way of participation. It happened as it did. Who joins us can decide but as I have been here from the very beginning, I decide (*laughs*), limited though.

How did new communication technologies and social media make a difference in presenting yourselves, in making your voice heard? Did they facilitate communication comparing to the 1980s?

The feminist movement in Turkey is not a success story in terms of using communication technologies. There was a discussion list and it gave harm to the movement. The dominance of the written word led to a fierce culture, full of intelligent performances, diplomatic manoeuvres, cross talks, narcissistic shows. Other instances are

also not good. *Amargi's* website is not good. However, new generations of women use new media wisely. There is 5 *harfliler* (with 5 letters) as a good example. Youngsters, university students use Internet widely but most of the women in Turkey do not. We prefer face-to-face relations.

When a woman is murdered, for instance, social media can facilitate organising a meeting, giving a reaction...

We use phones, call each other and say so. It is much more practical. The idea is good but in practice, all the successful actions are in face-to-face relations.

Is there a gap between what you imagine and what you make in feminist media?

I do not imagine first, and then proceed. Instead, I learn while making it and imagine at the same time. You can have several ideas about a feminist journal; something completely different can emerge after talks with others. What does actually have an emancipatory power is that you make it, remake it and an unexpected light appears in between to surprise you. A new word for instance can come into being from this sharing, from this collective work. *Amargi* is what I want; I know, it will become something else tomorrow and still it will be what I want.



NOR RADIO

Could you please tell us the story of the launch of Nor Radio and its development until today?

The Armenian community in Turkey was feeling the lack of its own community radio, which was also expressed by Hrant Dink when he was alive. The Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey had already established the Radio Council (*Radyo Oluşturma Kurulu-RADOK*). However, after the assassination of Hrant Dink on 19 January 2007 this council was dissolved. Even the name of the radio was determined yet it did not get materialized. We were involved in the process. The people constituting *Nor Zartonk* -first, started as a mail group in 2004, then became a NGO after Dink's assassination- thought of launching an Internet radio for economical reasons but then decided not to undermine RADOK's Armenian radio project. Instead, we, namely Alexis Kalk, Artun Kendirli and myself, prepared and broadcasted a program, called *Anuşabur*, at Yaşam Radio (Radio Life). On 17 January 2009, Nor Radio started its broadcasts with a live broadcasting of an activity organised by *Nor Zartonk* for commemorating Hrant Dink, "To Forget is To Lose".

Nor means new in Armenian language and the founders of the radio are Armenian; however, it is not only about Armenians but about all of the oppressed communities in this geography. Nor Radio's broadcasts cover the issues of LGBTs, Alevi people, Armenians, animals, ecology, women, Circassians, Laz people, Greeks, Syrians, workers, prisoners and host also other groups. It has been on air for 5 years.

How many languages are used in your broadcasts?

Now, eight languages. Since its inception, this number amounts to sixteen. As Nor Radio's programmes are prepared by volunteers, the use of different languages differs in time.

Which eight languages are being used now?

Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, including Western and Eastern Armenian, Hamshenian, Syriac, the Pomak language, the Chechen language and Western Circassian language (Adige).

How do the listeners interact with programme producers and participate in Nor Radio?

Interaction between the programmers and listeners is via social media. Previously, MSN was used efficiently: It still used now, but not as efficient as before. There used to be an instant correspondence between programmers and listeners via MSN. Now, Twitter got in its place. MSN, then Skype, which are now merged, Twitter and Facebook pages are all active. But especially Twitter is used more. Both the radio stations and its programmes have web pages and e-mail accounts. A novelty are the blogs of programmers. This is up to them, as they are voluntarily made. So, there are several routes of access and ways of interaction.

Do the programme producers open their blogs via the Nor Radio's website?

No, they open their blogs independently. But we are going to provide this opportunity soon as we have recently renewed the website (www.

norradyo.com). Internet radio broadcasting was not so widespread when we first launched Nor Radio. Now, there is a competition. There are oppositional radio stations that have learned the practice from us. In their blogs, producers share the content, visuals, news of their programmes beforehand, and the recorded programmes afterwards. They tweet the headings while hosting a guest and get tweets. Both in Facebook groups and in blogs, listeners can make comments. They interact. Interaction is a building block, a trademark of Internet broadcasting.

How is the production process? Who decides?

We have a broadcasting board consisting of five-six members. Its members change before each broadcasting season. The broadcasting board meets weekly and makes the necessary, urgent decisions for that week's operation. Actually, we make decisions in monthly meetings that gather all producers. There is a horizontal organisation and management.

Have your listeners been turned into producers as well? Are there such instances?

Yes, there are several instances. Melis Tantan was one of our listeners and became a producer, for instance. First, she helped Mahir Özkan in producing his programme, and then she produced "Labour Daily" by herself. Last season, she became editor in chief and one of the members of our broadcasting board. She is a pioneer. Others followed. Ferit Altınsu and Şabo Boyacı started making programmes this year. There was Roni Mêmud Ulağ who provided a

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Internet Broadcasting, Community Radio, Armenian community, Ethnic Minorities, Participatory Media

Kurdish programme from Diyarbakır more than one year. What is important for us is to adhere to Nor Radio's principles. We are against sexist and anti-ecological discourses, discrimination and hate speech.

Do the listeners participate in deciding the programme content and the station's broadcast policies?

No, they do not. Producers are in charge of the decision-making processes. However, there are annual activities organised to meet with the listeners. Moreover, they send a lot of e-mails. We always reply. Such interactions are taken into consideration while making decisions. The feedback we get is not limited to the research on Nor Radio. People intervene even into the technical details about the radio station and its website. We also think of introducing an ombudsman. Considering the comments of the listeners is important yet, of course, there must be a structure for participation as well. As I told you, we are not separated from the listeners. Most of the producers were Nor Radio's listeners before. We can divide the producers into two clusters. In one cluster there are those that were once listeners. 50% of all the producers fit into this category. In the second cluster, there are producers of programmes in their mother languages, some of whom were also listeners before. It is difficult to find people who are both speaking minority languages and producing programmes. They are usually among people who serve their communities in civil society, in NGOs, in newspapers. Two friends are from *Jineps* (Circassian's newspaper); Pakrat Estukyan who used to be our listener is from *Agos* (Armenian's newspaper), for instance.

Producers decide the broadcasting policy of Nor Radio. It is a community radio, having 50-60 producers. Most of them have different community belongings and different political commitments. They all have a say.

At the beginning of each broadcasting season, which is four months long, all the producers and broadcasting board members meet and discuss what kind of programmes to be aired and how long should they be. In the summer, we don't ask for programmes, but volunteers can make them, of course. There is no hierarchy: the broadcasting board receives the proposals, producers make their suggestions, and the views of the listeners are considered. We get friendly criticisms from listeners like asking to broadcast in Syriac language. We have looked for people to produce programmes in Syriac language for three-four years. At last, we found somebody and so did fulfil a listener's wish and did make up for Nor Radio's lack.

Would you like to add anything else about community radio, new media and participation?

Social media serve as a platform for interaction. It is very influential. Comments in social media not only influence programmes of Nor Radio but also are influential in investigations. I made an interview with RedHack. Somebody sent a tweet or made a comment under a Youtube video. It says, "the voice sounds like Barış Atay's voice". A year later Barış Atay got arrested. Thus, Nor Radio and such comments or tweets in social media are also under inspection by the security forces.

ÇAPUL TV

How did the idea of Çapul TV emerge? How did you decide to start it? Was there a need for it?

Çapul Tv came into being exactly when everybody said that we were in need for a medium to tell what was going on at Gezi Park as all media went blind, kept silent. Penguin documentaries, cooking programmes were on air while big events were happening on the streets. But of course, we did not decide to establish Çapul TV in a night. We have been interested in alternative media for a long time; we have already done some experiments with Internet broadcasting. We have broadcasted several symposiums and activities; we have made live broadcasts from Tekel workers' resistance in Ankara and from Taksim, Istanbul, on International Workers Day via sendika.tv since 2006. So, we considered how to make use of this experience in Gezi, and the crew experienced in Tekel workers' live broadcasts established the Çapul TV as an Internet TV on 6 June 2013.

At this point, I would like to ask whether your previous experiences were all with new communication technologies and whether the Association of Alternative Media or Çapul TV particularly emphasizes the importance of new media for alternative media practices.

Our assumption is that traditional mass media has been in the process of dissolution. The effects of newspapers and TV have lessened comparing to the previous decades. Looking

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Keywords

Web Television, Social Movements, Istanbul, Resistance, Convergence

at the circulation rates, at the perceptions of people and at much debated ratings, we acted with an assumption that mass media were not that influential. Active population at age 15-40/50 spends time using mobile technologies, and getting news and watching dramas via Internet. So, we oriented our work towards new media. We started with the Sendika.org website and video webcasting in 2001 and today social media has become very prominent because it is used widely and spreads news and knowledge quickly. Thus, from the very beginning, from the time we started being involved with sendika.org, international labour film festival and Tekel workers' resistance, new communication technologies have been very important for us.

Before closing the story of establishing Çapul TV, there should have been some decisions made about from where to make broadcasts, how long it would be, who would be assigned to which job at which stage and so on. Can you tell us more about this process?

First, there is the technical aspect of broadcasting. If we do live broadcasts, then they must be continuous for the audience. Today, we have got 3G for mobile platforms but they don't work properly and continuously when there are too many people trying to connect from the same area. In fact, all mobile technology platforms collapsed during Gezi. People even perceived it as interference by the state but it was a technical problem. Additional operators were brought to solve the problem but this was not sufficient for broadcasting. So, we looked for an alternative -that was why we waited till 6 June 2013 (note: Gezi events

erupted on 28 May 2013)- and used satellite technology.

The other aspect is broadcasting itself. We decided with our team from Tekel resistance on whom should be on TV, on what would not be there and how would it be. There would not be an artificial environment, there would not be a TV studio; it would not imitate other TV broadcasts; and there would not be a power relation between the presenter and the guest. Daily life would be presented in a relaxed atmosphere. The questions must be open. Asking two questions is enough: 1. Why are you here? 2. Why have you become a *çapulcu* (*chapuller*)? Let the guest express her/himself. Manipulation, time pressure would not limit the process. There would be no other limits. Conventional satellite broadcasters such as IMC TV, TV 10, Hayat TV and Halk TV were at Gezi with cameras. I can tell an anecdote. We were on air with TV 10 and the presenter acted with a fear of being shut down for not complying the rules of RTÜK (the Turkish High Council of Radio and TV) and warned us for behaving our words during live broadcasts. We did not use such filters or auto-censor in our broadcasts. It expresses our difference. The question of who would be on the TV screen: the experienced ones, actors as well as activists, people who had experience in journalism, actually 3-4 friends on a basis of rotation presented the events as far as physical conditions allowed it. We did not make plans beforehand yet it turned out to be that the experienced ones were on TV screen. The less experienced were gathering news. So, in general we only decided "not to do's", we tried to watch Çapul TV as if we were audience members and warned

each other about problems. For instance, people were passing in front of the cameras while broadcasts went on, and we wanted to leave it like this, everything in its natural course in Gezi Park. In short, we tried to make audience feel as if they were at Gezi Park, and we did not want to resemble other channels.

There were people in front of the camera and people behind it. Did the technical crew behind the camera consist of experienced people?

Yes, we made up a crew with friends who had alternative media experience, knew the news production process and were engaged with social media. They relayed information via social media as well as nurtured the programmes with news and feedbacks. There were both technical crew and news team behind the scenes, working very hard.

Was Çapul TV the only channel on air in Gezi Park? Was being there a conscious choice?

Yes, it was a conscious decision yet there were others as I told you. There were others using 3G. Çapul TV was the only one with continuous broadcasts. The decision was neat. We had to be in the Gezi Park; however, thinking of gas bombs, set up of technical means and physical conditions, we also used a place called Gezi Café, surrounded with glass after getting permission from who ran it and from the Taksim Solidarity Platform.

How was the integration of Çapul TV with social media? I see it has a facebook page and a twitter account. What were the

motives behind them? Were they reflected in the broadcasts' content?

This question is related to how Çapul TV became widespread. As we all know, the Gezi spirit reproduced "çapulcu" with a positive meaning after its pejorative use by the Prime Minister to describe the protestors. We were willing to take the name, Çapulcu TV with its positive connotation, instead of capul.tv, however missed it within hours. A company bought the name before us. We were aware of the fact that having a website was not enough because social media was very influential. Thus, we immediately open facebook and twitter accounts. We used mechanisms to quickly spread the news and announce the start of Çapul TV broadcasting via influential twitter accounts of media figures with several hundreds of thousands of followers. Those figures tweeted and retweeted the Çapul TV link. In 15 days our followers amounted to 80 thousand, now we have 120 thousand followers. Social media was very crucial; we gave a particular importance to it. During live broadcasts, the important sentences of the guests were immediately written down and tweeted as spots. Thus, we were able to reach hundred thousands of people.

How is Capul TV financed?

While deciding not to look like the classical TV world, we also meant never to be commercial, never to broadcast advertisements. The staff consists of volunteers. But of course, running a TV station has expenses such as the rent of the studio -as we rented one now- and its electricity. We aimed to finance them via solidarity campaigns, via grants and

donations. In none of our work from sendika.org to the international labour film festival we have ever dealt with money, ads and sponsorship. We think every relationship that has something to do with money makes the process dirty. We established the Association of Alternative Media to operate on a legal basis and collected donations through an Internet campaign. Now, Çapul TV provides its broadcasts thanks to voluntary work, and by people investing both labour and equipment.

You had a long live broadcasting experience, but there were interventions by security forces, and then Gezi Park was evacuated. How were those reflected in broadcasts? How could you maintain the continuity of broadcasts? How did the team react?

Actually, the team did not react like the professional journalist. We were at Gezi Park exactly for the same reason as it was for the people that occupied Gezi Park. Çapul TV was a form of protest. Some protested by occupying the park only, some by throwing back the gas bomb capsules to the police, and us by taking footages and broadcasting them. It was the spirit of Gezi that made all of us being there. What we did was praxis. This word is crucial here. We were among the last ones that were forced to leave the park. We were there till the end of occupying Gezi. Broadcasting was what we were able to do, our knowledge and technology made such broadcasting possible. Doctors set up an emergency unit for health care and we set up a broadcasting unit for relaying trustful information.

Users of Çapul TV share content. How does it happen technically?

Particularly after Gezi, we made a decision to provide continuity in content sharing. Conventionally you have to make contracts with news agencies in order to reach vast amount of information. We opposed to this assumption. On social media people produce content and share it. It was at the centre of the Gezi spirit, at the centre of what people did against disinformation and propaganda. We knew it. So we said, we should reconstruct Çapul TV according to this knowledge. As social media has the capacity to spread unconfirmed, uncertified information we felt the necessity of checking mechanisms based on our journalistic experience. The Association of Alternative Media started providing workshops under the label of Training for Resistance Journalism. It had two aspects: 1. How to use new media; and 2. What to consider in journalistic practice. Both academicians from faculties of communication and our friends who were involved in sendika.org and who experienced Gezi process gave courses for three weekends. Almost 200 people, gathered at 17 places interactively took these courses via new media. They learnt how to prepare and send information, and have already started applying their knowledge to practice. On 27 and 28 December 2013, the protests in different cities were presented by those trainees via mobile technologies. This way we built a kind of agency network. We shall offer facilities for them to improve their training in terms of techniques and content. The number of resistance journalists is increasing.

“Wherever the resistance, Çapul TV is there, it is in the streets” is the slogan used by Çapul TV. Considering this, can we say that users that share content and Çapul TV labourers co-decide broadcasting policy, what to present, which news has a priority and so on? Is there an horizontal organization?

There are three channels that constitute the content of Çapul TV. If there is a resistance, sharing the information about it, within it, and live if possible is the first channel. The second one is that if there is something going on; just shoot it and send/share it. The third channel is opened for people who want to use different formats of programming. We have a programme called “Worker in the Morning, Resister in the Evening”, in each episode; somebody uses a Vendetta mask and tells why she/he became a resister. We have a very good science programme called “Come on Atheists, Explain This” or a biweekly, presenting chapullers in Italy or in Venezuela. So, this pool has no editorial centre, everybody shares her/his product, nobody is paid for what she/he is doing, everybody who approves these can join and be in the decision-making processes. The basic principle for news and current affairs is that the information must be accurate and verified. We are applying a mechanism of cross-check. We are also in the process of learning, a kind of trial and error. Advertisement, money, sponsorship, commerce are what we avoid; users’ feedback is what we give attention and value. “We are everywhere when/if there is resistance.” This motto is important for us.



Acknowledgement: I am particularly indebted to Nico Carpentier, Geoffroy Patriarche and active members of WG2 COST Action IS0509 for pioneering “essays and interviews”. I also thank Barış Çoban both for a different initial impetus for this collection and for awakening me once more for the ethical-critical positioning in life.

