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INSTITUT DES SCIENCES SOCIALES
DEPARTMENT DE COMMUNICATION**

**MOUVEMENTS SOCIAUX MODERNES ET MEDIAS
PARTICIPATIFS EN LIGNE: MOUVEMENT DU PARC GEZİ
et ÉTUDE DE CAS ÇAPUL.TV**

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FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION**

**CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ONLINE
PARTICIPATORY MEDIA: CASE STUDY ON ÇAPUL.TV OF
GEZI PARK MOVEMENT**

PH.D. THESIS

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RÉSUMÉ ;

Dans les années 2000, une série de mouvements sociaux, bien qu'ils soient fragmentés et aient des facteurs déclencheurs différents, sont apparus dans de nombreux pays du monde. A la base de la plupart de ces mouvements sociaux, on constate une manifestation / une révolte et une résistance contre les politiques néolibérales globales qui renforcent les inégalités sociales.

Le mouvement du parc Gezi à Istanbul durant les mois de Mai-Juin 2013 peut être lu comme le reflet en Turquie de l'expression de Manuel Castells (2012) « les réseaux des révoltes » organisé contre les inégalités sociales engendrées par les politiques néolibérales. A la première étape, la tension, qui a débuté avec l'entrée dans le parc Gezi des équipements lourds pour la Caserne Taksim (Topçu Kışlası) devant accueillir un centre commercial et une résidence dans le cadre du projet de piétonnisation de Taksim, s'est transformée en peu de temps en un nouveau mouvement social couvrant l'ensemble de la Turquie. Le soutien d'un large éventail d'organisation de la société civile s'étendant de la Chambre des Dentistes d'Istanbul à l'Union des Chambres des Ingénieurs et Architectes Turcs TMMOB, d'organisations professionnelles à des initiatives civiles ont une part importante dans la transformation de ce mouvement en une résistance à l'échelle nationale.

Durant le processus, le silence des médias du courant dominant, face aux événements sociaux transmis par la presse étrangère en direct du premier jusqu'au dernier jour et surtout la pollution d'information des réseaux sociaux tels que Facebook et Twitter, a augmenté l'intérêt vis-à-vis de médias alternatifs/civils/en ligne/participatifs, et de certaines démarches de médias citoyens participatifs en ligne qui sont apparus tels que *çapul.tv*, *Revoltistanbul*, *Müstereklerimiz*, *Occupy Gezi*. La participation politique à travers la résistance a préparé une base favorable à la naissance des nouvelles cultures civiques pouvant contribuer parallèlement à la démocratisation de l'environnement médiatique en Turquie.

çapul.tv a une position particulière parmi les initiatives médiatiques participatives créées durant la résistance. Çapul TV, créée le dixième jour des protestations du parc Gezi et adoptant le slogan « le média de la résistance » a pris son nom au travers de la qualification utilisée par le premier ministre de l'époque, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, traitant les manifestants de « çapulcu » (maraudeur). Çapulcu, qui est un mot péjoratif, a gagné un contenu politique lors des protestations et s'est transformé en une expression d'appartenance.

La plupart des nouveaux mouvements sociaux apparus sous forme de grandes explosions dans les années 2000 n'ont pas pu créer de transformations permanentes dans les politiques néolibérales. Également les initiatives médiatiques civiles apparues d'une manière identique ont la plupart du temps perdu de leur efficacité et ont cessé avec la fin du mouvement. Les natures « singulières », « temporaires », « périodiques », « conjoncturelles » ou « thématiques » des mouvements sociaux engendrent des problèmes en termes de continuité, durabilité des médias participatifs en ligne. En effet, deux ans après des protestations du parc Gezi, on observe que les médias tels que RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz, Occupy Gezi créés lors de la résistance ont perdu leur activisme. Cette situation limite considérablement les contributions des médias participatifs au sujet de la création d'un média plus démocratique.

çapul.tv est un des rares médias participatifs découlant de la résistance du Parc Gezi qui, par la suite, a atteint une certaine masse de partisans en réussissant et en continuant à porter hors du mouvement son existence dans les réseaux sociaux. On observe que çapul.tv fait des efforts visant à être considéré comme un nouvel acteur dans l'environnement médiatique et de communication de Turquie en créant un discours axé sur le mouvement et les médias sociaux débordant de Gezi.

L'objectif de la présente étude est d'examiner la relation entre les nouveaux mouvements sociaux et les médias participatifs en ligne sur les exemples du parc Gezi et çapul.tv et les structures organisationnelles, technologiques, économiques des médias participatifs en ligne organisés autour de ces mouvements ainsi que les possibilités et les limites éditoriales. L'hypothèse de

l'étude demande, en raison de la nature des nouveaux mouvements sociaux, un environnement médiatique où, en dehors des formes de médias commerciaux du courant dominant, les formes des médias participatifs en ligne sont effectives. La continuité des formes de médias participatifs en ligne organisés autour/durant ces mouvements peut être possible avec l'appui d'une culture civile. Le fait pour *çapul.tv*, un des médias participatifs en ligne de l'époque du parc Gezi, de toujours exister après la fin du mouvement se pose sur l'établissement en tant qu'initiative civile et sur sa continuité.

L'étude comprend trois questions de recherche :

1. Quel était le rôle et l'importance des médias participatifs en ligne pendant le mouvement du parc Gezi ?
2. Quelles sont les aspects positifs et négatifs au niveau organisationnel, technologique, économique et éditorial de *çapul.tv*, média en ligne et participatif ?
3. Sous quels aspects *çapul.tv* peut-il être considéré comme une culture civile ?

En raison des trois différentes questions de recherche mais reliées les uns aux autres, différentes techniques d'observation et de données ont été utilisés lors de l'étude. Les méthodes de recherche principales sont des techniques d'entretien approfondi, d'analyse du contenu d'information et d'observation directe. Dans le cadre de l'étude des entretiens approfondis ont été réalisés avec 6 membres de *çapul.tv*. La technique d'entretien approfondi est une des méthodes utilisées fréquemment lors des analyses de cas. La technique d'observation directe, quand elle est utilisée, permet d'observer et de définir le comportement humain d'une manière efficace dans la culture organisationnelle. Et les résultats de l'analyse du contenu des informations présentent des visions intérieures importantes sur la représentation du mouvement du parc Gezi de *çapul.tv*.

La présente étude se compose de sept chapitres.

Le premier chapitre vise à définir et discuter des théories des mouvements sociaux modernes. Parmi les approches étudiées se trouvent l'approche Marxiste,

le comportement collectif, le dénuement relatif, le choix rationnel, l'opportunité politique, la mobilisation des ressources, les nouveaux mouvements sociaux, les théories de l'espace public et l'encadrement. L'argument principal du chapitre est que la théorie principale toujours actuelle parmi les approches des mouvements sociaux étudiés est en direction des débats dans l'espace public. L'approche dans l'espace public permet à la fois de donner un sens aux demandes et aux actions évoluées et à la fois d'évaluer l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies d'information et de communication lors des mouvements sociaux. Également dans le chapitre, il est souligné que la théorie Marxiste, bien qu'elle soit souvent critiquée par les autres approches, est la base de tous les travaux sur les mouvements sociaux. Sur des pertes de validité des approches exposant une position opposé au Marxisme telles que le dénuement relatif, le choix rationnel et l'opportunité politique se trouvent l'acceptation comme donnée des points fragiles du système capitaliste néolibéral. Et les théories de la mobilisation des ressources et de l'encadrement ont perdu leur validité en raison de l'accentuation excessive de l'instrumentalité.

Le deuxième chapitre vise à évaluer les théories alternatives et participatives proéminentes. L'argument principal du deuxième chapitre porte sur les exemples de médias participatifs en ligne réussis (en raison d'assurer une communication bidirectionnelle, d'accentuer les mécanismes de validation de données et de disposer d'une organisation horizontale) qui sont alimentés par la culture civile. L'approche de la culture civile tient ses bases dans la théorie de l'espace public de Jürgen Habermas (1981). Dans le chapitre, sont également définies en détail et évaluées les dimensions de cette approche développée par Peter Dahlgren (2000; 2005; 2009). Car l'approche de la culture civile forme le cadre analytique de la présente étude.

Le troisième chapitre se concentre sur les causes de la grande crise expérimentée dans les années 2000 par l'idéologie néolibérale et les mouvements sociaux modernes qui ont eu lieu dans divers pays du monde à la suite de cette crise. Par la suite d'un débat théorique, dans le chapitre les mouvements sociaux, les mouvements qui ont eu lieu dans différentes régions du monde après les protestations de Seattle sont examinés dans l'ordre chronologique. Un des points

communs de base de ces mouvements est le rôle important joué par les sources et les réseaux d'information basés sur internet, en ligne et participatif dans les processus de mobilisation sociale. Le principal argument du chapitre est que les mouvements sociaux modernes apparus après les protestations de Seattle ont deux caractéristiques communes. La première d'entre elles est que tous ces mouvements sont apparus comme une réaction contre les politiques néolibérales qui renforcent l'inégalité sociale. Et la deuxième caractéristique commune est le rôle actif joué par les nouveaux moyens et les nouvelles technologies de l'information et de communication dans la réalisation de divers objectifs tels que la communication, la validation des données et la mobilisation.

Le quatrième chapitre se concentre sur la transformation urbaine, l'inégalité sociale et l'environnement de communication injuste dans l'espace public produit comme résultat des politiques néolibérales. Le chapitre vise à examiner les causes de l'apparition du mouvement Gezi par les dynamiques sociales. L'argument principal du quatrième chapitre est la nécessité de lire le mouvement de Gezi en tant que résistance à la taille massive réalisée contre les politiques de l'islam modéré et néolibérales du parti AK. Le mouvement de Gezi, séparé des mouvements sociaux précédents survenus en Turquie par des bases sociales hétérogènes et des demandes exprimées, est une initiative qui a réussi à réunir des millions d'individus venus de divers arrières plans sociaux, culturels et économiques. Bien que les différences des demandes exprimées et la nature du mouvement géographiquement dispersé rend difficile à le définir, on observe qu'il partage un terrain d'entente commun avec les autres mouvements sociaux modernes étudiés dans le chapitre trois.

Le cinquième chapitre se concentre sur la crise de communication qui a établi les bases de l'apparition des acteurs produits avec le mouvement de Gezi tels que Ayağa Kalk Taksim, RevoltIstanbul et çapul.tv, etc. L'argument principal du chapitre est que l'importance en termes de médias et de communication du mouvement de Gezi est de faciliter l'émergence de plateformes médiatiques participatives et égalitaires tels que çapul.tv et similaires. Le mouvement de Gezi ne permet pas uniquement l'émergence de nouveaux acteurs médiatiques participatifs, mais souligne également les processus de production d'information

tendancieuse des organisations médiatiques du courant dominant. Autrement dit, le mouvement Gezi se met au premier plan en tant qu'expérience poussant les individus à chercher de nouvelles sources d'information alternatives contre les contenus d'information tendancieux et de temps en temps partisans des médias du courant dominant.

Le sixième chapitre se concentre sur l'analyse du cas de *çapul.tv*. Dans ce chapitre premièrement les processus méthodologiques (entretien approfondi, technique d'observation directe, le site internet de *çapul.tv* et les données statistiques concernant les comptes des médias sociaux, l'analyse du contenu d'information et les sources secondaires) sont expliqués et ensuite une place est accordée pour l'analyse du cas de *çapul.tv*. Dans ce chapitre, qui accorde une place à l'analyse organisationnelle de *çapul.tv* en partant de l'approche sociologique organisationnelle, la structure de la formation, le nom et le logo, la position et les fondements principaux, l'infrastructure technologique, l'organisation de la production du contenu, les ressources financières et humaines ainsi que l'historique sont traités. Cette analyse organisationnelle apporte un débat sur les aspects organisationnels forts et faibles de *çapul.tv*.

Le septième chapitre est concentré sur quels aspects *çapul.tv* peut être défini comme une culture civile. En partant de l'approche de la culture civile théorique développée par Dahlgren (2009), dans le chapitre les identités civiles des membres de *çapul.tv*, leur attachement aux valeurs et aux procédures démocratiques, leur pratique, leur routine et leur tradition et également leurs connaissances et compétences concernées sont évalués. L'objectif principal de ce chapitre est de s'interroger à savoir de quelle manière les caractéristiques de *çapul.tv*, en tant que culture civile, contribue à son existence et à sa durabilité. Parmi les données principales utilisées dans ce chapitre se trouvent les résultats des entretiens approfondis réalisés avec les membres de *çapul.tv* et les analyses du contenu des informations. Également dans le chapitre concerné une place est accordée aux notes d'observation directe effectués dans les studios de *çapul.tv*.

Dans le chapitre conclusion, une évaluation générale de l'étude est présentée ainsi que les suggestions théoriques et pratiques pour le développement

des médias participatifs en ligne concernés par les mouvements sociaux modernes.



ABSTRACT:

A series of contemporary social movements have taken place in different quarters of the world since the beginning of 2000s. The main motivation behind the majority of these contemporary social movements has been the resistance against neo-liberal policies that trigger social inequalities.

In case of Turkey, the reflection of this unrest was Gezi Park movement, which continued throughout May and July 2013. Gezi Park movement can be perceived as the movement of “resistance networks”¹ in Turkey, which organized against social equalities triggered by neo-liberal policies. Gezi Park movement, which started as a protest against an urban development plan in Istanbul turned into a massive revolt against the conservative/Islamist agenda of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, which has been ruling Turkey since 2002. Non-governmental organizations, trade bodies and civil initiatives such as Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects and Turkish Dental Association played a key role in expanding the movement across the country.

The silence of Turkey’s mainstream media outlets in terms of coverage and the rising usage of online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter increased interest towards online participatory media such as *çapul.tv*, *müştereklerimiz.org* and *Occupy Gezi*, which were established during the first days of Gezi movement. Political participation through resistance paved the way for the birth of new organizations rooted in civic culture that potentially contributed to the democratization of Turkey’s media environment.

çapul.tv holds a special place among online participatory media established during Gezi movement. Established at the tenth day of resistance with the Media of the resistance slogan, *çapul.tv* borrowed its name from a speech of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister of the era, who labeled protesters as “*çapulcu*” (“looters” in English). As a pejorative term, “*çapulcu*” gained a political meaning in time and referred to the attachment of the protesters to the Gezi movement.

¹ “Resistance network” term is coined by Manuel Castells (2012).

One of the main characteristics of the social movements emerged in 2000s-including the Gezi Park movement-, is that they could not succeed in creating permanent results. In line, majority of participatory civic media initiatives established in these movements did not last long. The unitary, temporary, seasonal, conjectural and thematic natures of these movements also challenge online participatory media in terms of their sustainability and continuity. For instance, majority of online participatory media including RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz and Occupy Gezi, established during Gezi movement lasted less than two years. This situation limits the potential of online participatory media contributing to the democratization of Turkey's media environment.

çapul.tv is also an exception in the sense that it succeeded to survive outside the Gezi movement. Although established within the movement, its follower base and online social network presence surpassed movement's limits. Discourse produced by çapul.tv surpassed the limits of Gezi movement with its emphasis on social rights and movements. The channel has stood out as a candidate to get involved Turkey's media and communication environment as a potential new actor.

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between contemporary social movements and online participatory media. The assumption of this study is that contemporary social movements demand the support of online participatory media environment by nature. The sustainability of online participatory media forms emerged in these movements depends on their civic culture. The perseverance of çapul.tv, which is established during Gezi Park movement, is owed to its civic bases.

This study is based on three main research questions:

1. What was the role and importance of online participatory media for Gezi Park movement?
2. What are the organizational, technological, economic and editorial strengths and weaknesses of çapul.tv as an online participatory media?

3. In what ways can *çapul.tv* be considered as a civic culture?

The current study is based on three different but inter-related research questions. The main research techniques applied are in-depth interviews, statistical analysis of *çapul.tv* website visitors and social media followers, content analysis of news items and firsthand observations. Six in-depth interviews are conducted with *çapul.tv* members. Additionally two interviews are conducted with members of online participatory media active during Gezi Park movement. In-depth interview technique is important for this study as it allows cases to be employed according to their suitability to the categories of the model. Interviews with online participatory media collective members are conducted to enrich the contextual base of the current research. Complementarily, first hand participant observations also inform the analysis, which also allow the observation and definition of human behavior within its organizational culture. Statistics on *çapul.tv* website and social media accounts reveal the changes in the number of *çapul.tv* visitors and followers through the years. Findings on content analysis of news items provide important insights on how *çapul.tv* represented Gezi Park movement.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters.

The first chapter sets out to discuss major theoretical perspectives on contemporary social movements; including Marxist, collective behavior, relative deprivation, rational choice, political opportunity, resource mobilization, new social movements, framing and public sphere approaches. The chapter argues that while there are a variety of social movement approaches that aim to understand the dynamics of mobilization patterns, the most prominent theory of the field has public sphere approach, for its adjustment with evolving tools –such as the use of new ICTs-, demands and actions. Moreover, despite widely criticized, Marxist interpretation of social movements serve the basis for understanding evolving characteristics of social movements. Several other approaches (mainly collective behavior, relative deprivation, rational choice and political opportunity perspectives), which directly position themselves in opposition with the Marxist interpretation of social movements for embracing a liberal point of view, take

vulnerabilities of the neoliberal capitalism as given; thus remain shortlived. Moreover, resource mobilization and framing approaches remain exceedingly instrumental that they overemphasize strategies and tools over demands and action.

The second chapter focuses on theories of alternative and online participatory media, by evaluating prominent perspectives of the field. The main argument of the second chapter is that online participatory media should be considered as rooted in civic culture because of their multi-dimensional functionality (two-way communication, data storage and verification, mobilization) and their civic roots (its emergence as a civic initiative based on interpersonal and horizontal organization). This argument is inspired by Jürgen Habermas's (1981) theory of public sphere. Peter Dahlgren's (2000; 2005; 2009) civic culture perspective is also explored and its basic dimensions (i.e. organizational structure, sustainability, editorial principles, ethical values, civic identity and knowledge and skills) are defined in detail, since the civic culture approach also composes the analytical framework of the current research.

The third chapter primarily focuses on why the neoliberal ideology experienced a major crisis in the 2000s and how this crisis paved the way for the emergence of international contemporary social movements. After discussing the theoretical framework and background of the crisis of neoliberalism the chapter focuses on international contemporary social movements chronologically starting with Seattle protests, in which the Internet-based, online and participatory news sources and networks played an important role in terms of fostering social mobility. The main argument of this chapter is that post-Seattle movements share two important characteristics: First, these social movements emerged as a reaction to neo-liberal policies that gave rise to a number of negative outcomes such as increasing economic and social inequality, worsening income distribution, widening gap between the rich and the poor segments of the global society, cultural, historical and environmental destruction, and so on. Second, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and tools played an essential role in terms of communication, data verification and mobilization in these movements.

The fourth chapter focuses on Gezi Park movement, as a movement marked by a mass resistance to urban development, to social inequality and to unfair public communication environment created by neo-liberal policies in Turkey. It aims to explore social dynamics that enabled the emergence of Gezi movement. The main argument of the fourth chapter is that Gezi Park movement must be perceived as a resistance against JDP's Islamic and neo-liberal vision in public sphere. Differentiating itself from previous social movements of Turkey, the social base of Gezi Park movement was heterogeneous, so were the demands. Emerging as an anti-government movement against a pro-Islamic neo-liberal world vision, the movement gathered millions of individuals from diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Despite the variety in demands and the geographically dispersed nature of Gezi Park movement makes it hard to define; it shares a common ground with contemporary social movements of 2000s, analyzed in Chapter 3.

The fifth chapter tries to shed some light on the communication crisis experienced in Gezi that resulted in the emergence of media initiatives such as Ayağa Kalk Taksim, RevoltIstanbul and *çapul.tv*. It argues that the significance of Gezi movement from a media and communications perspective is the emergence of new online participatory media such as *çapul.tv* and the birth of a relatively more participatory and egalitarian communication environment. From this sense, the movement not only enabled the emergence of a variety of participatory media outlets, but also pointed out the biased news coverage of particular mainstream media institutions in Turkey, thus directed recipients' attention towards alternative news sources. In other words, the movement succeeded in underlining partisan news coverage of mainstream media and directing recipients' attention towards alternative news sources.

Chapter six is devoted to the analysis of *çapul.tv* as a case study. It starts with the methodological procedures (in-depth interviews, first hand participant observations, statistics on *çapul.tv* web site and social media accounts, content analysis of news items and secondary sources) and continues with the analysis of *çapul.tv*. By drawing influence from the organizational sociology approach, the

chapter presents an organizational study of *çapul.tv* as an online participatory media, by analyzing its structure, name and logo, location and premises, technological facilities, organization of content production, financial resources, human resources and history. The organizational inquiry brings along a discussion on the organizational strengths and weaknesses of *çapul.tv*.

The seventh chapter explores in what ways *çapul.tv* can be considered as a civic culture. By drawing influence from the theoretical civic culture framework of Dahlgren (2009), the chapter explores civic identities of *çapul.tv* members, their loyalty to democratic values and procedures, practices, routines and traditions as well as their relevant knowledge and competencies. The main aim of the chapter is to reveal how civic culture characteristics of *çapul.tv*, contribute to the collective's presence and sustainability. The analysis is informed with in-depth interviews with co-founders, reporters and presenters of *çapul.tv*, as well as with content analysis of news items and first hand participant observations gathered at the *çapul.tv* studio.

The concluding section provides potential suggestions at theoretical and practical levels for online participatory media related with contemporary social movements.

ÖZET:

2000’li yıllarda birbirinden kopuk ve tetikleyici faktörleri farklı olsa da dünyanın birçok farklı ülkesinde bir dizi sosyal hareket ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu sosyal hareketlerin birçoğunun temelinde, sosyal eşitsizliği pekiştiren küresel neo-liberal politikalara karşı bir itiraz/başkaldırı ve direniş olduğu görülmektedir.

2013 Mayıs- Haziran aylarında İstanbul Gezi Parkı hareketi, neo-liberal politikaların doğurduğu sosyal eşitsizliğe karşı örgütlenen, Manuel Castells’in (2012) tabiriyle “isyan ağları”nın Türkiye’deki yansıması olarak okunabilir. İlk etapta Taksim’i Yayalaştırma Projesi kapsamında alışveriş merkezi ve rezidans olarak yeniden inşa edilmesi planlanan Topçu Kışlası için Gezi Parkı’na iş makinelerinin girmesi ile başlayan gerginlik kısa süre içerisinde tüm Türkiye’yi saran yeni bir toplumsal harekete dönüşmüştür. Bu hareketin, ülke çapında bir direnişe dönüşmesinde İstanbul Diş hekimleri Odası’ndan, TMMOB Makina Mühendisleri Odası’na kadar uzanan geniş bir STK, meslek örgütü ve sivil inisiyatifin desteğinin de payı büyüktür.

Süreç içerisinde dış basının ilk günden son güne kadar canlı yayınlarla aktardığı toplumsal olaylar karşısında ana damar medyanın suskunluğu, ve özellikle Facebook ve Twitter gibi sosyal ağlarda yaşanan enformasyon kirliliği, alternatif/sivil/çevrimiçi/katılımcı medyaya ilgiyi arttırmış, çapul.tv, Revoltİstanbul, Müştereklerimiz, Occupy Gezi gibi bir dizi çevrimiçi katılımcı yurttaş medyası girişimi ortaya çıkmıştır. Direniş yoluyla siyasi katılım, beraberinde Türkiye’deki medya ortamının demokratikleşmesine katkıları bulunabilecek yeni sivil kültürlerin doğuşu için uygun bir zemin hazırlamıştır.

Direniş esnasında kurulan katılımcı medya inisiyatifleri arasında çapul.tv, özel bir konuma sahiptir. Gezi Parkı protestolarının onuncu gününde kurulan ve “Direnişin medyası” sloganını benimseyen Çapul TV adını veren dönemin başbakanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’ın protestocuları “çapulcu” olarak nitelenmesinden almıştır. Pejoratif bir sözcük olan çapulcu protestolar sırasında politik bir içerik kazanarak bir aidiyet ifadesine dönüşmüştür.

2000’li yıllarda büyük patlamalar şeklinde ortaya çıkan yeni sosyal hareketlerin birçoğu neo-liberal politikalarda kalıcı dönüşümler yaratamamıştır. Benzer bir şekilde ortaya çıkan katılımcı sivil medya inisiyatifleri de çoğu kez hareketin sona ermesiyle beraber etkinliğini ve varlığını yitirmiştir. Yeni sosyal hareketlerin “tekil”, “geçici”, “dönemsel”, “konjonktürel” ya da “tematik” doğaları, çevrimiçi katılımcı medyanın süreklilik, sürdürülebilirlik açısından sorunlar yaşamasına neden olmaktadır. Nitekim Gezi Parkı protestolarının iki yıl ardından, RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz, Occupy Gezi gibi direniş esnasında kurulan medyaların aktifliklerini yitirdikleri görülmektedir. Bu durum katılımcı medyanın daha demokratik bir medya düzeni yaratmak konusundaki katkılarını ciddi ölçüde sınırlamaktadır.

çapul.tv, Gezi Parkı direnişinden doğan ve sonrasında hareketin dışına taşmayı başararak belirli bir takipçi kitlesine ulaşan ve sosyal ağlardaki varlığını devam ettiren az sayıda katılımcı medyadan biridir. çapul.tv’nin Gezi’nin dışına taşan sosyal hak ve hareket odaklı bir söylem oluşturarak Türkiye’deki medya ve iletişim ortamına yeni bir aktör olarak dâhil olmaya çabaladığı görülmektedir.

Mevcut çalışmanın amacı, Gezi Parkı ve çapul.tv örneklemini üzerinden yeni sosyal hareketler ve çevrimiçi katılımcı medya arasındaki ilişkiyi ve bu hareketler etrafında örgütlenen çevrimiçi katılımcı medyaların örgütsel, teknolojik, ekonomik yapılarını ve editoryal olanak ve sınırlılıklarını incelemektir. Çalışmanın varsayımı, yeni sosyal hareketler doğası gereği ana damar ticari medya formlarının dışında çevrimiçi katılımcı medya formlarının etkin olduğu bir medya ortamını talep eder. Bu hareketler etrafında/sırasında örgütlenen çevrimiçi katılımcı medya formlarının sürdürülebilir olması sivil bir kültüre yaslanmasıyla mümkün olabilir. Gezi parkı döneminin çevrimiçi katılımcı medyalarından çapul.tv’nin hareket sona erdikten sonra hala varlığını sürdürüyor olması sivil bir inisiyatif olarak kurulmuş ve devam ediyor olmasına dayanmaktadır.

Çalışmanın üç ana araştırma sorusu bulunur:

1. Gezi Parkı hareketinde çevrimiçi katılımcı medyanın rolü ve önemi neydi?
2. Çevrimiçi ve katılımcı bir medya olan çapul.tv'nin örgütsel, teknolojik, ekonomik ve editoryal açılardan güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir?
3. çapul.tv hangi yönleriyle sivil bir kültür olarak düşünülebilir?

Çalışmanın üç farklı fakat birbiri ile bağlantılı araştırma sorusu olması nedeniyle araştırma süresince farklı gözlem ve veri tekniklerinden yararlanılmıştır. Uygulanan temel araştırma yöntemleri, derinlemesine görüşme, çapul.tv internet sitesi ziyaretçileri ve sosyal medya takipçilerinin istatistiki analizi, haber içerik analizi ve dolaysız gözlem teknikleridir. Çalışma kapsamında altı çapul.tv üyesi ile derinlemesine görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ek olarak, Gezi Parkı hareketi döneminde aktif olarak diğer çevrimiçi katılımcı medyadan iki üye ile görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Derinlemesine görüşme tekniği, vaka analizlerinde sıklıkla kullanılan yöntemlerden biridir. Dolaysız gözlem tekniği ile birlikte uygulandığında, insan davranışının örgütsel kültürü içerisinde verimli bir şekilde gözlemlenmesine ve tanımlanmasına olanak sağlar. Gezi Parkı hareketi döneminde aktif olan diğer çevrimiçi katılımcı medyadan üyeler ile yapılan görüşmeler, çalışmanın bağlamsal zeminini güçlendirir. çapul.tv internet sitesi ziyaretçilerinin ve sosyal medya hesaplarının takipçilerinin istatistiki analizi, ziyaretçi ve takipçi oranlarının yıllar içerisindeki değişiminin gözlemlenmesine olanak sunar. Haber içerik analizinin bulguları ise, çapul.tv'nin Gezi Parkı hareketi temsili üzerine önemli içgörüler edinilmesini sağlar.

Mevcut çalışma yedi bölümden oluşur.

Birinci bölüm çağdaş sosyal hareketler teorilerini tanımlamayı ve tartışmayı amaçlar. İncelenen yaklaşımlar arasında Marksist yaklaşım, kolektif davranış, göreceli yoksunluk, rasyonel seçim, siyasi fırsat, kaynak mobilizasyonu, yeni sosyal hareketler, çerçeveleme ve kamusal alan teorileri bulunur. Bölümün temel argümanı, incelenen sosyal hareketler yaklaşımları arasında güncelliğini koruyan temel teorinin kamusal alan tartışmaları olduğu yönündedir. Kamusal alan yaklaşımı hem dönüşen talep ve eylemleri anlamlandırmaya hem de yeni enformasyon ve iletişim teknolojilerinin sosyal hareketlerde kullanılmasının

değerlendirilmesine olanak sağlar. Yanı sıra, bölümde, diğer yaklaşımlarca sıkça eleştirilmesine rağmen, Marksist teorinin tüm sosyal hareketler çalışmalarının temelini oluşturduğunun altını çizilir. Marksizme karşıt bir duruş sergileyen göreceli yoksunluk, rasyonel seçim ve siyasi fırsat gibi yaklaşımların geçerliliğini yitirmelerinde neoliberal kapitalist sistemin kırılan noktalarını verili olarak kabul etmeleri yatar. Kaynak mobilizasyonu ve çerçeveleme teorileri ise araçsallığa gereğinden fazla vurgu yapmaları nedeniyle geçerliliklerini yitirmişlerdir.

İkinci bölüm, öne çıkan alternatif ve katılımcı medya teorilerini değerlendirmeyi amaçlar. İkinci bölümün temel argümanı, başarılı çevrimiçi katılımcı medya örneklerinin (çift yönlü iletişime olanak sağlamaları, veri doğrulama mekanizmalarına ve mobilizasyona vurgu yapmaları ve yatay bir örgütlenmeye sahip olmaları nedeniyle) sivil kültürden beslendiklerine dikkat çekmektir. Sivil kültür yaklaşımı temellerini Jürgen Habermas'ın (1981) kamusal alan teorisinden alır. Bölümde, Peter Dahlgren (2000; 2005; 2009) tarafından geliştirilen bu yaklaşımın boyutları da detaylarıyla birlikte tanımlanır ve değerlendirilir. Zira sivil kültür yaklaşımı, mevcut çalışmanın analitik çerçevesini oluşturur.

Üçüncü bölüm, neoliberal ideolojinin 2000'li yıllarda deneyimlediği büyük krizin nedenlerine ve bu kriz sonucunda dünyanın çeşitli ülkelerinde meydana gelen çağdaş sosyal hareketlere yoğunlaşır. Teorik bir tartışmanın ardından, bölümde Seattle protestoları sonrası dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerinde meydana gelen çağdaş sosyal hareketler, kronolojik bir sıra ile incelenir. Bu hareketlerin temel ortak noktalarından biri İnternet-temelli, çevrimiçi ve katılımcı haber kaynaklarının ve ağların, sosyal mobilizasyon süreçlerinde önemli rol oynamalarıdır. Bölümün temel argümanı, Seattle protestoları sonrası ortaya çıkan çağdaş sosyal hareketlerin iki ortak özelliği olduğu yönündedir. Bunlardan birincisi, tüm bu hareketlerin sosyal eşitsizliği pekiştiren neo-liberal politikalara karşı tepki olarak ortaya çıktıklarıdır. İkinci ortak özellik ise, bu çağdaş sosyal hareketlerde yeni enformasyon ve iletişim teknolojilerinin ve araçlarının gerek haberleşme, veri doğrulama ve mobilize olma gibi çeşitli amaçların gerçekleştirilmesinde etkin bir rol oynamalarıdır.

Dördüncü bölüm, neo-liberal politikalar sonucu meydana gelen kentsel dönüşüme, sosyal eşitsizliğe ve kamusal alandaki adaletsiz iletişim ortamına karşı çıkışın bir simgesi haline gelen Gezi Parkı hareketine yoğunlaşır. Bölüm, Gezi hareketinin ortaya çıkış nedenlerini ve sosyal dinamiklerini incelemeyi amaçlar. Dördüncü bölümün temel argümanı, Gezi hareketinin AK Parti'nin ılımlı İslam ve neo-liberal politikalarına karşı gerçekleşen kitlesel boyutta bir direniş olarak okunması gerektiğidir. Türkiye'de meydana gelen önceki sosyal hareketlerden heterojen sosyal temeliyle ve dile getirilen taleplerle ayrılan Gezi hareketi, çeşitli sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik arka planlardan gelen milyonlarca bireyi bir araya getirmeyi başaran bir girişimdir. Her ne kadar dile getirilen taleplerdeki farklılıklar ve hareketin coğrafi olarak dağınık doğası, onu tanımlamayı zorlaştırsa da, Gezi hareketinin, üçüncü bölümde incelenen diğer çağdaş sosyal hareketlerle ortak bir zemini paylaştığı görülür.

Beşinci bölüm, Gezi Parkı hareketiyle birlikte meydana gelen ve sonucunda Ayağa Kalk Taksim, Revoltİstanbul ve çapul.tv gibi aktörlerin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlayan iletişim krizine yoğunlaşır. Bölümün temel argümanı, Gezi hareketinin medya ve iletişim bakımından öneminin, çapul.tv ve benzeri katılımcı ve eşitlikçi medya platformlarının ortaya çıkışına olanak sağlaması olduğu yönündedir. Gezi hareketi yalnızca yeni katılımcı medya aktörlerinin ortaya çıkışına olanak sağlamaz, aynı zamanda anaakım medya kuruluşlarının taraflı haber üretim süreçlerinin de altını çizer. Diğer bir deyişle Gezi hareketi, anaakım medyanın taraflı ve kimi zaman partizan haber içeriklerine karşın, bireyleri alternatif haber kaynakları aramaya yöneltten bir deneyim olarak ön plana çıkar.

Altıncı bölüm, çapul.tv vaka analizine yoğunlaşır. Bölümde ilk olarak metodolojik süreçler (derinlemesine görüşme, dolaysız gözlem tekniği, çapul.tv internet sitesi ziyaretçileri ve sosyal medya takipçilerine dair istatistik verilerin toplanması, haber içerik analizi ve ikincil kaynakların kullanımı) açıklanır ve ardından çapul.tv vaka analizine yer verilir. Örgütsel sosyoloji yaklaşımından yola çıkılarak çapul.tv'nin örgütsel analizine yer verilen bu bölümde oluşumun yapısı, ismi ve logosu, konumu ve temel dayanakları, teknolojik altyapısı, içerik üretiminin organizasyonu, finansal ve insan kaynakları ve tarihçesi ele alınır. Bu

örgütsel analiz, beraberinde çapul.tv'nin örgütsel güçlü ve zayıf yönlerine dair bir tartışmayı beraberinde getirir.

Yedinci bölümde çapul.tv'nin hangi yönleriyle sivil bir kültür olarak tanımlanabileceğine yoğunlaşılır. Dahlgren'in (2009) geliştirmiş olduğu teorik sivil kültür yaklaşımından yola çıkılarak, bölümde çapul.tv üyelerinin sivil kimlikleri, demokratik değerlere ve prosedürlere bağlılıkları, pratikleri, rutinleri ve gelenkleri, yanı sıra ilgili bilgi ve becerileri değerlendirilir. Bu bölümün temel amacı, çapul.tv'nin sivil bir kültür olarak sahip olduğu özelliklerin, varlığına ve sürdürülebilirliğine ne şekilde katkıda bulunduğunu sorgulamaktır. Bölümde kullanılan temel veriler arasında çapul.tv üyeleri ile gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine görüşmelerin bulguları ve haber içerik analizi yer alır. Yanı sıra analizin ilgi bölümlerinde, çapul.tv stüdyosunda yapılan dolaysız gözlem notlarına da yer verilir.

Sonuç bölümünde çalışmanın genel bir değerlendirmesi sunulur ve çağdaş sosyal hareketlerle ilişkili çevrimiçi katılımcı medyanın gelişimine yönelik teorik ve pratik düzeylerde öneriler getirilir.

INTRODUCTION

Being the dominant economic and political dogma of our time, neo-liberalism emerged in the aftermath of the structural crisis of capitalism in the 1970s. By the early 1990s with the decreasing role of the nation states in decision making processes, the emergence of international actors such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) the growing reliance on market forces to foster economic growth and the widespread deregulation and liberalization in both national and international trade the impact of neoliberalism could be felt in both developed and developing countries. Shaped by “new class objectives” that worked to benefit highest income brackets, capitalist owners, and “the upper fractions of management” (Duménil and Lévy, 2011, p. 205-206), neoliberal ideology put a strong pressure on the less well-off segments of the society such as salaried workers, unemployed, ethnic minorities and women in order to restore the profit rates. Moreover, the new world order proposed by the WTO not only resulted in domestic exploitation of particular social groups, but also threatened the existing world economy. Under the new neo-liberal trading system embodied by the WTO, developed and developing countries have been subject to the same regulations in international trade regardless of their economic and political strength. This pushed developing and geographically small countries into a fragile position in international trade. The decreasing role of nation states in regulating trade and commerce generated an imbalanced international economic order and threatened sustainable economic development at national level.

As a consequence, the closing years of the 20th century witnessed the birth of “anti-corporate” and “anti-government” social movements, critical of the neo-liberal globalization of corporate capitalism that aimed to direct attention to social and economic imbalance both at national and international levels. These movements were marked by series of protests, directed against the new managerial elites of neo-liberal capitalism: governments, the WTO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the parties to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). These well-known manifestations of new

movements were just the tip of a more deep-rooted disobedience and social unrest worldwide to which many diverse groups including nationalists and environmentalists greatly contributed. Thus, it was not surprising to see the emergence of several local and international movements and the development of a variety of counter-government protests in recent years.

Starting from 2011, the governments have faced counter-movements in Tunisia (which then spread to Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara and Yemen), Iceland, the United States (Occupy Wall Street), Spain (15-M movement), Turkey (Gezi Park protests) and Brazil (V for Vinegar Movement). The counter-government social protests not only took place in developing countries but also affected the most affluent ones. The Wall Street in the US often labeled as the heart of capitalism for being the home of the largest stock exchange in the world, was the centre stage of the most well known occupy movement.

Though each local movement had its own causes and characteristics depending on their country of origin they were formed by and/or they came to represent the dispossessed, marginalized, powerless and victimized. These movements also tended to be against the dominant ideology that was complicit in exploitation and discrimination. As Harvey (2005) asserts, it is the exploitative and anti-democratic character of neoliberalism that marks the focal point of these public oppositions (p. 205-206).

One of the most important features of contemporary social unrests was the widespread use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and extensive exploitation of alternative media in counter-mobilizations for activist purposes. Unlike McLuhan's well-known argument that electronic technology has been contracting the world into a "global village", some argue that new media technologies which led to an alternative media explosion allowed countless self-sufficient 'neo-tribes' that need not participate in larger arenas of public discourse or social movements to emerge (Lash and Urry, 1994, p. 317–318; Lievrouw, 2001). Manuel Castells called such groups as "sources of resistance to the new

global order . . . historically specific societies -that- take their revenge against their domination by global flows” (Castells, 1997, p. 72).

The rise of blogs (e.g. Wordpress, Blogspot, Tumblr), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter, Weibo), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia) and content sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Flickr) in the 2000s has intensified discussions on the implications of new media for the political realm. While techno-optimists focused on mainly the positive impacts of social media and depicted contemporary social movements as “social media revolution” (e.g. Ghonim, 2012; Vargas, 2012), others (e.g. Morozov, 2010) have rejected that online activism has any real social impact.

In *The Net Delusion*, Morozov (2009) asserted that “feel-good” online activism gave those who participate in ‘slacktivist’² campaigns an illusion of having a meaningful impact on the world without demanding anything more than joining a Facebook group. Castells (2012) disagreed with this argument by stating that in places such as Tunisia and Iceland and the movement went “from cyberspace to urban space” for the activists “planned the protests on Facebook, coordinated them through Twitter, spread them by SMSs and webcasted them to the world on YouTube” (p. 56-58). Castell proposed that new social movements were able to spread by contagion thanks to unprecedented opportunities that the Internet offers for communication and mobilization. “They would be connected to economic, political, military, ideological and cultural contradictions of power (...) but they could only be formed if there are the emotions of hope and outrage and these emotions are communicated to others on a larger scale” (p. 12-14).

The Internet emerged as the most important source of news to get up-to-date information about ongoing events during the Gezi Park protests, which started on 28 May 2013 initially to contest an urban development plan at Taksim in Istanbul. Despite the dissemination of ample amount of misinformation and

² Slacktivism is a combination of words ‘slacker’ and ‘activism’, that describes ‘feel good’ measures, in support of an issue or social cause, that have little or no practical effect other than to make the person doing it take satisfaction from the feeling they have contributed. Slacktivism can take other expressions, such as wearing political messages on body or vehicle, joining Facebook groups, or taking part in short-term boycotts (Christensen, 2011).

disinformation especially on social media platforms, digitally literate individuals faced with the silence of mainstream media outlets resorted to online media.

i. Focus of current research

The current thesis has two starting points. First, mass media today is in a transition which influences the way mainstream institutions operate. Competition is not just among mainstream media corporations themselves but also between mainstream media and other information providers. Participatory media organizations challenge the dominant role and structure of mainstream media outlets, through presenting a horizontally structured and non-commercial alternative model mostly based on the Internet.

The secondary departure point is that there is a shift in the ways that individuals become politically active. The current thesis rests on the premise that civic engagement goes beyond traditional political campaigns and activities such as voting and, thus, it may be too early to claim, as some do, political participation is in decline. Participatory journalism in which individuals engage in media both as users and information producers stand as an example of newly emerging non-traditional forms of civic engagement. The majority of experiments in participatory media take place on the Internet thanks to citizen-reporters who provide essential information, mostly based on volunteer-work.

As previous research on dynamics of participatory media reveals, strategies and the structure of the media organization shapes its production and the content it produces (Atton, 2002). Therefore, the current research sets out to shed some light on the sociology of online participatory media and journalism practices at the grassroot level and in their organizational context. In doing so, it draws its theoretical insights from a number of scholarly works on participatory media. The first is Bowman and Willis' (2003) characterization of participatory journalism that places emphasis not solely on democratization function of participatory media but also on characteristics that makes participatory reporting a form of civic engagement. The second is Henry Jenkins' (2008) argument on "participatory culture" in which the audience plays an active role in the processes of data

collection, reporting, analyzing and disseminating content. The third is Dahlgren's (2009) assertion on civic culture, which allows not just to outline the distinctive components that may influence the engagement in participatory media but also to investigate its dynamics.

Drawing from Dahlgren (2009) this study will investigate interlinked features of online participatory journalism without ignoring its embeddedness in a socio-cultural context. Dahlgren conceptualizes civic culture as cultural patterns that are shaped by citizens gathered around certain characteristics that include knowledge, democratic values, practices and skills (p.9). In *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication and Democracy*, he (2009) proposes that civic culture emerge around four dimensions of mutual reciprocity: knowledge, values, practices and identities (p. 108).

What is of interest for the current research is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of online participatory media that emerge in the context of contemporary social movements. In order to produce answer to this question I will analyze the structural features and organizational dynamics of *çapul.tv*, which was established following the first week of Gezi Park protests in Turkey in May 2013.

In this study the term “participatory” instead of “citizen” is preferred in order to underline the significance of participation as the key-defining feature of participatory journalism. Participatory journalism comprises two types of participation: participation in the production of content and participation in the media association (Carpentier, 2007). Participatory journalism differs from citizen journalism that came to define individuals’ participation in conventional media (Bentley et al., 2007, p. 240) As Couldry (2010) points out the term “citizen journalist” is ended up being exceptionally challenged. While some correspondents considered the term problematic due to the negative undertones of the term “citizen” some were uncomfortable with calling their practices “journalism” (Couldry, 2010).

ii. Conceptualizing online participatory media

The roots of participatory media as the media based on the content produced by amateurs and enthusiasts can be traced in citizen journalism practices such as the eyewitness reporting of events often ignored by the corporate media outlets. Although often considered as synonymous with radical media, participatory media is different from songs, dances, jokes, public speech and graffiti that are associated with the politically radical groups. The line between alternative and participatory media is often blurred for the two concepts have some common grounds. Several features of alternative media such as their horizontal structures that foster collective production as well as challenging and overlapping roles of readers, editors, publishers and distributors can also be attributed to participatory media (Atton, 2002). The Internet, which has emerged as the main distribution channel for alternative media, has brought the two concepts even closer.

The indispensable role that the Internet plays in the formation and distribution of alternative media provided a basis for optimistic scholars to define the Internet as an alternative form of public sphere (e.g. Villarreal Ford & Gil, 2001) and fostered the belief that “technical possibilities of the Internet as a public sphere are unlimited” (p. 202). Drawing from Jürgen Habermas (1965) the idea of public sphere allows the exploration of how consensus is built over common good in a rational debate that tolerates and fosters pluralism of views. Therefore, the growing use of the Internet has made it immensely relevant for research on participatory media.

Participatory media practices are also related with the ways individuals act as politically active citizens. The resurgence of social activism, which also includes media activism, allows us to reconsider the extent of democratic rights of citizens and their right for communication (Bennett, 2008; Dahlgren, 2000). In addition to disappointment experienced with formal politics certain individuals’ attitudes towards traditional media seem to be changing. Although mainstream news media are available in a variety of formats, growing numbers of citizens seek for or establish alternative sources of information especially online. An

online survey by Indymedia revealed that profit orientation and content manipulation on mainstream media were the main reasons that divert citizens' attention to alternative media (Rannikko, 2005).

It is also possible that participatory media may be related to specific events, depending on the context and the interests of citizens, as it was the case during the threat of war in Iraq in 2003. A momentum was created with the formation of web sites for alternative news source production. As a consequence of the dissatisfaction of individuals with the way mainstream media outlet reported the news many individuals in Iraq took the responsibility in their hands and opened up blogs and/or launched vlogs. In certain cases the emergence of alternative news sources such as the Indymedia, which was established during the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, was the outcome of an event-related resistance movements.

Though many similarities between alternative, community and participatory media can be drawn a clarification at a certain degree is necessary to be able to explore how and why alternative media differ from participatory media (Gillmor, 2006). It is true that some of the participatory media can also be perceived as alternative, as long as their primary aim is to foster change usually in certain social, cultural and political contexts. Individuals that are, for instance, residing in a specific geographical location that shares common goals, which brings them altogether produce community media. Online participatory media, on the other hand, are not necessarily built on "communities". Here the focus is shifting from narrow and closed communities to media structures that render service to needs of individuals through amateur journalistic activities, actualized via loose networks of individuals creating media for potential audiences. In this context, Indymedia, a decentralized network composed of local and autonomous collectives from various geographies (Çevikel, 2015, p. 299), can be described as an online participatory media for relying on volunteer labor that is nourished by content producers around the world. The same structure can be observed in the *çapul.tv* of Gezi Park protests in Turkey. *çapul.tv*, is based on volunteer support of a loose network with a core team managing the daily operation.

By observing Indymedia or *çapul.tv*, one can easily see that participatory journalism is not against the professional journalism practices and values, however, it aims to challenge and transform the press as an institution. In “Alternative and Activist New Media”, Lievrouw (2011) underlines that participatory media differs from other forms of media with their scope, stance and agency/action. In terms of scope, participatory media are notable for being small scale and collaborative (Lievrouw, p. 144). Despite its geographic dispersion, Lievrouw (2011) asserts that participatory media such as Indymedia remain local and generate news by embracing a bottom-up approach.

In terms of stance, participatory media journalists either position themselves outside of or directly in opposition with the mainstream media institutions. Still, similar to journalists working in mainstream media institutions; participatory media journalists adopt certain values, ethos and practices to actualize their journalistic ideals. Such practices can be observed in how participatory media journalists or editors maintain some kind of control over a story and storytelling in general (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 145).

In terms of agency and action participatory media outlets embrace an interventionist approach through positioning themselves in certain genres. Genres remain important for activist participatory media projects to make communications recognizable by recipients. Such positioning allows participatory media outlets to reach particular agencies before a collective action is taken (Jenkins et al., 2006). For instance, *çapul.tv* positions itself as a social movement-oriented participatory media, thus, mainly appeals to recipients seeking for news on contemporary social movements based in various geographies of Turkey. *çapul.tv*, thus, have emerged as one of primary actors in social movement genre of online participatory media scene in Turkey.

iii. Contextualizing *çapul.tv*

In order to understand the serious obstacles to freedom of press and the ground that enabled the birth of alternative media in Turkey, one needs to look at the problematic nature of mainstream media ownership as well as legal

restrictions on the freedom of press and governmental pressures on the media. As a result of the lack of profitability in the sector the largest media companies also invest in other sectors, such as the energy, finance and construction. This results in a clear conflict of interests and close ties with the government (White, 2014). The government also exerts considerable pressure on media content directly or indirectly, for example, through op-ed pieces, which serve as “ready-made propaganda” (White, 2014). The World Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders exposes the legal and political pressures on the media in Turkey (<https://index.rsf.org/#!/>). Turkey showed a stabile decline in freedom of press since 2002, the year when the World Press Freedom Index was first published, as the country ranked 99th in 2002, 101st in 2007 and 149nd in 2015³. CPJ’s (2012) findings revealed that 76 journalists were in prison by 2012, while at least 61 of them were jailed in relation to their work. Critical and/or investigative reporters and Kurdish journalists have been the main targets. The arrested journalists have been mostly associated with mainstream news outlets or Kurdish news media such as Dicle News Agency, Özgür Radyo (Free Radio), Özgür Gündem (Free Agenda) and Azadiya Welat (Freedom of the Country). Similarly, ordinary citizens have also been under risk of being arrested on various grounds such as insulting the President and government officials on online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (e.g. taraf.com.tr, 2015; t24.com.tr, 2015). Several have been put on trial for sharing their views on social media. Alternative media have also been exposed to direct censorship on various grounds such as Article 301⁴ and Article 312⁵ of the Turkish Penal Code. Findings of *EngelliWeb* (Disabled Web in English), a user-generated platform established in 2008 to track censored web sites in Turkey, revealed that more than 105.000 websites were blocked by November 2015 (engelliweb.com, 2015).

Alternative media in Turkey started to flourish, especially in the mid-1990s when there was a big increase in the number of commercial media outlets due to privatization of broadcasting sector. The rapid development of new

³ Erol Önderoğlu, “Türkiye Basın Özgürlüğü Sıralamasında 102. Sırada”, Bianet, 22 October 2008, retrieved from <http://bianet.org/bianet/ifade-ozgurlugu/110373-turkiye-basin-ozgurlugu-siralamasi-nda-102-sirada>

⁴ Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code makes it illegal to insult Turkey, Turkish identity or Turkish government.

⁵ Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code is related to inciting religious hatred encouraging individuals to disobey the law.

information and communication technologies also played a key role in this process. The number of alternative news web sites increased during late 1990s and 2000s as a consequence of decreasing costs of Internet services.

Alternative news sources proliferated in mid-2000s with the increasing use of social networking sites, which allowed alternative news providers to launch pages on Facebook, open up accounts on Twitter, launch online television channels via ustream.com and similar relevant services, establish vlogs via YouTube.com, create visual stories through storify.com and keep blogs via services such as blogger.com and wordpress.com.

Despite the increase in number of services that makes it easier for citizens to launch alternative news outlets, a research conducted by the KONDA revealed that 42 per cent of the Turkey's citizens believed that Internet is more harmful than useful (Anonymous reporter, 2011). Thus, online media has often met with skeptical reactions from individuals and been subject to legal constraints. With the enactment of the law no. 5651, entitled Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by Such Publication, in May 2007 practices of Internet censorship and filtering became a recent focus of interest in Turkey. While the regulation of audio-visual media by the Radio and Television Supreme Channel (RTUK) is still in force, a new authority called Telecommunication and Transmission Authority, to hold the power to ban suspected Internet sites without judicial approval was established. Internet censorship was first initiated in March 2007, with the imposition of a ban on YouTube.com, due to a controversial video intentionally insulting Atatürk, the founder and the first President of Turkey. Although the ban was lifted two days later (ABC News, 2008), it was reinstated following a series of 853 web site blockings in November 2010, due to an old video published via YouTube, showing the former opposition leader Deniz Baykal in a hotel room with a woman other than his wife (PC Mag, 2010).

Following the ban on YouTube, the primary practice of Internet censorship in Turkey, was the accusations brought against mainly journalists and bloggers on the justifications of the inappropriateness of the offered content. Among them

Barış Yarkadaş was accused of insulting the Turkish Republic in June 2010 while Aylin Duruoğlu, the editor of the daily Vatan's website, accused of being a member of an armed group. A student, Erdem Büyük, was charged with attacking personal rights after posting a caricature on his own Facebook profile. Soner Yalçın, the owner of Oda TV news site, was accused of inciting hatred and hostility through the media (Reporters Without Borders, 2011). Due to recent practices on banning web sites and legal restrictions, the Reporters listed Turkey as one of the "countries under surveillance" without Borders in March 2011 (Lordet, 2011).

The OSCE Report published in January 2010 revealed that approximately 3.700 web sites were blocked on similar grounds since the enactment of the law no.5651, and the number increased up to 15.055 in August 2011, either as a consequence of the court decision, or at the initiative of the TIB⁶. According to the law, Internet sites could be censored in cases of unauthorized online gambling, offense against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, sexual abuse of children, encouragement of suicide, abuse and supply of drugs, and promotion of prostitution.⁷ However, a group of web sites were also blocked by arbitrary decisions made at the initiative of TIB for reasons of promoting terrorist activities, insulting the government and individuals, downloading MP3s and movies, as well as for launching Turkish gay communities online. To oppose censorship, social media activists opposing Internet filtering and censorship in Turkey launched Facebook groups such as "Internetime dokunma"(Don't touch my internet)⁸, "sansüre karşı yürüyüş" (Marching Against Censorship)⁹, "sansüre sansür"¹⁰ and joined the campaign "Stop Censorship in Turkey".^{11,12} As it was the case during Iranian election protests of

⁶ The most recent statistical data on the number of censored web sites is provided by engelliweb.com

⁷ Middle East Technical University Web site on Law No. 5651, <http://www.metu.edu.tr/5651/>

⁸ "Internetime Dokunma" Facebook Page has 6,333 members.

See: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Internetime-dokunma/187907054588741>

⁹ "Sansüre Karşı Yürüyüş" Facebook Page has 7,121 members.

See: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/sansüre-karşı-yürüyüş/132397150110683>

¹⁰ "SansüreSansür" Facebook Page has 7,410 members.

See: <http://www.facebook.com/sansuresansur>

¹¹ "Stop Censorship in Turkey" Cause drew 13,166 members until the date.

¹² Turkey branch of Avaaz.org, an international civic organization, also launched an online petition to fight against Internet censorship and filtering, and received 24,610 signatures until the date August 11, 2011.

2009-2010¹³, social networking sites have made a large number of individuals become aware of the cause and join street protests organized in 29 cities in May 15, 2011.

Up until Gezi Park protests, several platforms of alternative media have also been subjected to censorship. One of them was *Ötekilerin Postası* (the *Others' Post* in English), which is a citizen journalism platform that is mainly active via Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook page of *Ötekilerin Postası* was closed down three times by the Facebook office due to a government order on the grounds of “violation of community standards” (*Ötekilerin Postası*, 2013).

Citizens' right to obtain news and information was not the sole motivation behind the Gezi Park protests. However, Gezi Park demonstrations made governmental restrictions on media and the practices of censorship much more transparent in the eyes of citizens. The Internet poll conducted during the protests by Bilgiç and Kafkaslı (2013) revealed that 84.2 % of attendees protested the silence of mainstream media. The media coverage of Gezi protests was largely characterized by silence at first and later by the selective coverage and self-censorship by mainstream television channels such as CNN Turk, NTV, Haber Turk as well as TRT and major newspapers. The initial silence of mainstream media and government's influence on their content attracted around 3000 protesters in front of the NTV building (Anonymous reporter, 2013).

The mainstream media remained largely silent about the demonstrations that started at Gezi Park and spread to various parts of the country in its first week. In the following weeks they voiced official statements by the government and communicated the provocative utterances of politicians. The influence of political pressures became particularly evident when six national dailies (HaberTurk, Türkiye, Sabah, Zaman, Yeni Şafak and Star) used exactly the same words (“We lay down our life for democratic demands”) as headline on June 7, 2013 while covering Erdoğan's speech during his return from Tunisia. 24-hour

¹³ During the organization of marching against Iranian Election of 2009, Facebook served as the front-runner social networking sites to mobilize people, while Twitter and Flickr were also popular platforms to post images from the bloody protests. It is estimated that around 40,000 Iranians filled the Haft-e Tir Square, and the government attempted to block access to social networking sites as Flickr, Twitter, Facebook and as such as a response. (Popkin, 2009)

news channels including CNNTürk and HaberTürk were criticised by protesters. While social media users mocked CNNTürk for broadcasting a documentary on penguins at the height of the uprising, a group of protesters staged a protest in front of HaberTürk TV building for broadcasting an interview with the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Emen, 2013).

The concentrated ownership of mainstream media outlets led citizens to look for alternative sources of news such as the Ulusal Kanal, Halk TV, Cem TV and EM TV, which broadcast nationwide with lower ratings in comparison to mainstream media outlets. Social media were also used as one of the main medium of communication. Individuals used social networking sites to share videos, document evidence of police brutality and provide instructions for getting medical help and finding safe zones. Despite the condemnation of Twitter by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 'as the worst menace to society' on which 'the best examples of lies can be found' (Letsch, 2013) social media use reached its peak throughout Gezi Park protests. Twitter users had sent two million tweets with hashtags (i.e. #direngeziparki, #OccupyGezi) related to the protests in a few hours into the protests (Egin, 2013). The total number of tweets sent in Turkey increased from 9 to 11 million to 15.2 million on May 31, the day when events sparked (Ergürel, 2013).

Practices of citizen journalism such as live-stream broadcasts played a key role in filling the gap left wide open by traditional mainstream media. Various collectives undertook the mission to report the protests. While certain alternative media platforms including the Others' Post, Bianet, Vagus TV and T24 which were established before Gezi Park protests, provided up-to-date information on on-going events, there were also brand new activist media platforms including RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz, Gezi Radyo, Gezi Post and Videoccupy which were established during the first days of the uprising. The majority of activist media platforms utilized various social networking sites and interactive services such as Livestream, UStream, Twitter and Facebook in order to reach a wider audience. *çapul.tv* was among the online media initiatives that started broadcasting on the tenth day of the protests by setting up a makeshift studio in Gezi Park.

çapul.tv was born as a national volunteer-run information network of participatory and non-profit media based in İstanbul, where it acts as a communication hub for activist-journalists of various movements for social justice. Its name, “çapul” is derived from the neologism originated during protests when PM Erdoğan described the protesters as “çapulcu” (“looters” in English). Erdoğan said during a public speech on June 2, 2013:

“We cannot just watch some “çapulcu” inciting our people. [...] Yes, we will also build a mosque. I do not need permission for this neither from the head of the Republican People's Party (CHP) nor from a few çapulcu. I got permission from the fifty percent of the citizens who elected us as the governing party” (sabah.com.tr, 2013).

The protesters quickly adapted the term and started to describe themselves as *çapulcu*, as a term for self-identification in a humorous manner. Many took the concept further by integrating the unique nature of the demonstrations and defined it as an act towards taking the democracy to the next step by reminding government of its reason for existence in a peaceful and humorous manner.

Established on June 6, 2013, the tenth day of the protests at Gezi Park, çapul.tv started its broadcast on site as a critical response to mainstream media outlets çapul.tv team explains in their web site that they have been struggling since 2001 to overcome the unequal nature of public communication in Turkey by supporting alternative communication movements such as union.org (sendika.org), union.tv (sendika.tv) and International Labor Film Festival (iff.org.tr) (çapul.tv, 2014).

iv. Research aims, methodology and chapters

One of the main characteristics of the social movements emerged in 2000s-including the Gezi Park movement-, is that they largely failed to create lasting impact. A Gezi Park movement protester evaluates this situation with following words, three years after protests:

“Now I feel sadder. Freedom of expression in Turkey is getting worse. The environment is being destroyed. Gezi provided an opportunity for social discharge. In time, it slowed down. Like an earthquake... Gezi Park movement will not happen again. Now the system (government) is more experienced. They will take precautions.” (Köse and Açar, 2016).

Accordingly, a large number of participatory civic media initiatives established around these movements were also short-lived. The transient, dispersed and thematic nature of these movements presented major challenges in terms of the sustainability and permanency of online participatory media that emerged in support of them. The majority of online participatory media including RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz and Occupy Gezi established during Gezi movement lasted less than two years. The inability of online participatory media to last longer limited their contribution to the democratization of Turkey’s media environment.

çapul.tv proved to be an exception in the sense that it succeeded to survive in the aftermath of the Gezi movement. Its follower base and online social network presence exceeded the limits of Gezi movement. The presence and follower base of çapul.tv remained stable even a couple of years after Gezi Park movement, that its Twitter followers were approximately 160.000 and Facebook likers were around 23.723 by July 2015. One of the main and unique characteristics of çapul.tv is that its founders emphasize their ideal of creating “a more equal and democratic societal structure”. Its emphasis on social rights and movements enables the discourse produced by çapul.tv goes beyond the discourse of Gezi movement.

The aim of the present thesis is to explore the role and importance of online participatory media for contemporary social movements and investigate their structural, technological, economic and editorial opportunities and limitations that determine their contribution to the democratization of public sphere in general and media system in particular. In doing so, it also aims to contribute to the literature on online civic engagement by exploring online participatory media in their relationship with civic culture.

Its fieldwork is based on an organizational case study on *çapul.tv*. *çapul.tv* is chosen for a number of reasons. First, it is the only online participatory media established during Gezi Park movement that is still active. Second, it is actively engaged in the civil and political society in Turkey and resides at the forefront of newer developments of civic culture. Third, *çapul.tv* has a reasonably noticeable presence in Turkey's net-sphere and also makes use of the Internet for their internal activities and operations.

Contemporary social movements by nature require the support of online participatory media. The main hypothesis of this thesis is that the relevance and sustainability of online participatory media that emerge in and around these movements depends on their relevance to civic culture. *çapul.tv* owes its sustainability to its civic foundation.

This thesis raises three main research questions:

1. What was the role and importance of online participatory media for Gezi Park movement?
2. What are the structural, technological, economic and editorial strengths and weaknesses of *çapul.tv* as an online participatory media?
3. In what ways can *çapul.tv* be considered as a civic culture?

The primary data collection techniques of the current research are in-depth interviews, statistical analysis of *çapul.tv* website visitors and social media followers, content analysis of news items and firsthand observation. Six in-depth interviews are conducted with *çapul.tv* members. Interviews with one of the co-founders and reporters, which were conducted to investigate the structural and editorial characteristics of *çapul.tv*, took place at *çapul.tv* studios at Şişli district of İstanbul between February and April 2015. Interviews with television program presenters were conducted at Beşiktaş district of İstanbul in May 2015. Content analysis method is used to analyze news items of *çapul.tv* to find out how the collective represented Gezi Park movement during the course of events. Statistical

data on visitors, traffic sources and followers are used to explore the web presence of *capul.tv*. In addition, firsthand observations enrich the arguments, where relevant.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. The first chapter sets out to discuss major theoretical perspectives on contemporary social movements; including Marxist, collective behavior, relative deprivation, rational choice, political opportunity, resource mobilization, new social movements, framing and public sphere approaches. The chapter argues that while there are a variety of social movement approaches that aim to understand the dynamics of mobilization patterns, the most prominent theory of the field has public sphere approach, for its adjustment with evolving tools –such as the use of new ICTs–, demands and actions. Moreover, despite widely criticized, Marxist interpretation of social movements serve the basis for understanding evolving characteristics of social movements. Several other approaches (mainly collective behavior, relative deprivation, rational choice and political opportunity perspectives), which directly position themselves in opposition with the Marxist interpretation of social movements for embracing a liberal point of view, take vulnerabilities of the neoliberal capitalism as given; thus remain shortlived. Moreover, resource mobilization and framing approaches remain exceedingly instrumental that they overemphasize strategies and tools over demands and action.

The second chapter focuses on theories of alternative and online participatory media, by evaluating prominent perspectives of the field. The main argument of the second chapter is that online participatory media should be considered as rooted in civic culture because of their multi-dimensional functionality (two-way communication, data storage and verification, mobilization) and their civic roots (its emergence as a civic initiative based on interpersonal and horizontal organization). This argument is inspired by Jürgen Habermas's (1981) theory of public sphere. Peter Dahlgren's (2000; 2005; 2009) civic culture perspective is also explored and its basic dimensions (i.e. organizational structure, sustainability, editorial principles, ethical values, civic identity and knowledge and skills) are defined in detail, since the civic culture approach also composes the analytical framework of the current research.

The third chapter primarily focuses on why the neoliberal ideology experienced a major crisis in the 2000s and how this crisis paved the way for the emergence of international contemporary social movements. After discussing the theoretical framework and background of the crisis of neoliberalism the chapter focuses on international contemporary social movements chronologically starting with Seattle protests, in which the Internet-based, online and participatory news sources and networks played an important role in terms of fostering social mobility. The main argument of the this chapter is that post-Seattle movements share two important characteristics: First, these social movements emerged as a reaction to neo-liberal policies that gave rise to a number of negative outcomes such as increasing economic and social inequality, worsening income distribution, widening gap between the rich and the poor segments of the global society, cultural, historical and environmental destruction, and so on. Second, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and tools played an essential role in terms of communication, data verification and mobilization in these movements.

The fourth chapter focuses on Gezi Park movement, as a movement marked by a mass resistance to urban development, to social inequality and to unfair public communication environment created by neo-liberal policies in Turkey. It aims to explore social dynamics that enabled the emergence of Gezi movement. The main argument of the fourth chapter is that Gezi Park movement must be perceived as a resistance against JDP's Islamic and neo-liberal vision in public sphere. Differentiating itself from previous social movements of Turkey, the social base of Gezi Park movement was heterogeneous, so were the demands. Emerging as an anti-government movement against a pro-Islamic neo-liberal world vision, the movement gathered millions of individuals from diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Despite the variety in demands and the geographically dispersed nature of Gezi Park movement makes it hard to define; it shares a common ground with contemporary social movements of 2000s, analyzed in Chapter 3.

The fifth chapter tries to shed some light on the communication crisis

experienced in Gezi that resulted in the emergence of media initiatives such as Ayağa Kalk Taksim, RevoltIstanbul and çapul.tv. It argues that the significance of Gezi movement from a media and communications perspective is the emergence of new online participatory media such as çapul.tv and the birth of a relatively more participatory and egalitarian communication environment. From this sense, the movement not only enabled the emergence of a variety of participatory media outlets, but also pointed out the biased news coverage of particular mainstream media institutions in Turkey, thus directed recipients' attention towards alternative news sources. In other words, the movement succeeded in underlining partisan news coverage of mainstream media and directing recipients' attention towards alternative news sources.

Chapter six is devoted to the analysis of çapul.tv as a case study. It starts with the methodological procedures (in-depth interviews, first hand participant observations, statistical analysis of çapul.tv website visitors and social media followers, content analysis of news items and secondary sources) and continues with the analysis of çapul.tv. By drawing influence from the organizational sociology approach, the chapter presents an organizational study of çapul.tv as an online participatory media, by analyzing its structure, name and logo, location and premises, technological facilities, organization of content production, financial resources, human resources and history. The organizational inquiry brings along a discussion on the organizational strengths and weaknesses of çapul.tv.

The seventh chapter explores in what ways çapul.tv can be considered as a civic culture. By drawing influence from the theoretical civic culture framework of Dahlgren (2009), the chapter explores civic identities of çapul.tv members, their loyalty to democratic values and procedures, practices, routines and traditions as well as their relevant knowledge and competencies. The main aim of the chapter is to reveal how civic culture characteristics of çapul.tv, contribute to the collective's presence and sustainability. The analysis is informed with in-depth interviews with co-founders, reporters and presenters of çapul.tv, as well as with content analysis of news items and first hand participant observations gathered at the çapul.tv studio.

The concluding section offers an overall assessment of the study and provides potential suggestions for the improvement of online participatory media related with the contemporary social movements.



CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

1.1. Introduction

Social actions, including social movements, are essential elements of social theory as emphasized by Weber (1968, p. 24). Social movements are informal social actions taken at group level. They are formed by groups of diffusely organized individuals and/or organizations that aim to reach a common goal to create social change and awareness over particular social and political issues. Social movements may differ in size; however, they are always carried out at collective level. They emerge mostly in a loosely organized manner by a small group of individuals and then turn into larger movements with spontaneous participation of individuals from various different backgrounds. The relationships and processes of social movements are not defined by rules and procedures.

Since the 1960s the main characteristics of social movements have been their dynamic, complex and evolving natures. These characteristics reflect the complexity of the modern and democratic societies in which individuals speak up for a variety of demands related to environmental activism, labor rights, gender equality and human rights in general. Therefore, social movements since the 1960s are perceived as different from traditional social movements, which are marked by economic demands and labor movements and mostly associated with the Marxist ideology.

Contemporary social movements of 2000s share some similarities with the new social movements that began to emerge since the 1960s. Anti-globalization protests in Seattle and post-Seattle social movements, which emerged in different quarters of the world, have been marked by the heterogeneity of collective identities among geographically dispersed individuals who speak up for familiar demands. Theorists such as Manuel Castells (2012) called contemporary social movements as acts of “network of networks” while referring to the heavy use of communication technologies before, during and after the protests. This

conceptualization encompasses the organization of interest-based diverse networks as well as networks which take collective action against macro-issues such as unfair neoliberal governmental policies and procedures. The diversity in demands and collectivities of contemporary social movements has been accompanied with the rapid development of the new information and communication technologies especially starting from late 1990s. The widespread use of new ICTs in contemporary social movements stirred up debates on the role of communication technologies over collective identity formation and mobilization processes.

As can be inferred from their articulated demands, post-1960 movements as well as contemporary social movements in general, are inclined to be more social and cultural rather than political. Departing from the historically Marxist background of the labor movement, they are more interested in social mobilization through cultural innovations, development of new life-styles and transformation of identities. Contemporary social movements tend to express themselves through publicly recognized forms of protest or direct action, and they, in general, are linked to an external organization or a platform. What differs contemporary social movements from their predecessors are their strategies, goals and membership. Prior movements called for action against the deep-rooted political and social issues, such as capitalization, representation and proletarianization. Rather than demanding for a structural change contemporary movements demand for a social change and transformation through impacting societal policies of powerful institutions.

The French May revolution of 1968, which began by demonstrations and general strikes in universities and factories across France, was one of the turning points in the history of new social movements. The movement, which started with a series of student occupation protests against capitalism and the traditional institutions and then spread to factories involving millions of workers for approximately two weeks, served as the foundation of contemporary social movements with its network-based structure and geographic diffusiveness. The so-called revolution had a permanent impact on French society and influenced movements in other European countries in terms of the way protesters mobilized

and realized their actions. The movement was also marked for being one of the first social movements, which put social motivations over political ones.

The demands spoken up in the French May revolution marked the beginning of contemporary social movements as they were soon extended to the women's movement, ecology movement, gay rights movement and peace movement in different quarters of the world. The mobilization patterns, slogans such as "Il est interdit d'interdire" – "It is forbidden to forbid" and successive movements adopted resistance forums as well.

The mobilization dynamics of modern societies and sociology of contemporary social movements are approached from diverse theoretical perspectives, which vary from collective behavior to resource mobilization approach. This chapter aims to outline theoretical interpretations, which dominate social movement studies in order to provide a background for a better understanding of the roots, nature and operation of contemporary social movements.

1.2. Defining and understanding social movements

Social movement literature borrows theories from the fields of sociology, social psychology and even economics when explaining and analyzing the dynamics of social mobilizations. The study of social movements has a long history in sociology. However, more recently, the study of social movements has been subsumed under the study of contentious politics.

Social movements are described as patterns of collective action that take place as a reaction to inequality, oppression, and social, political or cultural problems. They constitute an organized set of components that pursue a common social agenda of change over time. Despite there are several definitions of them, social movements can briefly be understood as types of group actions, which are large and mostly informal organizations that focus on particular social issues to create a social change. As Blumer (1969) explains:

“Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living. The career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order of life.” (p. 99)

Thus, social movements can be regarded as forms of collective actions, sets of opinions and beliefs of specific collectivities (Neidhardt and Rucht, 1991). They integrate social agents to gather and collaborate in various ways to share a common goal, aim or project. Beliefs, ideas, desires and choices are as much important as the strategies developed throughout the mobilization processes and action-focused tactics. Dynamics beneath social movements are challenges to authorities and power holders, as well as cultural beliefs and practices to promote and resist social change.

Dissatisfaction with certain forms of life is also essential in order to understand the emergence of social movements. For instance, it could be observed that while access to basic civil rights formed the basis of traditional social movements, dissatisfaction with the unfair neoliberal policies and economic inequalities constitute the motives of contemporary social movements. Social movements aim to create a social change in the existing social and bureaucratic mechanisms and the society itself, which is a hard task for activists to succeed in their first attempt.

Similar to Blumer (1969), Eyerman and Jamison (1991) depict social movements as temporary opportunities to seek for alternative solutions to the failing mechanisms of existing systems. They (1991) suggest that social movements should be perceived as sources of creativity in public spaces:

Social movements are . . . best conceived of as temporary public spaces, as moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities, and even ideals (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p.4).

In defining social movements Tarrow (1998) focuses on their relative durability and dispersed nature:

“Contentious politics occurs when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities and opponent ... when backed by dense social networks and galvanised by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is the social movement (Tarrow, 1998).

Social movements differ from single protest events for they involve sustained interaction with opponents. According to Tarrow (1998), social movements last for a longer duration than the individual protest events. Thus, duration is an essential element of the social movements from this perspective. Movements leave their traces to public spheres through their rhetoric and collective actions, which impact on the destiny of future movements.

Tarrow (1998) additionally underlines the importance of social networks for enabling the collectivization process. Similar to Eyerman and Jamison (1991), Tarrow (1998) considers that cultural elements of social movements such as ideas, identities and idealshave important functions within the context of resistances. The social movement culture, which enables the emergence of the social movement, supports and nurture the movement itself, thus, contributes to the movement's duration.

Despite modern history of social movements date back to eighteenth century especially in Europe, where individuals struggled to obtain their basic civil rights, the contemporary debates on social movements revolve around a dual classification; which can be generalized as traditional social movements and contemporary/new social movements. The traditional movements, which were centered on economic well-being, such as the labor movement, were perceived as disorganized and threatening to the social order. These so-called traditional social movements are often associated with the Marxist ideology and they are mainly based on class struggles. The Marxist view of social movements emphasizes that the whole totality of social forms should be reconstructed from below, in order to overcome the disparities that derive from social, political and economic inequality. Emphasizing the importance of class-consciousness, the Marxist view

of social movements position struggle at the center of class conflict, in which the proletariat speaks up against the unfair mode of production, that serve for the interests of the dominant class.

Despite the so-called traditional view of social movements perceived as outdated starting from the 1960s, during the time when alternative interpretations of social movements began to emerge, these new interpretations of contemporary/new social movements borrow perspectives from the Marxist worldview. A majority of theorists of contemporary/new social movements, including André Gorz, Alberto Melucci and Alain Touraine integrated the general understanding of Marxist analysis into their interpretations. Still, the dominant argument starting from 1960s and 1970s has been that the structural changes in the economy; politics and the society in general, displaced the working class from the center of social transformations with a variety of new issues and actors. The declining popularity of organized labor in politics such as the social-democratic and Stalinist parties in European parliaments, and the hierarchical structures of trade unions justified the validity of contemporary/new social movement interpretations that prioritized identity politics over class politics (Barker and Dale, 1998).

Theoretical approaches to new social movement endorsed the belief that the Marxist interpretation of social movements remains limited in terms of understanding main motivations and consequences of contemporary social movements. The New Left, which emerged two and a half decades after the Second World War in the West interpreted the Marxist critique of the political economy in less economic terms and integrated Marxist points of views with alternative perspectives that prioritized identity politics. The re-interpretation of Marxist texts and anti-Marxist perspectives at the academic level underlined the essentiality of micro-level perspectives in understanding new social movements over macro-economic readings. One such critical account was suggested by Alberto Melucci (1989), who argued that Marxist theory remains limited for mainly focusing on the objective social foundations of collective action:

“The Marxist theory derives the meaning of action from its analysis of the social conditions, which the actors appear to have in common... Here collective action appears as actors without action – while the gap between objective conditions and the empirically observed collective behavior proves impossible to explain” (Melucci, 1989, p. 18).

Melucci (1989) considered the Marxist interpretation of social movements as ambiguous for overemphasizing the actors and neglecting the actions. From this perspective, collective identity, rather than directly the individuals themselves, are essential for social movements, which emerge as a consequence of interaction among individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action, as a potential field of opportunities and limitations. According to Melucci (1989), collective identity is shaped around three characteristics: cognitive definitions (the creation of a cognitive framework related with the goals, aims and the atmosphere of the action), active relationship (the activation of relationship among individuals) and emotional investments (emotional bonds between individuals). From this perspective, these three characteristics of collective identity also emerge as an analytical tool to understand social movements.

Tarrow (1998) also criticised the traditional interpretation of social movements, for being narrowly defined and limited with the Marxist revolutionist ideals and the disbelief in social transformation.

“Concerned with the problem that the workers’ movement could not succeed without the participation of a significant proportion of its members, (Marx) developed a theory of ‘false consciousness’, by which he meant that if workers failed to act as ‘History’ dictated, it was because they remained cloaked in a shroud of ignorance woven by their class enemies. The theory was unsatisfactory because no one could say whose consciousness was false and whose was real” (Tarrow, 1998).

As can be inferred from anti-Marxist accounts provided, the interpretation of social movements starting from 1960s relied on the disbelief in the Marxist theory and the increase in the number of causes and actors. The diversification in the number of causes and actors paved the ground for the new social movement theory and its variations, which have directed the attention from economic

dimensions to societal problems. For instance, the dominant paradigm in American social movement theory has been resource mobilization, which also holds similarities with the political process theory (Jasper, 2010).

Resource mobilization approach, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections, emerged to stress the capability of a movement's members to acquire resources and mobilize individuals to accomplish the movement's aims. Similarly, political process, or political opportunity theory, argued that the success of social movements are dependent on the political opportunities such as increased political pluralism, decline in repression, division within elites and increased political enfranchisement. These two approaches mostly treated goals and aims of social movements as taken for granted, and they rather focused on the mobilization patterns and opportunities.

The definition of social movements from such instrumentalist perspectives, thus, received criticisms since they degrade social movements into rational-choice actions and that such interpretation may result in the negation of cultural dynamics and emotions that trigger the emergence of movements. The majority of criticism over resource mobilization and political process paradigms, which has been dominant in the United States between 1960s and 2010s, focused on their inability in making sense of protesters' choices, desires and points of views that actualize the social movements.

Theories of new social movement claimed to bring a new agenda for Marxist theory and the movement research. However, these new perspectives at times, also borrowed the Marxist terminology in order to understand and interpret social movements. They mainly emphasized collective actions actualized by individuals and activist groups over shared interests for socially transformative or revolutionary purposes.

In this study, I choose to refer the so-called new social movements as contemporary social movements, since the conceptualization of social movements as "new" remain problematic. The "new" perspective on social movement underestimates the Marxist past of civil resistance by overemphasizing the diverse

nature of contemporary social demands and actors, although they emerge as a consequence of the unfair neoliberal policies which negatively impact on the masses and serve for the interests of the minority elites.

1.3. Theories of social movements

1.3.1. Interpretation of social movements in Marxist theory

Marxist theory perceives the social world as a combination of social and economic structures that shape individual needs and capabilities. In his words, "Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand" (Marx, 1993, p. 265). These interrelations are tied in accordance with the economic activity and mode of production; thus they inevitably shape the social life of individuals. The historical materialist theory of history, which examines the underlying motives of the social change and development, argues that the main features of modern societies such as class relations and ideologies are organized in line with the economic activities and the interests, in which individuals produce and reproduce to preserve their social existence. Thus, social life in Marxist terms can be read as a recurring lifecycle that is dominated by the modes of production and the economic power of the elites.

In order to attract attention to the class divisions among the society, Marx (1973) suggests the consideration of the society at two levels through the base and the superstructure metaphors, in which the base (e.g. politics, religion) refers to the social consciousness while the superstructure refers to the dominant ideology. Within this perspective, changes in the base would have the potential to transform the superstructure, thus the change needs to stem from below to impact on the dominant ideological paradigms. Social movements, thus, must be organized from below to directly challenge the very existence of these social and economic structures. The social organization for movement purposes is a consequence of individuals' practical, physical and intellectual demands and needs, which result in the gathering of individuals around shared interests.

When we look at the brief theoretical history of social movements, it can be observed that the linkage between Marxist theory and social movements have remained weak. Although social movement theorists at times refer to Marxist readings when theorizing contemporary social movements, they mainly refrain from directly linking theories with the Marxist worldview. However, both studies could contribute to each other, if the social movement studies did not break ties from the impact of capitalism over social movements and the Marxist researchers raised practical questions over issues of class-consciousness, social structures and strategies.

Although the linkage between the Marxist theory and social movement studies remain weak contemporary social movements such as the #occupywallstreet in the U.S. and the so-called Blackberry riots in the United Kingdom emerged with anti-corporatist and anti-globalist arguments that draw from the Marxist theory. Despite the analysis of contemporary social movements emphasize the social and collective dimensions in general¹⁴, they are also related with the construction and dissemination of extensive popular analyses of neoliberalism and commodification processes. It can be observed in the influential *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* book by Naomi Klein (1999) and the documentaries of Michael Moore such as *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) and *Capitalism: A Love Story* (2009) that contemporary social movements are directly related to the corporate domination over everyday life, exploitation of indigenous labor, creative workers struggling to enhance the flexible working conditions and the solidarity movements against the unfair neoliberal policies. The underlying motives behind the contemporary social movements use a similar language of contention that challenge the social and cultural power of the global elites through emphasizing labor exploitation, unfair modes of production and the inequality in income distribution.

Thus, it can be claimed that despite the Marxist theory is understated in contemporary social movement literature Marxist terminology still remains influential in terms of understanding unrest and resistance movements that target

¹⁴ Theorists such as Toni Negri and David Harvey should not be included in this generalization, as they interpret contemporary social movements as a consequence of the unfair nature of neoliberal and capitalist world order.

neoliberal globalization, especially since late 1990s. Activists that endorse the leftist ideological tradition engage with each other to discuss the potential strategies and tactics within horizontal structures that allow the participation of any interested individual.

In contemporary social movements, engagement and participation take place in a “movement of movements” fashion. Therefore, the structure that lies at the core of the contemporary social movements foster equal distribution of sources and acts as networks of resistance. The 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization protests had aimed the abandonment of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. The social response to the 2008 global financial crisis, which emerged with the mobilization of the network of networks in online and offline arenas, was to see it as a reflection of the ills of neoliberalism. The similar tendency continued in the successor movements including the protests in Greece, Iceland, Turkey and Brazil.

Thus, although contemporary social movements have different mobilization patterns, their motivations for mobilization carry similarities with the Marxists perspectives of traditional social movements. As a consequence, it can be argued that Marxist social theory still plays a key role in understanding structural reasons of contemporary social movements, despite critics’ claim that it is outdated for emphasizing revolution over transformation.

1.3.2. Collective behavior theory

Collective behavior is a sociological concept used to refer to a variety of behaviors in which a large group of individuals engage (Tilly, 1978). Collective behavior refers to relatively unstructured behavior by a large number of individuals taking action with or being effected by other individuals. Collective behavior are marked for being largely spontaneous and unstructured; thus they differ from conventional and institutionalized behavior patterns such as the behavior sets in the classroom, workplace and the everyday behavior that are familiar in general. McAdam (1982), Tilly (1978) and Jenkins (1983) are among

main theorists who outline the framework of the collective behavior theory of social movements.

Collective behavior concept makes sense in the context of social movements since the social movements are forms of collective behavior themselves. As can be inferred from the labor movements and the new social movements in general, social movements emerge as an attempt of collective behavior, although they mainly establish themselves as social institutions afterwards (Tilly, 1978). Despite obtaining its roots from the sociology literature, social movements are often considered as separate from sociology for surpassing the boundaries of the field that sociological concepts at times remain insufficient in understanding social movements. The collective behavior approach asserts a more interdisciplinary perspective is needed for analyzing and understanding social movements in general (McAdam, 1982).

From the point of view of collective behavior theory, social movements should aim to change the society and more specifically, its participants. For instance, Alcoholics Anonymous organization, which emerged as a movement of the Oxford Group, a religious movement popular in the United States and Europe in the early 1930s, can be perceived as an example of the collective behavior type of social movement, that aimed self-improvement through creating a formula of “performing self-inventory, admitting wrongs, making amends, using prayer and meditation, and carrying the message to others” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2015). Thus, transformation through self-improvement is aimed with Alcoholics Anonymous movement as well as in other movements deriving from collective behavior, which assists the enhancement process of civil rights, social everyday life for disadvantaged or marginalized groups and the disengaged. The transformatory power of the collective approach preserved its dominance especially in the United States, until late 1970s, when resource mobilization emerged as the primary paradigm.

Although collective behavior theory kept its relevance for a couple of decades especially throughout the 20th century, empirical refutations came up when for instance, Snyder and Tilly (1972) found out that increases in hardship do

not directly impact on the emergence of any sort of protest or movement. Similarly, Eisinger (1973) emphasized that social movements are more likely to increase during times of political reform and economic crisis, which had very little to do with the increase in hardship. Although hardships are important components of social life, which at times leads to social unrest, its impact over the society in general remain limited due to their specificities such as alcoholism, disengagement from the society for social reasons and so on. Moreover, the theory fell short in terms of proving that those who attend social movements are from the less integrated segments of the society. In the wake of late 1960 protests collective behavior perspective was criticized for remaining excessively normative to analyze emerging conflicts. Thus, the collective behavior paradigm was replaced by the resource mobilization approach in the United States and the new social movement paradigm especially in Europe.

1.3.3. Relative deprivation theory

In the context of social movements, the relative deprivation approach refers to the feelings of deprivation that is derived from a related and desired point of reference. The relativity of the deprivation stems from comparison with the reference groups, who are socially satisfied. Relative deprivation is, thus, the opposite of social satisfaction feeling, and it is considered to be one of the main variables in the context of social movements to understand the collective motivation behind social change (Gurr, 1970). The deprivation is perceived to be the at the core of social movements and deviance, that results with the emergence of political violence such as protesting, terrorism, civil wars and even social crime (Gurr, 1970). In this perspective, it can be stated that individuals involved in deviant actions or behaviors when their means do not match with their aims (Merton, 1938).

The relative deprivation theory has organic bonds with economic, political and organizational problems and embraces an interdisciplinary approach in explaining feelings and actions (Flynn, no date). Therefore, the theory has been employed to a variety of fields including psychology and sociology, in social

psychology and even economics for it serves as the basis for explaining feelings such as frustration and aggression.

The relative deprivation theory asserts that an individual's feeling of deprivation stems from comparing his or her condition with a reference individual or group that is socially satisfied (Singer, 1992). At this point, the division between egoistic deprivation and fraternal deprivation must be recalled; while the former refers to an individual's comparative deprivation, the latter refers to a group's deprivation resulting from comparison with a reference group. Thus, the deprivation may occur at individual and group levels, and the deprivation at the group level may strengthen the group's collective identity (Singer, 1992). The employment of relative deprivation theory in the context of social movements has been questioned for it claimed a link between the feeling of deprivation and social movements. Critics argued that the proponents of the theory overlooked the differences between egoistic and fraternal deprivation, which marks a significant division while understanding social movements (Flynn, no date). Moreover, relative deprivation may not be as determining as absolute deprivation in terms of leading to social change or a movement. Thus, the theory has suffered from a non-explanatory generalization that resulted in its loss of credit a decade after its foundation in 1950s.

1.3.4. Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory is originally a theoretical modeling for understanding social and economic behavior (Olson, 1965). The theory aims to understand the world we live in by assuming that an individual has preferences among available alternatives that enable them to express the option they prefer. The basic assumption of the rational choice approach is that social behavior emerges as a consequence of the behaviors of individual actors, who are making rational decisions.

The rational choice theory, which is based on rational decision-making, is employed in various disciplines including sociology, international relations, and economics and specifically in social movement studies. The economist Mancur

Olson (1965) provided a novel approach for the rational choice theory, which impacted on the sociological interpretation of collective behavior and on understanding collective action in social movements. Before Olson, the social movement studies and the sociological theories did not distinguish between the individual and collective interests. By employing the microeconomics perspective, Olson (1965) asserted that rational individuals would be better off if they act as free riders when making decisions and getting involved in the collective actions. Following his theorization, social movement studies started to focus on the role of individual interests, while exploring individual decision-making processes in getting involved with collective actions.

As a consequence of the influence of Olson's (1965) theory over sociological studies and social movement research, empirical studies of the period focused on the advantages and limitations of participation in social movements (e.g. Udehn, 1993), which underlined that an individual's social behavior is dependent on individual's social circle and interactions with her or his network (e.g. Sandell and Stern, 1998). This assumption reached through empirical investigations also influenced researches on interactions in online social networks, thus leaked in Internet studied as well.

Despite its legacy in sociology, the impact of rational choice theory over social movements has been short-lived. One of the major criticisms attributed to the rational choice approach has been that the theory has overlooked individual feelings and motivations in terms of participating in collective behavior, by estimating that participating in a social movement is an act of rational choice. Jasper (2002), for instance, claimed that it is almost impossible to make a division between rational act and irrational act when the rationality is dependent on cultural and institutional contexts. Thus, any rational decision made within cultural and institutional boundaries will have the potential to be limited by the sets of the existing problematic structures. Another criticism directed towards the rational choice theory has been its overemphasis of the rationality and individual decision-making processes. While individual decision-making processes are essential components in social movement participation activity, the process should also be taken into consideration in cultural and historical contexts, since

motivations of participation may be influenced by factors beyond social interactions. Thus, critics demanded for an alternative interpretation of social movements beyond rational act and mathematical explanations to provide an extensive image of demands, actions and mobilization processes.

1.3.5. Political opportunity theory

There are various factors that contribute to the emergence of social mobilizations. In terms of social movements, Smelser (1962) underlined the importance of contextual background of mobilizations, through coining the concept, structural conduciveness. According to this approach, contextual background of social issues is important for social mobilizations because the political opportunities and contextual backgrounds of social issues determine the success or failure of social movements. In other words, the political background of social problems that cause deprivation, determine the fate of the of social movement outcomes.

Political opportunity approach is in-between other social movement theories such as resource mobilization theory and relative deprivation theory (Eisinger, 1973). It is related with relative deprivation theory since it assumes that protests occur when certain individuals within a society feel deprived or mistreated by the system or certain institutions. Similarly with the resource mobilization approach, the political opportunity theory underlines the importance of strong and efficient leadership and the access to the sufficient resources (Tilly, 1973). Thus, although these three theories are not interrelated with each other directly, political opportunity approach shares similarities with the other two theories.

Another important characteristic of political opportunity theory is its emphasis on the system's vulnerabilities that enable the social challenge. According to this approach, the vulnerability can be a consequence of increasing political pluralism, division among elite segments of the society and the decline in repression. The discovery of such vulnerabilities can prompt the emergence of social movements as the conditions themselves determine the likelihood and

success of mobilizations. As Eisinger (1973), the founder of the theory underlines that the political opportunity approach refers to the degree of openness of a political structure to the social and political aims of a social movement. In this context, timing and outcome of movements are related with the receptiveness of the social system and the opportunities discovered by or provided to the activists.

One of the common criticisms directed to political opportunity theory has been that the relationship between mobilization and opportunities are not always direct, both have an on-going relationship, especially within the context of the new/contemporary social movements.

1.3.6. Resource mobilization theory

Following the decline in intellectual appeal of relative deprivation and political opportunity approaches, the resource mobilization and new social movement paradigms emerged as prominent theories in analyzing and understanding social movements. The former emphasizes the importance of societal support and access to a variety of resources, which are essential for mobilization. The sources and external support are essential for mobilization in order to overcome the tactics utilized by the powerful authorities to suppress the movement. Various theorists including Tilly (1973, 1975), McCarthy and Zald (1977) and Gamson (1975) contributed to the theorization of the resource mobilization approach. Their theorization integrated political sociology and economics approaches with the collective behavior approach of the social psychology discipline to explore and understand the dynamics of the social movements.

The approach has several central points that need to be emphasized (McCarthy and Zald, 1987). Primarily, the study of resources, such as labor and money, are essential for the social movement activity since resources, which should be utilized in line with collective aims, are important for engagement within a social movement. Secondly, resources should be utilized in an organized manner, in order to reach success with an efficient use of resources. Thirdly, the movement requires outside supporters beyond the collective of the movement

itself. Fourthly, the economic supply and demand model can be employed to trace the usage of resources throughout the social movement activity. Lastly, the cost and reward mechanism can be useful in understanding individual and organizational participation in a social movement (McCarthy and Zald, 1987).

The resource mobilization approach is also related to three important factors, which are the support base and strategy and tactics of the movement and its relation to the larger society. When the support base of a social movement is examined from a resource mobilization approach, it can be seen that conscious constituents at individual or organization level provide support such as of money and labor, which was not available in traditional social movements. While the movement may not be directly related to the interests of the conscious constituents, supporters may provide money and facilities on demand for various reasons (McCarthy and Zald, 1987).

Secondly, strategies and tactics are essential components of social movements. The collective of the movement has to handle a variety of strategic tasks, including mobilizing individuals, transforming elite publics into movement supporters as well as creating social impact. Thus, the movement collectives develop strategies and movement-specific tactics by discovering the vulnerabilities of the targeted institutions (McCarthy and Zald, 1987). The tactics should be developed movement-specific since a successful tactic employed in a social movement may be unsuccessful in another.

Lastly, the society provides the infrastructure of the social movement (McCarthy and Zald, 1987). Thus, regardless of how large the collective is itself, the movement must be related to the larger society and it should go beyond the boundaries of the collective. For instance, the movement should relate itself with certain media or it should establish its media in order to popularize its demands. The collective also relates itself with relevant institutional organizations and aims to integrate with already existing networks in order to establish its presence and sustain its growth.

Overall, resource mobilization theory emerged as one of the prominent theories in social movement studies. Its legacy even extended to studies on contemporary social movements that are marked for intense usage of technological resources for mobilization processes. One of the major criticisms directed at the resource mobilization theory has been that it failed explaining larger social movement communities that are comprised of large networks including social organizations and services (Kendall, 2005). Another criticism has been that the resource mobilization theory fell short in explaining successful social movements with limited resources in terms of money, labor and facilities. The approach was also instrumental to focusing on processes rather than aiming to understand different cultures and identities that potentially contribute to the social movement. Thus, the approach remained insufficient in terms of analyzing macro-economic problems such as social inequality and poverty in a globalizing world economy and their impact at societal-level, which are directly related to the contradictory neoliberal economic policies of the dominant world economies and institutions.

1.3.7. New social movements theory

The notion of collective identity is deeply rooted in constructionism, thus is very frequently employed in social movement studies that embrace a constructivist approach. As can be inferred from its employment in other theories of social movements such as, relative deprivation and rational choice, the collective behavior approach is also applied to the new social movement perspective, to represent the collective dynamics of the new forms of movements.

The European theorists such as Alberto Melucci (1981), who opposed the traditional interpretation of contemporary social movements from for instance Marxist perspective, was one of the primary scholars who adopted the collective identity notion to the study of new social movements (NSM). Other prominent theorists who contributed to the field include sociologists such as Alain Touraine, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Claus Offe.

New social movements, which are recognized for their emphasis on identity in post-industrial societies, are perceived to be different from traditional and class-based social movements. The new movements focus on the standards of life and life style (Touraine, 1971), and extend from women's movement to ecology movement and peace movement. The approach emphasizes the politicization of formerly apolitical spheres of life, by underlining the argument that what is personal is also political, and the personal can be politicized through formation of identity politics.

With NSM, it can be stated that the emphasis has shifted from traditional forms of politics including class and race to social conflicts that emerged within the complicated nature of modern societies. Melucci (1995) underlines this complexity by stating that since mid-1970s, the "emerging social conflicts in advanced societies have not expressed themselves through political action, but rather have raised cultural challenges to the dominant language, to the codes that organize information and shape social practices" (p. 41). Therefore, new social movements are more about making demands regarding the everyday life and various identities rather than targeting the existing political system. In this process, collective identity triggers the feeling of "we-ness" among individuals who gather around similar identities or interests. Thus, identity formation is an essential process of fostering the collectivity among individuals. Empirical evidence (e.g. Klandermans, 2004) indicates that individuals' motivation for protest participation is intensely related to how individuals identify themselves with the aims and other participants of that particular movement.

The social movement asserts that new social movements are rooted in civil societies and they are based on collective identities. Protesters aim at creating social transformation on problematic social issues, rather than revolutionizing the existing political order. Protesters, who organize as dispersed networks, focus on single issues such as women's rights and environment and limit their range in order to intensify their discourse through collective actions to create consciousness among ordinary individuals. Researchers who embrace the NSM approach raise research questions on how the collective identity is formed, expressed and contribute to the mobilization process (e.g. Snow, 2001; Hunt and

Benford, 2004). The NSM perspective emphasizes the importance of collective identity formation process for conscious building among potential participants. Despite the potential of NSM theory to explain contemporary social movements, critics also pointed out its limits. One of the primary criticisms raised against the NSM approach has been its emphasis on social and non-materialistic problems. According to this criticism, the NSM approach neglects the economic dimensions of social issues, which lead to a situation in which the impact of new social movements, remain short term. The second criticism raised against the NSM theory is that the approach carries only a few unique features when compared to traditional social movements and that its influence is only limited to left-wing politics. Thus, the NSM approach is criticized for solely focusing on left-wing politics at the expense of the demands and politics of right wing.

Despite its limits the NSM approach remains influential in studies exploring contemporary social movements. It is perceived as more applicable to contemporary social movements in comparison to the resource mobilization approach, which remain excessively instrumental.

1.3.8. Framing theory

Besides resource mobilization and new social movement approaches, framing theory is one of the main social movement theories that aim to explain contemporary social movements. The theory assumes that the meaning created by social movement actors is central in analyzing a social movement. Therefore, it focuses the way in which social movement participants create meaning as well as how the problems raised are framed. The approach draws from sociologist Erving Goffman's frame analysis in *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974). Goffman (1974) defines the frame as a set of concepts and theoretical approaches that assists us in organizing and interpreting our experiences and actions. He resembles the framing approach to a picture frame (the structure), which an individual uses to hold together his picture (the content) to mark and organize his experiences. Framing assists individuals in interpreting their social world based on their previous experiences. Every social interaction established between individuals is perceived through a frame of reference.

Therefore, every social interaction established in the present has a reference in the past.

In the context of social movements, collective action frames are adopted to participants' action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that lead to the realization of social movement activities (Benford and Snow, 2000). Regardless of the size of group that form the social movement, collective action frames remain useful in terms of motivating individuals to act collectively in order to pursue common goals.

As Benford and Snow (2000) points out the framing analysis of social movements focus on four issues: the creation of collective frames; opportunities; limitations; and the impact of framing on the consequences of the movement. Collective frames, which are essential for social movement mobilization, have three main tasks: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. Firstly, diagnostic framing is the identification of a problematic situation by the social movement. Secondly, the prognostic framing refers to proposed solutions to the diagnosed problem, which may vary from a plan of attack to carrying a strategic plan into effect. Lastly, motivation framing refers to engaging potential participants to collective action through creating reasons to make them get involved. From the perspective of the framing approach these three frames which ease the mobilization process through identification of the problem, carrying out a strategic plan and making a call for collective action are essential for social movements to be successful.

Similar to resource mobilization theory, framing approach asserts that social grievances lead to collective action. However, unlike the resource mobilization approach, the framing theory does not assign a critical mission to the leaders of social movement in order to ensure the success of the movement. This differentiation is a consequence of the emphasis that the framing approach places on the power of individual contribution to social interactions. This characteristic also points out one of the setbacks of the framing approach since the meaning construction can be highly personal. As emphasized by Goffman (1974) each individual brings a unique set of characteristics to social interactions. Despite this

drawback, the framing approach has been found useful in terms of revealing dynamics of social movements as well as exposing the functions of framing in the mobilization processes.

1.3.9. Public sphere approach

Jürgen Habermas, similar to his Frankfurt School predecessors, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, draws a dark picture of the mass contemporary societies. According to Habermas, the lifeworld is stuck in between the “economic subsystem” for the privately run circulation and the “political subsystem” for the instruments of the state authority (Habermas, 1981). As a critique of the mass society, Habermas explained that the interlinked political and economic subsystems colonize the lifeworld and transform its individuals into ‘good-citizen consumers’.

Colonization is a central concept in the works of Habermas in that it, provides the link between the other two central concepts of Habermas’ theory, systems and the lifeworld, and characterizes the nature of the relationship between them in advanced capitalist societies. The system’s interference in the lifeworld results in distortions in everyday life, for instance, through the media of money and power, that raises symbolic and moral questions around identity (who we are) and lifestyle (how we want to live) (Edwards, 2007). However, what makes Habermas’ arguments distinct from his predecessors is his belief in the power of public meetings, associations or institutions. Habermas argues that the oppressive colonizing effects of the political and economic subsystems can be overcome through effective resistance.

Habermas refers to the sites of resistance as the public sphere (Habermas, 1981) and finds their origins in the eighteenth century coffee houses where individuals gathered to discuss and share their readings. Coffee house culture symbolizes the sites for critical discussions of the affairs of the day. Jürgen Habermas emphasizes the importance of public sphere as an essential area of social life. He defines public sphere as a public space where individuals come

together to freely discuss and identify societal problems and to have an impact on political action through that discussion.

Habermas asserted that (1989) public opinion is formed in the public sphere where matters of general interest are discussed in an unrestricted fashion. This implied the freedom of public sphere from economic and political control. “The public sphere constituted for a new liberal form of politics that worked as a bulwark against the colonizing effects of the interlocking subsystems of the private economy and state authorities – an instrument by which a newly modernized society self-limited the power that it exercised over its subjects” (Krips, 2012, p. 243). Thus, formation of public opinion, in an environment to which all citizens has access is essential for an effective public sphere (Habermas, 1981).

As a discourse based, rather than a class based arena, the public sphere has the potential to host any social movement or deliberative assembly, in which individuals outside small organizing collectives can also participate. The discussion of ideals and ideas in public spaces where individuals can freely participate bring along the emergence of collective action as a consequence of the knowledge and skill sharing, identity formation and collaboration (Habermas, 1981).

The vision of a singular and integrated sphere of public has eroded with the transformation of the social structure of late modern societies. The aim of gathering citizens into a single public sphere with common set of cultural and communicative traditions is rejected on grounds of pluralism. Thus, in contemporary liberal societies, shaped under the influence of late capitalist norms and traditions, different spaces in which citizens attached to various groups and cultures are needed, for meaningful participation. Various types of differences, including political, ethnic, gender orientations, cultural capital and geography result in the emergence of various communicative arenas. At certain points certain groups may demand a separate space for themselves to work on their own issues.

This is where the Internet can contribute to the transformation of the public sphere according to conditions and demands of the late modern society. The expansion in terms of available communicative spaces for political spaces can easily be observed on the Internet. There exist thousands of Internet platforms and web sites built on grounds of partisan, local, national and global political realms in addition to non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations, issue-advocacy sites, and voter education sites. Such pluralism not only expands but also disperses the relatively clustered public sphere of mass media, making Habermas's formulation of public sphere relevant to contemporary online civic activities conducted via online services.

Dahlgren (2006) asserts that the Internet hosts several public spheres a number of different sectors of Internet based public spheres can be specified as follows:

“i. Variations of e-government services that are mostly structured with a top-down character, where the officials of the government communicate with citizens and where information about administration and services of the government are made available. While the interaction with citizens may be constricted, e-government services serve as an online form of public sphere, and it is distinguished from e-governance that defines horizontal civic communications and inputs for governmental policy, such as the crowdsourcing practice that was performed by the Icelandic government to revise the official constitution of the country.

ii. The activist/advocacy domain, in which discussions are framed by organizations around shared perceptions, values and goals and tailored for various forms of civic intervention. This might include issues relevant with the parliamentary politics, established interest group politics and politics of contemporary social movements and independent activists.

iii. Diverse forums of civic dialogue, that represents the views exchanged among citizens, which is mostly perceived as the paradigmatic version of the

public sphere on the Internet, but that also would be quite misleading for representing a tiny segment of the overall country.

iv. The pre-political domain, where social and cultural issues relevant with common interests and identities are discussed. In pre-political domain, politics is not explicit but also remains as obtaining a potential.

v. The domain of journalism, that covers practices from major news establishments that have gone online such as the traditional dailies and television channels, to solely Internet-based news associations.

Alternative news organizations such as the Indymedia as well as weblog platforms are also included within the journalism domain. It is important to note here that online journalism sector composes a core element of the public sphere on the Internet. This list could be more extended, for instance that, civic forums in which journalistic initiatives are originated can be divided into another category. But overall, Dahlgren (2006) highlights the diverse nature of the online public spheres by dividing the field into five subcategories in the context of online civic culture.

Habermas' notion of the public sphere is also important in understanding his later work on social movements, riots and protests. In relation to contemporary social movements, Habermas (1981) does not accept discussions built around two major paradigms: Resource mobilization theory or new social movements. For Habermas new social movement (NSM) paradigm typically reduces the movement to a liberal rights-based politics that transforms the system in already familiar ways, while resource mobilization (RM) paradigm, fails to understand movement communities as large networks of individuals and institutions offering various services. Habermas develops his own perspective by combining the descriptive resources of both NSM theory and RM paradigm, and asserts that operating within the lifeworld, political element of NSMs sustains localized resistance to the colonizing effects of the system, while the strategic element of RM paradigm deploys tactics drawn from traditional liberal-democratic emancipatory politics (Habermas, 1981). In this sense, Habermas emphasizes two

important elements that contemporary social movements should feature. First, the movement must be taking place within the public sphere, and second, it must be challenging the colonizing economic and political subsystems of the current order.

Within this perspective, Habermas draws a distinction between research program on social movements prior and after 1960's while explaining new social movements. He explains that the research program of the 1930s reflected the historical and philosophical trust in the rational potential of bourgeois culture – a potential that would be released in social movements under the pressure of developed forces of production. The development of productive forces, and even critical thought of the Frankfurt School itself, was moving more into a perspective of bleak assimilation to their opposites: “Everything that existed was transformed into a reality of abstraction, which also indicated the fragility of Marxist philosophy of history” (Habermas, 1981, p. 382) that Habermas rejected. Thus, he attempted to free historical materialism from its philosophical ballast while constructing the theory of communicative action, through which structures of action and structures of mutual understanding could be deconstructed in the intuitive knowledge of modern societies. In his introduction to Jürgen Habermas's work, White (1988) argued that Habermas's communicative model was the best available framework to understand why and how new social movements emerged and what issues were at stake:

“In terms of understanding why such movements have arisen and interpreting what is at stake in their struggles, Habermas directs our attention to his interpretation of modernity and modernization, more particularly to the notions of systemic versus communicative socialization and of a one-sided process of societal rationalization versus a rationalized lifeworld” (White 1988: 124).

In distinguishing new social movements from prior forms of mobilization, Habermas asserted that post 1960s social movements assisted the development of a new type of public sphere. These movements (e.g. women, students, environmentalist movements) were about the ways in which these social groups' lifestyles and identities were feeling threatened by the state. His internal colonization (1981) thesis supported the argument that power and money are the

main causes of the tension between the system and the lifeworld and that the constant shift between the state and the economy in the progression of capitalism causes problems that drive conflicts upon the system. Conflicts have emerged in modern societies that deviate from the welfare-state pattern of institutionalized conflict over distribution. Thus, these so-called new conflicts no longer arise from areas of material production, rather in areas of cultural production, social integration and socialization. These movements are manifested in sub-institutional forms of protest and underlying deficits reflect a reification of communication spheres of action (Habermas, 1981).

New social movements, in Habermas's point of view merged to counter-attack the system by providing a space which participants use for debates and communicative action in order to question the legitimacy of the state, since the media of money and the power are not sufficient to circumvent this reification. The new movements are very difficult to classify, since scenes, groupings and topics change rapidly. To the extent that organizational nuclei are formed at the level of parties or associations, members are recruited from the same diffuse reservoir.

As Habermas (1981) points out, the demands of contemporary social movements are diverse and this diversity is reflected on the media utilized. New social movements utilize traditional and digital media that includes leaflets, placards and social networking services that provide citizens on time opportunity to communicate. For instance, #OCCUPYWALLSTREET protesters subverted or culture jammed¹⁵ advertising slogans. The diversity of demands was also obvious in Brazil, where protesters carried placards with slogans including *Vem pra rua* (Come to the streets) and *O gigante acordou* (The giant has awoken). The latter slogan was taken from a 2011 Johnnie Walker ad, in which the rocks forming the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro raised upwards – literally as a giant (Costa, 2013). These examples point out the relevancy of Habermas' (1981) argument that a public should be conceptualized as something other than just media audience. Habermas' NSM theory in modern societies has been

¹⁵ Culture jamming is a technique mostly made known by the creators of *adbusters* magazine in Canada.

challenged by evolving forms of social unrests starting with the global justice movements in Seattle in 1999. Although contemporary social movements still share some common features with traditional social movements new questions have had to be raised around the concepts of globalization, social media and evolving patterns of journalism throughout the 2000s.

The widespread uses of new ICTs transformed patterns of mobilization and communication as well as sustainability of spaces for communicative actions. For universal communicative action to function properly the efficiency of interactive media should be questioned to find out whether they stand as useful platforms for “ideal speech situation” in which all participants have an equal opportunity to be involved in the debate in which they overcome their merely subjective views, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated convictions (Habermas, 1987, p.10). This foundation is essential for social movements to attain their full potential.

1.4. Conclusion

Overall, social movements can be defined as an organized set of components that pursue a common social agenda of change. They can be defined as large and informal group actions that focus on particular problematic social issues. Social movements are essential components of democratic and modern societies. They represent a direct form of democratic participation since they emerge as reflections of collective social dissent over particular social and political problems. Although they may differ in size, social movements always emerge as a consequence of a group will to create social impact or transformation. They are mainly organized in a loose, flexible and geographically dispersed manner and potentially turn into larger movements.

As explained in the previous sections, various social movement theories have been developed to explain and understand the nature of these movements. The social movement studies have a relatively long history and it has organic connections with other disciplines such as political science, social psychology and economics. While social movement studies were considered as part of the political

science and sociology for a couple of decades, it later emerged as a discipline by itself to explain and analyze the dynamics of social mobilization and collective action that emerge as a reaction to social inequalities with various political and cultural demands.

Despite the existence of diverse social movement approaches, social movements can be broadly classified into two as traditional and new/contemporary movements. While traditional social movements focused on economic well being and they were mainly associated with the labor movement, the new/contemporary social movements prioritize identity politics over class struggles, by pointing out to social, political and cultural problems resulting from the drawbacks of modern societies.

Whether traditional or new/contemporary, social movements always emerge in a collective manner although contemporary social movements revealed that demands do not have to be unified. While labor movement of 1920s and 1930s and new social movements of 1960s had focused agendas with unified demands, contemporary social movements showed how individuals from various social backgrounds can come together and speak up for their individual demands. Therefore, I choose to refer the post-Seattle social movements as contemporary social movements, since new social movements had unified agendas over social and political issues, while demands in contemporary social movements show diversity. The “new” perspective on social movement degrades the Marxist past of civil resistance by underestimating the role of unfair neoliberal policies, which negatively impact on the masses, and serves for the interests of the minority elites on social movements.

To sum, contemporary social movements have two common features: they primarily emerged as a response to the crisis of neoliberalism in the early 2000s, and they were marked by the intense uses of new information and communication technologies and services.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF ALTERNATIVE AND ONLINE PARTICIPATORY MEDIA

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to evaluate the Internet and online participatory journalism with theories of alternative and online participatory media within the contexts of contemporary social movements. It seeks to contribute to the scholarly investigation of mainly Habermas (1985) and Dahlgren (2009) on the use of ICTs in social movements for taking communicative action. More specifically, it critically explores and assesses the implications of the use of ICTs (mainly the Internet) for citizen mobilization and the formation, activities, legitimacy and effectiveness of the so-called new and contemporary social movements.

The chapter argues that the civic culture provides an insightful theoretical framework to explore how online participatory media in a social movement context utilizes the Internet and its services. Regardless of the idea that whether Internet services support the globalist notion of considering the online civil society as a free market place or not, uses of Internet services by civil society fostered the emergence of a diverse civic culture that differ from or are integrated with offline civic activities.

Civic culture obviously bears some relationship to what has been termed civil society although it does not necessarily presuppose homogeneity among its citizens. It suggests minimal shared commitments to the vision and procedures of democracy. As it was experienced throughout riots in London, in 2013 protests in Brazil and Turkey and in the Occupy Wall Street and so on, the evidence suggest that contemporary social movements emerge on grounds of civic culture that are not necessarily based on but are supported by the Internet services.

The following section will first examine the roots of online participatory media in the formulation and experiences of alternative media. Then it will move

on to explain why civic culture stand as an insightful theoretical framework to understand how online participatory media in a social movement context utilizes online services.

2.2. Theories of alternative media

Alternative media is a broad term encompassing wide array of media forms ranging from community radio to fanzines and news websites that aim to challenge the status quo. One of the prominent theorists of alternative media, Chris Atton (2001) prefers the term alternative over radical, since alternative is a more general term covering a wide range of ‘social change publishing’ (p. 9). Atton thinks alternative media “are crucially about offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production” (2001, p. 4). Moreover, Alankuş (2003) explains that local/civic media initiatives should primarily produce an alternative discourse and organizational structure, distinctive from the hegemonic discourse and organizational characteristics of the mainstream media. The alternative discourse produced by local/civic media initiatives should aim to deconstruct the hegemonic expressions produced by the outlets of mainstream media (Alankuş, p. 116-117).

The development of alternative media continued upon a relatively stable trajectory until the invention of the Internet, which led to an explosion in alternative outlets. The rise of blogs (e.g. Wordpress, Blogspot, Tumblr), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter, Weibo), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia) and content sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Flickr) has resulted in discussions on the implications of these media for the political realm. The counter-government protests in different countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara, Yemen, Iceland, the United States (Occupy Wall Street), Spain (15-M movement), Turkey (Gezi Park protests) and Brazil (V for Vinegar Movement) intensified the discussion on the role played by alternative media during contemporary social movements.

Table 2.1. The four theoretical approaches to alternative media

	Media centered	Society centered
Anonymous identity of community media (essentialist)	<u>Approach I:</u> Serving the community	<u>Approach III:</u> Part of civil society
Identity of community media in relation to other identities (relationalist)	<u>Approach II:</u> An alternative to mainstream	
		<u>Approach IV:</u> Rhizome

Source: (Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier, 2007)

This section will provide a theoretical discussion on models of alternative media proposed by Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier (2007) in order to understand their compliance with the current dynamics of alternative and activist virtual media outlets. Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier (2007) argued that alternative media can be considered from four different perspectives: serving the community, an alternative to mainstream, part of civil society, rhizome. Bailey et al. utilized Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) political identity theory as an overarching theoretical framework (p.111). Unlike essentialist approaches to alternative media, the categorization of Bailey and colleagues offers a relational and contingent framework. The emphasis is put on antagonism, which is described by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) as the "limit of everyday objectivity" or the "impossibility of constituting society" (p. 125). They argue that social antagonism both threaten and constitute identities. Social formations depend on the construction of antagonistic relations among social actors "inside" and "outside" While "the presence of the 'other' prevents 'one' from being totally herself (...) the 'other' also becomes a purely negative point of identification" (p.125). In parallel, antagonisms also play a key role in constitution of alternative media in both traditional and digital forms.

2.2.1. Four approaches to alternative media

2.2.1.1. Alternative media in the service of a community

Some alternative media are situated within a community, paying little attention to its geographical boundaries. The relationship between the medium and

the real community transcends "conventional" one-way correspondence in which themes are picked by expert communicators that focus on the obvious needs and demands of the masses. Alternative media's role in encouraging participation can be approached from two different angles: "interest in the media" and "interest through the media" as Wasko and Mosco (1992, p. 7) described democratization in and through the media. Both the interest in the media and through the media perceive the open process not as an arrangement of practices that are frequently regulated by media experts but as a human right that cuts across the entire society. Investment in the media manages the interest of non-experts in the processing of media output (substance related cooperation) and in media decision-making (structural support). These types of media permit community members to be shifted in one of the numerous (micro-) circles important to everyday life. Besides, these manifestations of micro-interests are recognized to be imperative since they permit individuals to take up and receive an equitable urban role, reinforcing (the conceivable structures) macro-support not only for the media but also to the city. Verba and Nie (1987: 3) define this as "a participatory community (that) may rest on participatory social orders".

Participation through the media involves the opportunities for extensive participation in public debate and for self-representation in public spaces. This immediately implies that we live in the realm of enabling and facilitating macro-participation, which is related to the more ritualistic approaches towards media in general. Beginning from an extensively characterized idea of the political, consensus-based models of decision (and interest) making processes underscore the importance of exchange and concentrate on aggregate decision making in an open space, dependent upon public sphere discussions of Habermas. Other theorists (i.e. Mouffe 2000) stress more conflict-oriented approaches and oppositional public spheres. They indicate the unavoidability of political contrasts and battles and see the media as vital destinations for struggles for hegemony. Regardless of their disparities, both consensus and conflict-oriented models underline the necessity for individuals to take part in these processes of dialogue and deliberation.

In serving a community the relationship between the broadcaster and the community is organically established. By picking a particular community as a target, the (idea of) group itself is validated. The audience is not characterized, simply as a total of citizens with common socio-demographic characteristics, but as a collective group of people incorporating a series of group relations. Along these lines, the situated-ness of citizens as a complex set of social structure is a threat by itself in challenging the traditional state-citizen and medium- audience dichotomies. On the downside, this orientation towards a community creates a dependency on the community, as two-way communication requires two partners more or less equally interested in communicating. While the predominant dialogue on mainstream media is dependent upon one-way correspondence, raising the community's interest to go beyond this limited form of communication does not speak for itself due to what can be called the lack of two-way communication skills and interest. The lack of two-way communication skills and interest is mostly a consequence of technologies oriented towards one-way correspondence. Besides, the concept of community has frequently been decreased to its geographical significance. This has trapped alternative media in the positions of neighborhood media, steadily diminishing their role as servers of communities and in the end, pressuring them to adopt commercial media formats to keep the business up.

2.2.1.2. Alternative media as an alternative to mainstream media

Alternative media as an alternative to mainstream media is built around notions of hegemony and representation. In considering alternative media, the issue of representation is essential since alternative media owes its own very existence to misleading representations of identities on hegemonic mainstream media outlets.

In this approach, mainstream media are perceived as a site of competing agendas of institutional values and commercial concerns. Mainstream media owners hold a position that allows them outline which specific topics should be brought into attention in the public arena. Mainstream media is considered as ideological instruments, which reproduce their preferred views of realities. It is

assumed that mainstream media act in an ideological manner by prioritizing the requests and thoughts of powerful social actors that include the government, political leaders and private sector. For instance, during Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, mainstream media coverage was criticized for reflecting protesters as misinformed and violent individuals who destroyed private properties (DeLuca and Peebles, 2002). Such media representation aimed to construct an overall consensus that favors economic globalization and failed to inform the public on issues of free trade from different perspectives (Howley, 2005).

Representation, in this context, stands as an area of struggle for meaning making and an essential tool for knowledge production, “a system connected in more intimate ways with social practices and questions of power” (Hall, 1997, p. 42). Reality and the meanings associated with it are built upon language, discourse and representation within a specific history of culture. For instance, Bailey and Harindranath (2005) argued that throughout 1990s British mainstream media shaped audience perceptions on foreigners living in the United Kingdom by utilizing negative stereotypes of immigrants and triggering the “us vs. them” dichotomy to sustain British identity. This symbolic representation not only reflected discrimination against immigrants living in Britain, but also caused a distinction between the media representation and the material world by neglecting immigrants’ economic and social contributions to the British society.

The second approach to alternative media positions them as in opposition to mainstream media. Alternative media do not possess characteristics of mainstream media such as large-scale audiences and vertically structured organizations coordinated by professionals. Moreover, Bailey, Cammaert and Carpentier (2008) assert that the rejection by alternative media of professional values of mainstream media provides the opportunity to diversify formats and genres and makes room for media experimentations in terms of content and form production. Therefore, alternative media formations are perceived as valuable grounds for innovation that also offers mainstream media outlets alternative models to adopt.

In comparison to the mainstream media, alternative media may find themselves in disadvantaged positions for being small-scale, independent, horizontally structured and providing non-dominant courses and representations. As such they face major challenges in terms of reaching financial sources and sustain their existence and organizational stability. Mainstream media outlets criticize alternative media for being “unprofessional”, “inefficient” and “marginal”. One of the main consequences of marginalizing the alternative and counter-hegemonic formations in a negative manner is the low political priority given to what is considered to be “marginal”, which in certain countries has strengthened the downward spiral for alternative media organizations. This was especially the case in Turkey during Gezi Park protests. Major mainstream media outlets ignored the events throughout the first week when the Prime Minister referred protesters as marginal and “looter (çapulcu)”. Founders of *çapul.tv* accepted these labels spoken out by the Prime Minister and the pro-government mainstream media and named their organization as *çapul.tv*.

2.2.1.3. Linking alternative media to civil society

The argument that community media should be considered as separate and independent from the state and the market positions alternative media linked to civil society. Civil society fosters the idea of citizenship as well as interest and pressure groups that demand social change. Theoretically, civil society can be approached in two different ways: as a macro conception advanced by Hegel and Karl Marx; and secondly as a minimalist conception developed by Antonio Gramsci and Jürgen Habermas.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1991) positioned the sphere of civil society between the private and public interests and market and the state institutions (i.e. legal structures). Karl Marx opposed Hegel’s conceptualization of civil society in relation to and at intersections with the free market and state institutions. In his opinion the bourgeois elite segments of the society controlled the state and the legal institutions as primary instruments. Marx argued that positioning civil society as linked with the state and market would be accepting that civil society would serve for private interests of bourgeois elite rather than

public interests of the common. Thus, Marx perceived civil society as a site of organized domination, where individual actors get involved in action and regard other man as means (Marx, 1975, p. 153). Antonio Gramsci (1998) defined civil society as a site of domination by consent or hegemony, as indirect form of government by the implied means of power that is reproduced over and over. By positioning civil society as separate from the market and the state institutions, he asserted that civil society is the place where the hegemony can be challenged and the political system can be developed and thrived. Macdonald (1994) asserts that Gramsci's dialectical understanding of civil society allows us to see it as an arena of struggle over hegemony, that offers the opportunity to analyze the contradiction and conflict that stems from the political power, not from the contradictions between the state and the civil society (p. 276). Gramscian understanding of civil society has some parallels with the "public sphere" concept of Jürgen Habermas, which put emphasis on areas of social life where individuals can freely come together and identify societal problems in line with the ideal form of democratic civil society.

Civil society, however, should not be perceived as necessarily separate or in opposition to the government and markets at all times. Especially in developed countries there is a complicated but often effective relationship between institutional and non-institutional politics. Although the state is often considered as the main actor behind social inequalities and political conflicts, there is not always a sharp distinction between the civil society and the state. It is also important to remember that civil society itself is also differentiated and fragmented, which brings its own advantages and disadvantages. When referring to civil society, one may not refer to a single entity although it becomes easier to do so for the sake of policy.

Based Gramsci's work on hegemony, Cox (1999) differentiated between a "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to civil society (p. 10-11). Within the top-down approach, the dominant and powerful actors and forces penetrate into the civil society in a much easier way whereas in the bottom-up civil society disadvantaged and negatively affected groups can speak up their voices and look for alternatives.

Another point of view that links alternative media to civil society can be found in Thompson (1995). Thompson asserts (1995) that the influence of neo-liberal policies on media pressured public broadcasters to adopt market-driven approaches that included audience maximization and staying away from the community. However, alternative media still appreciates and embraces community. Thompson thinks that it is such orientation that differentiates community media from public broadcasting media. While market-driven policies in contemporary societies influence one, the other still aims to remain at the community level and serve as the third voice between the state and the market to practice citizen-driven journalism. Online community radio, Facebook and Twitter activism, online culture jamming, hacking and online participatory media are new practices of alternative media that have flourished thanks to new ICTs.

To sum up, alternative media as part of civil society can be considered as the media of third voice between the state and commercial media. With the increasing development of new ICTs they can be established as online social networks, websites, mailing lists, crowdsourcing tools and forums in and or through the Net. They are perceived as a societal segment essential for the actualization of democracy. It can be seen as a more appropriate formulation that refers to the expansion and deepening of democratic values through increasing levels of civic participation.

As part of civil society alternative media has an important mission to allow citizens to be active in micro spheres relevant to every day life by managing various forms of deliberation and exercising their rights to communicate (Wasko and Mosco, 1992). The third approach, thus, defines alternative media as potential instruments utilized by a variety of movements that struggle for social equality to speak out their voices. Especially in radical democratic theory, a considerable emphasis is put on the importance to link a variety of democratic movements for the common articulation of, for instance, anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-capitalism (Mouffe, 1997, p. 18). Such approach goes in parallel with reformulations of ways in which the power is enacted and citizenship is expressed (Rodrigues, 2001, p. 19).

While commercial and public broadcasting media commercially compete in a free market environment and spend most of their energy on their survival, alternative media's rejection of advertising revenue is ambitious and challenging act that sometimes pushes them into a financially insecure position. To sustain alternative media organizations requires a constant struggle. Horizontally structured and participation oriented nature of civic alternative media organizations may also undermine their functioning and lead to a certain degree of inefficiency.

2.2.1.4. Alternative media as rhizome

The concept of rhizome derives from the juxtaposition of *rhizomatic* and *arborescent* ways of thinking. The latter of the two refers to a linear and hierarchical structure that can be depicted as a structure resembling a tree, whose branches are subdivided into sub and smaller categories (Wray, 1998, p. 3). The former, refers to a non-linear and anarchic way of thinking, which differs itself from tree-like structures by being composed of connections between disorderly points (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 19).

In their collaborative work, *A Thousand Plateaus*, dated 1987, Deleuze and Guattari suggested a variety of examples of rhizome, in order to draw attention to its heterogeneous, connectable and multiple structures. Connectivity and heterogeneity suggests that a potential network may be connected to any other at any point, while the multiplicity refers that components of the rhizome are not static and can be multiplied by addition of new elements. Multiplicity can be pointed out as one the major components of rhizomes, since it provides rhizome-like structures multiple entryways (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12).

Conceptualization of alternative media as rhizome mainly focuses on three characteristics: the role of alternative media at their intersection with the civil society, their elusiveness and their interconnections with the marketplace and the government. The concept of rhizome provides the opportunity to imagine alternative media at intersections with the civil society organizations and

movements, which linked to local communities but can, also engage in trans-local networks. Trans-local networks are described by the fluid articulation of a diversity of alternative media organizations. Thus, alternative media as rhizome can provide connections with the local and the global simultaneously. Similar to rhizomes, alternative media overcome existing borders and build alternative links by filling in the gaps, which mainstream media, create.

Since alternative media organizations are not completely independent from the market and the government they soften their oppositional relationship with the market and the government. This approach supposes that alternative media establishes a variety of relationships with the markets and the governments for reasons of survival and they can still be perceived as potentially destabilizing outlets challenging the certainties and power of public and commercial media outlets. Thus, the alternative media as rhizome approach is built upon the importance of alternative media to civil society and democracy. While civil society approach put emphasis on the catalytic role of alternative media in functioning at the intersections where individuals from a variety of movements (e.g. women's, peasants', students' or anti-racist movements) encounter and collaborate, the rhizome approach underlines their role as part of the public sphere – which also includes the market and the states.

Approaching alternative media as rhizome makes it possible to underline the fluidity of community media outlets in contrast to more rigid and commercial structures of mainstream media outlets, by emphasizing their elusive natures and functions. It perceives the elusive nature of community media outlets as a destabilizing characteristic that challenges the strict nature of the states, the governments and the mainstream media outlets. The elusiveness makes alternative media hard to control and ensures their independence.

However, in countries like Turkey, where the national government has extensive power over mainstream media and the market, it would be misleading to treat the market and the mainstream media as independent actors. Since the government heavily influences major actors of commercial media and the marketplace the rhizome approach to alternative media remains invalid in the

context of Turkey. This structure does not allow alternative media outlets to build dynamic relationships with the market and state officials. The workers of community media journalists and especially volunteers of online participatory media are not yet recognized as journalists. They are not able to obtain press cards, which would have allowed them to attend governmental press conferences and public meetings. The Internet law is still a matter of contention and online journalism has not yet been legally recognized which puts online journalists into an ambiguous and insecure position. In 2014, the Press Advertising Council General Director of Turkey, Mehmet Atalay, stated that the Internet law will be revised to recognize the online media in such a way to allow Internet journalists the right to obtain a press card (t24.com.tr, 2014).

Therefore, I would argue that in Turkey, linking alternative media to civil society seems more applicable. As experienced before, during and after Gezi Park protests, online participatory media outlets have served for a variety of movements and civil society organizations that have not been given the opportunity to speak up their voices in mainstream media outlets. The situation became more apparent when Turkey's mainstream media remained passive throughout the first week of Gezi Park protests.

Online participatory media such as *çapul.tv* rejected and still rejects commercial funding and advertising revenues from market actors and relies on revenues from crowd-sourcing campaigns conducted online via platforms such as *indiegogo.com*. This places online participatory media in Turkey not in between the state and the market, but as actors rooted within the civil society. Their position and structure allow online participatory media be open to volunteer work and financial support derived from citizens, and calls for active audiences to be parts of the online civic culture.

2.2.2. Democratic-participant media theory

Besides alternative media theories proposed by Carpentier et al. (2007), alternative media can be approached from the perspective of democratic-participant media theory. The democratic-participant media theory is an extension

to the four normative theories of the press, namely, authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet media, developed by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm (1956).

In authoritarian theory authoritarian figures are needed to control the media and protect citizens from any threats that can be stemmed from communication. Thus, authoritarian approach justifies restrictive practices such as censorship. Libertarian theory assumes citizens as rational actors who can decide what is good and bad for them. According to this theory the press should not be restricted for even a negative content may provide knowledge to citizens and assist them making better decisions. In social responsibility theory media ownership must be kept private and community opinion and interest must be prioritized in news content. Although it prioritizes public opinion, the theory has been criticized for accepting the “tyranny of majority” in times of political crises. Lastly, Soviet media theory asserts that the entire control of the press must be under the control of the national leader. Deriving its roots from the Leninist Soviet principles, it fosters a one-way communication that prevents receiving feedback from the public. Soviet media theory differs from the authoritarian theory in that the latter allows the distribution of media control to several ministries while the former invests in a single source of power.

In 1980s the four normative theories developed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) came under severe criticism. For instance, the authoritarian theory was criticized for justifying various forms of censorship (e.g. political, moral, religious or military) while the libertarian approach came under criticism for overemphasizing individual rationality. Accordingly, the social responsibility approach was criticized for supporting private media ownership while the Soviet media theory lost its relevance with the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1990s.

As a consequence, new theories such as democratic-participant media theory were developed as an extension to the four normative theories developed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956). The democratic-participant media theory, which is also referred as the democratization theory, shares some

similarities with the alternative media approaches proposed by Carpentier et al. (2007). However, democratic-participant media theory is based on a liberal perspective that the free will and individual freedoms lead to higher participation in democratic media environments. Thus, while the theories developed by Carpentier et al. (2007) tend to be more anarchical the democratic-participant media theory takes its roots from the liberal theory.

The democratic-participant media theory fosters horizontal media structures and demands easy access to the media for potential users and consumers in order to transform the problematic commercial and professional hegemony in the media sector. Due to its emphasis on the community and participation in liberal societies, the theory remains relevant in the age of Internet technologies, which support user participation and content generation. In contrast to the authoritarian theory, the democratic-participant media theory prioritizes user feedback and fosters equality among various classes, races and genders. In short, the theory aims to put democracy into practice through media in such a way that small media organizations co-exist along with large media conglomerates to foster diversity, inclusion and eliminate marginalization of particular social groups in the media.

Despite its emphasis on small-scale local media, the democratic-participant media theory fails to provide professional journalism skills and ethics for the start-ups. Moreover, the approach underestimates the anarchical nature of the Internet technologies and treats the alternative media organizations as small-scale versions of the big media companies. Thus, while emphasizing and fostering equality and diversity among different social groups, the democratic-participant media theory eliminates the critical nature of the alternative media organizations, which aims to represent marginalized voices under the hegemony of the dominant political and economic interests. The theory takes defects of the neoliberal system as given and aims to integrate alternative media organizations into the existing problematic media ecology. The democratic-participant media theory focuses on integration rather than transformation, thus, falls short of providing a novel framework for alternative media organizations to challenge the existing media system through alternative forms of production and distribution.

2.3. Theories of online participatory media

Participatory media refers to the media in which the audience plays an important role in the processes of collecting, reporting, analyzing and distributing content (Bowman and Willis, 2003). The term is rooted in the neologism, participatory culture, which is developed in opposition to the consumer culture and defines individuals not solely consumers but also producers (prosumers) of media content. Recent developments in information and media technologies enabled the creation of interactive media based on participatory culture.

The following sections will aim to assess five different but at times inter-related approaches towards defining and understanding online participatory media. These approaches include the participatory journalism, participatory culture approach, active audience, online media activism and civic culture approaches.

2.3.1. Participatory journalism approach

Participatory journalism approach is mainly developed and inspired by the work of Bowman and Willis (2003), who published a thinking report titled, “We the media: How the audiences are shaping the future of news and information”. In “We the media” report, Bowman and Willis (2003) define participatory journalism as an act of a citizen who takes an important role in collecting, analyzing and distributing news and information (p.9). The aim in this participation is to offer relatively accurate and independent information for general audience. This aim is derived from individuals’ democratic right to information.

Similar to alternative media, participatory media organizes in a bottom-up manner and rejects hierarchical structures. Participation is an essential component. It is also strictly underlined that participatory media differs editorially from editorial traditions of mainstream media in the sense that there is very little or

almost no editorial intervention dictated on the staff. In this sense, participatory media has its own editorial traditions, which may depend on the editorial preferences of different organizations. For instance, particular participatory media may prefer “publish, then filter” model, while other participatory media may prefer filtering information before it is published (Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 21). In this sense, participatory media differs from editorial traditions of mainstream media institutions that they depend on the journalistic routine and practices of different participatory media organizations. However, in either case, self-correcting stands as an important practice for participatory media in order to enable them emerge as reliable sources of news for recipients.

Similar to Jenkins et al. (2006), Bowman and Willis (2003) also underline the essentiality of the Internet for participatory media, since they mainly flourish in social media, including e-mail, chat rooms, message boards, forums, online social networks, interactive web sites, etc. With the development of new information and communication technologies in a rapid manner, we can observe the emergence of online participatory media in hybrid forms, which integrate online television services with news stories, feeds on online social networks and discussion forums.

Indy Media is one of the most first and prominent examples of this integration, which has been presenting its content in various Internet platforms. Gezi experience also revealed that relatively more amateur platforms such as RevoltIstanbul and Gezi Parkı TV integrated various services such as livestream.com, blogging services and YouTube in order to offer live broadcasts or short video clips. Thus, as can be inferred from relevant examples, integration of Internet technologies are must for participatory media within this approach. This characteristic also makes online participatory media approach differ from traditional theorizations of alternative media.

Following the theorization of Bowman and Willis (2003), Rheingold (2008) also emphasizes the participatory nature of new media and its potential to enable broader cultural production and democratic political influence. He (2008) asserts that participatory media include (but are not limited to) blogs, wikis, RSS,

tagging and social bookmarking, music-photo-video sharing, mash ups, podcasts, digital storytelling, virtual communities, social network services, virtual environments, and video blogs.

In such a dynamic media environment, Rheingold (2008) argues that new media makes it possible for every individual to utilize from broadcasting technologies as well as necessary tools to publish texts, images, discussions, etc. The once asymmetric relationship between the broadcaster and the recipients have transformed radically that this has also provided new media technologies an important value. This value is mainly deriving from the interactive nature of new media technologies that enable active participation of ordinary citizens to production processes faster and at a low cost (Rheingold, 2008, p. 100).

Thus, in participatory media boundaries between audience and creators are blurred. This situation also influences practices of journalism, as the World Wide Web evolves from read-only to read-write. Previously, only a small group of individuals had the opportunity to create content that would reach large audiences. As the audience acquired necessary resources and skills for production the gap between producers and the audience is reduced. With participatory media, individuals are not only able to control information but also contribute to wider political and economic structures. Moreover, web-based participatory media platforms are cheaper and more accessible for the individuals.

Although it is hard to assess the credibility of information provided by the audience and that new technologies allow an excessive number of individuals put information online, the increase in the number of online participatory media is welcomed since individuals can now compose and publish media content by themselves. As new technologies challenge conventions of traditional journalism individuals are no longer limited to professional journalistic output. Web-based Internet services such as online social networks and blogs, which are accessible to any individual with Internet access around the world, provide the opportunity for individuals to speak up their voices when the mainstream media content do not appeal to their interests or when they are not adequately and fairly represented in the content compiled by traditional journalists. The eager adoption of web

publishing, digital video production, social networking services, instant messaging, multiplayer role playing games, online communities, virtual worlds, and other Internet based media around the world by individuals reveal the strength of their desire to learn digital production and communication skills (Rheingold, 2008).

2.3.2. Participatory culture approach

Jenkins et al. (2006) developed an alternative approach that emphasizes the participatory nature of Internet technologies. In “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture”, Jenkins et al. (2006) define participatory culture as one that is relatively open to civic participation and where individuals feel social connection with one another at a certain degree through creating and sharing in new media (p.6). In other words, participatory culture approach prioritizes creation and collaboration through Internet technologies in order to encourage individuals that they can be a part of a larger creative community.

Participatory culture is also conceptualized as Web 2.0, which refers to the World Wide Web sites that stress user-generated content and usability. The participatory Web 2.0 culture has encouraged individuals to play active role in reporting, analyzing and disseminating content through various Internet-based platforms and services. These platforms include community media, blogs, wikis, RSS, tagging, video sharing websites, music streaming platforms, podcasts and crowdsourcing projects. These platforms can be generalized as e-services that require active participation of their users for value creation. Without participation, the relationship between the audience and the producers would be one-way, similar to the relationship established between traditional mainstream media content producers and the audience.

It is true that participatory mode of audience production is often associated with online services and the number of participatory media outlets increased with the development of various Internet services. However, in the history of mediated communication one can encounter other participatory media projects and cultures. Offline participatory cultures created and controlled by a community of identity or

interest can be considered as one of the primary and founding practices of participatory media in which the audience is involved in the sharing of content sharing.

In Turkey, one of the most prominent examples of offline participatory cultures has been the Radio Traffic, an FM radio broadcast station which aims to provide information on the urban traffic in İstanbul. Radio Traffic emerged as one of the primary participatory projects in which the audience voluntarily has taken part in content creation. Individuals call the radio station to anonymously report about the locations where the traffic is getting busy to warn other drivers to seek for alternative routes. Although Radio Traffic emerged as an offline participatory culture, the collective also started utilizing from new media technologies such as Twitter in order to receive information on traffic faster from its users.

Therefore, the participatory culture that Jenkins et al. (2006) emphasizes is not new phenomenon, however it transformed in a radical manner throughout 2000s with the development of new ICTs. The increase in the usage of Internet also contributed to this process, as more individuals have been able to reach and use Internet-based production services. In this sense, Jenkins et al. (2006) do not degrade participatory culture into technology, but seek for its roots within the culture it operates.

2.3.3. Active audience approach

Another theoretical approach that can be used to conceptualize participatory media is the active audience model which portrays audiences not simply receivers of media messages but active consumers who can create their own meanings of media content for various purposes. Majority of previous research on active audience such as Fiske (e.g., 1987, 1989), Lull (e.g. 1980), Morley (e.g. 1992) and Silverstone (e.g. 1994) chose to focus on television. That is not surprising when the prominent position of television in media and audience studies is considered before the widespread use of the Internet.

With the development of ICTs individuals have started to communicate and exchange information in an online network environment. As Bagdikian (2004) pointed out the Internet and online services such as social networking platforms have become major competitors to mainstream media industry. In order to ensure their survival traditional mainstream media were forced to transform themselves in line with the requirements of digital technology.

New interactive ICTs encouraged users to become more active by allowing them to comment, provide feedback, share stories and ideas and ask questions. This situation forced mainstream media to adapt their operations into changing audience expectations in the age of interactive media. As a result, more and more media and communications scholars began to focus on interactions among online users instead of analyzing how audiences perceive and interpret media messages.

However, some researchers such as Deuze (2003) shown active audience model can be exaggerated. Mainstream media still have the tendency to conduct their business in the traditional manner. Despite the incorporation of interactive applications such as discussion and comment sections by mainstream media communicative acts of online audiences are subject to strict editorial control. In mainstream news outlets professional journalists still control the content and little opportunity is offered for users to suggest content for publication.

Still, the active audience approach remains as one of the most prominent theories that can also be considered within the context of new media technologies. Although taking its roots from mainly the television studies, the approach kept its relevance with the new ICTs thanks to the fact that Internet based services allow more interactivity for its users, in comparison with the television services of 1990s.

2.3.4. Online media activism approach

Online media activism approach is also relevant within the context of online participatory media. Media activism can be described as a sub-category

activism, which utilizes from ICTs for social change and mobilizations. In “Activist and New Media”, Lievrouw (2011) explains that activist online media can be perceived as the latest step in the historical line of the radical and oppositional media. Throughout history, tools of media activists have varied from newspapers, video recordings to leaflets, and even flourished by mid 1990s with the development of new ICTs.

The increase in the Internet-based tools utilized for media activism inevitably brought along new conceptualizations of media activism, as Internet activism, digital campaigning, e-activism, etc. Despite online activist media are aimed to be differentiated from their offline predecessors due to their contextual differences, Braman (2002) argues that they share certain characteristics; which include the rejection of the meta-narratives and ideologies, integration of art and politics, appreciation of new technologies and the use of various medium to disseminate content. Still, online media activism differ from its predecessors in the sense that it has the potential to go beyond borders of a local community and impact on larger groups of individuals.

With the rapid development of Internet-based services, online media activism has emerged as an academically separate sub-field, which also directed attention among media and communication scholars. For instance by focusing on Italy, Ardizzoni (2013) explores whether the ties between television and politics smother the democratic potential of the media and how media activism practices can be engaged in the rapprochement of media and citizenship. In case of Kara Haber (Black News) online video activist collective of Turkey, Depeli (2016) explores the role of video activism between the reality and representation, by focusing on three questionable broadcasts of the collective, which contain violent scenes. Depeli (2016) questions ethicality of broadcasting violent content under the name of video activism, by simply reflecting what is happening, rather than employing a constructivist approach and building up a sound news story. Similarly, Lim (2013) dissects the distinct features of the media environment in Tunisia where the self-immolation of a fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, spurred a national uprising in 2010. In case of Tunisia uprising, Lim (2013) argues that many observers believed that social media was the ‘catalyst’ that enabled

resistance to spread over the region in a short time (Harb, 2011; Howard and Hussain, 2011; Lotan et al., 2011; Stepanova, 2011).

Opponents of this view claimed that it was a people's revolution that would have happened with or without social media, and social media played only an incidental role (Ehrenberg, 2012; Morozov, 2011). In her study addressing the question how media was used to propel Bouazizi's death into a large scale and successful movement, Lim (2013) conducts a framing analysis of media products related to the uprising. She suggests that the activation of an alternative/activist hybrid network reflects cultural and technological logic of media convergence to facilitate connective structures that became a platform for collective action among Tunisians who shared collective identities. Standardized communication found in formal organizations including mainstream media outlets, however, remained inadequate. Mobilizations relied on participatory resources and connective structures provided by various associations and information networks operating as a free space.

Due to its impact potential, online media activism has also been perceived as a threat by certain governments. For instance, the Egyptian government almost entirely cut off the Internet access at the height of protests and the number of bloggers arrested increased up to 199 within the same year (Rhoads and Fowler, 2011; Reporters Without Borders, 2012). Similarly in Turkey, online participatory media projects such as The Others' Post and sendika.org were imposed to ban several times, which reflected the power of media activism in the eye of government officials.

When considering the increased impact of online media activism thanks to the development of new ICTs, it does not come as a surprise when practices such as arresting Internet journalists are taking place especially in developing countries, where governmental officials fear from the dissemination ideas in opposition. Media activism projects can impact on very large scales that as also explored in Chapter 3, online media activist networks in Spain and Brazil speeded up the mobilization processes during 15M and Free Fare movements. Overall, online media activism can be considered as one the most relevant theories in considering

online participatory media, thanks to its applicability to different movements and various contexts.

2.3.5. Civic culture approach

Peter Dahlgren, a prominent theorist of media and communication studies, (2009) conceptualized civic culture as a framework that aimed to assist the analysis of conditions that are essential to nurture political engagement by drawing influence from the work of Almond and Verba (1963). The notion is based on two essential elements: The first is those individuals' identities as citizens are not fixed and static but are rooted within a wider cultural and social milieu (Dahlgren, 2009). Second is that individuals can involve in various forms of civic engagements in late modern societies which, in turn, result with the evolution of civic culture with the transforming engaging practices (Dahlgren, 2009). Thus, Dahlgren's reformulation of civic culture departs from the Almond and Verba's (1963) interpretation.

Dahlgren (2010) argues that the civic culture concept can be used to understand the nature, values and structures of emerging online participatory media that have been established with the proliferation of Internet services such as audio and video uploading and social networking platforms. In his view civic culture, which offers a schematic framework to understand the nature of democratic political systems, can also be interpreted as an essential component of the life-world, in Habermasian terms, with its negotiation of norms and values (Dahlgren, 2010).

The colonization of the life-world, thus, the political and economic spheres inevitably influences the norms and values of everyday life. Civic culture, which is dependent on the political and economic systems, evolves in relation to these two spheres. This makes civic culture both fragile and strong at the same time. Civic culture comprises the cultural resources that are needed for efficient functioning of contemporary democracies. The technology, positioned at the intersection of economic growth and politics allows citizens to shape both spheres and, thus, the media at the same time.

As Dahlberg (2001) explains, if the public sphere is to be extended through the Internet, it must provide spaces for civic engagement. Dahlgren (2009) argues that if this kind of civic engagement is to ‘take off’; it must reach to the ‘cultural realm’ with its cooperative requirements of communicative action and renewal of cultural knowledge, cultural reproduction, social integration, formation of solidarity, and personal identities (Habermas, 1984: 137–138). These kinds of engaging, participatory communications occurring in the cultural public spheres are efficient and “help people to think reflexively on how to negotiate their way in and through systems that may seem beyond anyone’s control on the terrain of everyday life” (McGuigan, 2005: 435). This does not necessarily mean that such communication does not take place in political public spheres but that these processes in the cultural public spheres are as pre-conditions for processes in the political public spheres. Dahlgren argues also that *engagement* and *participation* are key elements for generating such communication as they are highly linked to civic agency: “For engagement to become embodied in participation and thereby give rise to civic agency there must be some connection to practical, do-able activities, where citizens can feel empowered” (2009: 80–1).

Civic culture is a dynamic concept, which encompasses both empirical and normative dimensions. Following the Second World War, American political scientists investigated cultural variables in modern democracies. Large-scale survey techniques were utilized in order to examine civic culture patterns in an effort to draw cross-national comparisons (Almond & Verba, 1963). Thus, the concept is formulated on a constructionist instead of systemic perspective that allowed researchers to explore it in contexts of political communication and cultural studies. Thus, concept of civic culture has always been connected to the notion of civil society. While civil society is a more multivalent and ambiguous term civic culture refers to the collective meaning making – or production. Although civic culture resides within civil society it would be misleading to think it as equivalent of public sphere.

Civic culture does not necessarily seek homogeneity among citizens in the context of political activities they attend to or political beliefs they hold on to.

It requires the basic and shared commitments that are related to the procedures and the vision of contemporary democracies, hence, supports the capacity of individuals to look beyond immediate interests of their own groups. This can be complicated at times when various social and cultural interest groups reveal their civic commitments in conflicting ways. Theoretically speaking, groups always position themselves in contexts of, for instance, ethnic and cultural lines, that prevent them from constituting heterogeneous communities.

The notion of civic culture asserts that everyday preconditions for democratic participation, engagement in the public sphere and involvement in political activity should be ensured via cultural attributes among citizens in order to enhance and facilitate the democratic life. Dahlgren proposes four empirical dimensions of civic culture, which can serve as starting point for empirical interrogation of various media salient for modern democracies. These are “relevant knowledge and competencies”; “loyalty to democratic values and procedures”; “practices, routines, traditions”; and “identities as citizens”. In the rest of this chapter I will move on to examine these dimension in more detail.

2.3.5.1. Identities as citizens

Citizenship is one of the essential object of exploration in social theory and political analysis (e.g. Beiner, 1995; Janoski, 1998; Turner, 1993) Although it is conceptualized as a formal and static concept which rights being a citizen entail are always a mater of contention particularly in non-democratic societies.. It can be argued that the formal definition of citizenship in a country reflects its political context.

Majority of literature on citizenship treats the concept as a social agency that is bound with a set of practices and circumstances. The traditional perspectives on citizenship conceptualize it through its relevance to the public arena (Weintraub & Kumar, 1997) and define it in relation to certain rights and values. More recent literature, however, places citizenship within cultural theory (e.g. Isin & Wood, 1999; Preston, 1997). These recent contributions highlight the dimensions of identity as a key to understand and explore citizenship as a mode of

social agency. The main idea is that in order to act as a citizen one needs to perceive herself as a citizen and embrace attributes identified with citizenship. The main problem is then to relevant attributes.

In contemporary societies, citizenship often evokes the notion of a subjectivity positioned publicly, although the context of the so-called public can be very small in scale. As the public and the private have started to become interlinked, citizenship has re-emerged as a concept that is more relevant as a dimension of the self. One of the primary features of the late modern societies has been contextualizing the self as a reflexive project. Identity is reconsidered in accordance with the increasing and pluralizing mix of social forces, cultural openings and personal contexts composed by individuals. As in everyday life, individuals experience multiple worlds of realities with various knowledge, assumptions, rules, roles and traditions the identity started to be perceived as plural. While some of these elements remain at the core of our identities, some remain at the peripheries.

Identities of individuals as citizens with potential to engage in societal developments are a crucial element of everyday life in modern democracies. The modern democracies' efficient management is also seen as a consequence of construction of multiple selves within the citizenship, which Gellner (1994) conceptualizes as "the modular man". Thus, perceiving citizenship as a dimension of identity prevents generating a static portrait of citizenship that is socially and psychologically untrue in contemporary societies.

Dahlgren argues that (2009) identities "build on knowledge and values, they can be reinforced by trust, and embodied in particular spaces via practices – pursuing issues by the use of civic skills – that in turns serve to reinforce identities" (p. 119). In his view civic identities are not fixed but they transform through experiences that are especially emotion based. At this point, Dahlgren (2009) agrees with Mouffe (2005), who emphasizes the importance of affective involvement. In line with their emotional bonds, citizens may have more than a single civic identity in contemporary democratic societies. This situation points the possibility that civic engagement is not in decline but changing its forms. It

signals that there is more than a single way in which civic identities can give birth to empowered political actors which as Dahlgren (2009, pp. 120-121) explains can be fostered by involvement in a political community, be it local (Delanty, 2003), virtual (Rheingold, 1993), or imagined (Anderson, 2006).

2.3.5.2. Relevant knowledge and competencies

In order to understand the everyday life and its ongoing transformations citizens are required to have at least a minimum amount of knowledge. Thus, individuals as citizens need to have access reliable information, reports, and discussions on past and ongoing affairs (Miegel & Olsson, 2013). The role of media at this point is central and problematic in that accessibility to information is not just related to technical and economic competencies but also to material development of linguistic and cultural proximity.

Civic culture is also in need of active citizens for efficient functioning of full democracy. Besides following current debates and searching for knowledge communicative skills are essential. Such skills are not necessarily be sophisticated such as writing letter to an editor, but should be at least at elementary level to achieve democratic opinion formation. Opinions could be formed through expression of ideas. Thus, communicative competencies are important for citizens to take part in the public sphere, and engage in relevant political activities. Although sociological realism asserts that it is not possible for every citizen to have the same knowledge and competence the issue must always be open for discussion. In contemporary societies, many question what constitutes relevant knowledge in the age of new media in which previous boundaries between for instance the personal and the political, the citizen and the consumer, have increasingly become vague. Peter Dahlgren suggests that knowledge does not only refer to types of information that inform civic engagement, but also to skills to obtain, disseminate and generate information (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 109):

“Some civic cultures, no doubt tend to rest more on established background knowledge – which may even become outdated and ossified as ideological truths – while others are more continuously dealing with new information

and thereby revising knowledge and even some political perceptions” (Dahlgren, 2009, p.110).

2.3.5.3. Loyalty to democratic values and procedures

Dahlgren (2010) asserts that democracy would not function without virtues of tolerance and willingness to follow democratic principles and procedures of everyday life. In explaining the universal values that define a modern democracy Dahlgren (2009) distinguishes between the two types: the former is substantive values that cover equality, liberty, justice, solidarity and tolerance; and the latter is procedural values that include openness, reciprocity, discussion and accountability (p. 111). Dahlgren emphasizes the importance of democratic values especially in times of political turmoil. In order to cultivate democracy as a system of resolution among conflicting interests citizens should manifest their loyalty to democratic values and procedures. Conflict resolution in a democratic government can reflect its efficiency in terms of preservation of its values and procedures. In democratic societies, media are expected to reinforce citizens’ commitment to democratic values.

2.3.5.4. Routines, practices and traditions

According to Dahlgren (2010), democracy must be embodied in concrete, recurring practices in which individuals or groups take part in relevant situations. As Dahlgren (2009) explains, practices help generate personal and social meaning to the ideal of democracy and they must have an element of the routine (p. 116). Although practices require and are part of a routine, they can evolve in time and turn into traditions as well. “Across time, practices become traditions, and experience becomes collective memory” (Dahlgren, no date). Practices require learnt skills, which depend on the practice in return. Practices generate individual and collective meanings in accordance with the ideals of democracy. For instance, national elections can be seen as a form of practice in this context but a civic culture also requires practices embodied in everyday life – both at civil and political contexts. Such practices range from organizing a meeting on a particular cause to forming discussion forums. They may vary from

mobilization, bargaining, civil disobedience to disruption that aims to bring relevant issues into the public arena. Interaction among individuals – as citizens is essential for the public sphere. Mainstream media, through ritualistic and symbolic representations, encourage citizens for interaction. The lack of practices, traditions and restrictions on civic culture by governmental pressures prevent non-democratic societies to establish an efficient public sphere. In non-democratic societies citizens are in need of discovering different interaction possibilities to incorporate their skills and traditions to civic collectives through the media. At this point participatory media stand as a useful solution to encourage individuals to interact with other citizens around intersecting political agendas.

To sum up, four dimensions of civic culture offered by Dahlgren should be perceived not as a separate list of distinct but as mutually reinforcing factors. For individuals to perceive themselves as citizens and for a civic culture to emerge, the mutual interdependence of knowledge and competencies, loyalty to democratic values, as well as established practices and traditions are needed. Since a civic culture is built up on citizens' ways of doing and thinking in everyday life the media can assume a supportive role.

The factors that affect the success of online participatory media as a mode of civic engagement depend on a variety of organizational characteristics. The primary organizational challenge is their economic sustainability. One of the major dilemmas of alternative media is that adopting a funding model may mean sacrificing its own independence (Atton, 2002, pp. 32-39). Since they primarily do not accept revenues from advertising and rely on donations alternative media has fewer options to ensure a stable economic structure (Atton, 2002). This situation results in unstable financial resources, which cause several difficulties in hiring a full-time staff and managing efficient distribution of its productions. Moreover, the alternative media dependent on volunteer labor are also in a vulnerable position in terms of human resources. Other deficiencies of alternative media, specifically online participatory media are noted as their “poor organization, lack of strategy or inadequately defined common goals” (Hackett & Carroll, 2006, p. 131).

Rochester (1999) suggests the concept of “small voluntary organizations” while evaluating and analyzing the organizational challenges for alternative news outlets that are based on volunteer labor. He (1999) explains the activist model of small voluntary organizations as a group of individuals that are gathered to achieve a mutual goal and who adopt certain rules and traditions to regulate in house relationships an affairs.

Compared to voluntary organizations with full-time paid staff, the activist model remains simpler, but still encounters major difficulties. Harris (1998) counts internal disagreements between group members and problems related to volunteer management as major challenges in activist model. Another challenge is the lack of knowledge necessary for the everyday operation of the alternative media outlet both at management and production levels. Thus, knowledge and training stand as essential for the survival of alternative media outlets. Although alternative media differ from corporate media in terms of their economic and management structures, they still need to set standards and establish training sessions to equip their staff and/or volunteers with standard knowledge necessary for everyday operations.

Bearing the world population in mind, only a minority are interested in involving with participatory media outlets as volunteer reporters. Therefore, democratization of the media through individual’s involvement in the content production through opportunities provided by the Internet seems excessively optimistic (Rosen, 2008). On the other hand, the pessimist accounts based on the fear of loss of the authority of experts, a cacophony of increasing voices and a rise in misinformation and lies also seem to be exaggerated.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter investigated and discussed different theoretical viewpoints in relation to alternative and participatory media forms that were put forward as a solution to the democratic deficits of mainstream media. Conceptualizing alternative media as part of civil society was found the most relevant approach within the context of contemporary social movements. The approach is also in

line with the theories of participatory media that emphasize the importance of civil society for participating in media production.

It was also found that dimensions of civic culture offered by Peter Dahlgren offer a useful framework to analyse how online participatory media, through their modes of representations and emerging forms of interactivity contribute to the decline of conventional political participation while it gives rise to newer forms of political involvement during contemporary social movements.

The civic culture approach also allows conducting an interrogation on participatory media practices, for their emphasis on civic identities of citizens, knowledge and competencies, relation with the democratic values as well as journalistic routines and traditions. The approach is not only limited with journalistic routine of participatory journalists, but also their civic motivations for media production. In that sense, the civic culture approach allows one to explore emerging forms of political participation in an era of contemporary social movements, marked by intense use of ICTs.

CHAPTER 3: THE CRISIS OF NEO-LIBERALISM AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

3.1. Introduction

As a consequence of worldwide resentments against neoliberal globalization, social unrest and protests started to emerge in different quarters of the world from the beginning of 2000s. Social movements of the 2000s followed the Seattle WTO protests of 1999, which surrounded the WTO Ministerial Conference and included the support of various local, national and international organizations that were concerned about labor rights, the environmental pollution and consumer rights. The loose coalition of networks succeeded in increasing exposure of WTO especially in the United States media and spreading the waves of ant globalization movement to different quarters of the world. The movement was theorized as a bottom up and a leaderless movement with no political program; thus was perceived as an attempt to transform the world order with no claim for power.

The anti-WTO mobilizations were also important in the sense that they showed how the Internet could be integrated into contemporary social movements. Through the open network of the Internet, a variety of social activists and groups connected together and coordinated movement against the WTO summit in the streets. Throughout the protests, activists reported on field regarding the on-going events and the changing tactics of the police forces. Thus, Seattle protests and the ones that followed them share two important characteristics. First, these social movements emerged as a reaction to neo-liberal politics that trigger social inequality and second, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) played essential role in terms of communication, data verification and mobilization.

Gezi Park protests reflected a number of similarities with other contemporary social movements. What started as a small-scale resistance against

environmental destruction and developmentalist government policies turned into an anti-government movement, which objected to the consumption-based neoliberalism with a moderate Islamic worldview of JDP. Various social groups and classes, including blue-collar and white-collar workers, public officers, small retailers, self-employed, retired, housewives, students and unemployed were present in Gezi Park movement (KONDA, 2013). Thus, social and economic issues that were raised varied from interference in lifestyles to urbanization that reshape the landscape of mainly the particular historical sites of Istanbul such as the Taksim Square and Tarlabasi district.

This chapter argues that contemporary social movements of 2000s cannot be understood and explained without investigating their relationship with the rise and consequences of neoliberalism. It first introduces the foundations of neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology. Then it moves on to explore how and why the neoliberal ideology experienced its first major crisis in the first decade of the 2000s which paved the way for the emergence of international contemporary social movements. After discussing the theoretical framework and background of the crisis of neoliberal ideology, the chapter will chronologically assess the contemporary social movements in the post Seattle period, in which Internet-based, online and participatory news sources and networks played an important role in terms of fostering social mobility.

3.2. Development of neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology

Neoliberalism has received considerable scholarly attention starting from 1980s. Common perspective on neoliberalism pictures it as the dominant ideology of our times that shapes the dynamics of the contemporary societies since the late 1970s. Despite the term's widespread usage, a consensus on its definition has not been reached yet. There are various definitions of neoliberalism, which makes it a concept that is hard to explain with a single sentence. For instance, in their empirical study exploring the journal articles based on neoliberalism, Boas and Morse (2009) argues that neoliberalism has become an academic catchphrase which is often considered as given and, thus, remain undefined in many studies.

From the point of view of political economy neoliberalism perceives the maximization of an individual's entrepreneurial freedom essential for an increase in social welfare. Entrepreneurial freedom is ensured with an institutional framework, ensuring private property rights, individual freedoms, free markets and international trade. The duty of the state in a neoliberal order is to create a framework that ensures freedom of markets. In addition to this, state should support creation of markets that regulate fields of education, health, social security and environmental pollution, when such markets do not exist. Apart from these, state should not involve in commercial enterprises and intervene in markets. The state interventions to free markets should be kept in minimum since it does not have the competence to determine market values. In neoliberalism prominent financial interest-seekers would have the power to manipulate state interventions in line with their own interests.

Palley (2005) asserts that income distribution and aggregate employment determination are the two main tenets of neoliberalism. In terms of income distribution, the neoliberal perspective requires that factors of production are paid for what they are worth (p. 20) and that this process is accomplished through the efficient operation of the supply and demand process. In relation to aggregate employment determination, neoliberal theory argues that prices will be adjusted to make sure that demand is forthcoming so that "free markets will not let valuable factors of production (including labor) go to waste" (Palley, 2005, p. 20). These two approaches derive their roots from the Keynesian economic model that was in practice between 1945 and 1970, which was structured on the argument that economic output is strongly influenced by the aggregate demand. Neo-liberal commentators argued that the shortcomings of the Keynesian model, such as its focus on the demand side rather than the supply side and its controller nature on issues such as price stability and full employment, limited the freedom of the markets and made it an outdated approach in understanding contemporary economies.

The rise of neoliberalism was largely a result of the crisis of global capitalism at the end of 1960s, which was further triggered by the international economic recession in 1973. The same year witnessed a rise in the price of oil as a

consequence of the Arab-Israeli War. Up until the first half of 1970s, the state played an interventionist role between the capital owners and the working class to prevent any form of social or economic exploitation of the labor. However, the fragile contract between the labor and the capital owners started to decay, which resulted in the collapse of the Bretton Woods Agreement that had aimed to ensure the stability of the monetary management that established the rules for commercial and financial relations among the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia and Japan in the mid-20th century. The system was unilaterally terminated on August 15, 1971 by the United States. While the Bretton Woods marked the golden age for contractual countries in 1950s and during the first half of 1960s, the second half of 1960s witnessed the break down of the system.

In a period marked by an intense political and economic crisis, neoliberalism emerged as the dominant intellectual movement that was intensely politicized by Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s. It provided an ideological framework for competitive globalization that aimed to challenge the ground rules for management of crisis-torn economies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the former Soviet Union. Neoliberalism as new form of free market paradigm fostered flexible labor, active individualism and the value of free trade in contemporary politics of various geographical regions.

The start of neoliberal ideology is also alternatively considered in parallel with the military coups in Argentina and Chile in the 1970s, where the military interventions were supported by the traditionalist upper classes. However, the so-called neoliberal revolution after 1979 was accomplished with democratic means. Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, and Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States were the key figures in accomplishing the so-called neoliberal revolution with democratic means. For instance, in order to overcome high unemployment and recession in British economy, Thatcher's economic policies emphasized deregulation, flexible labor markets, the privatization of state-owned companies and reducing the power and influence of trade unions. In parallel, Reagan's economic policies advocated reducing tax rates to enable economic growth, controlling the money supply to reduce inflation, deregulating the economy and reducing government spending.

Similar to Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan also took a hard line against trade and labor unions.

The common points between the US and the UK neo-liberal model lied in their treatment on labor relations and fight against inflation. While Thatcher privatized all sectors in public ownership, Reagan, in parallel forged consent through cultivation of a middle class that embraced private property ownership, individualism and the liberation of entrepreneurial opportunities. This neoliberal program, specifically applied on the cultivated middle class, enabled Thatcher to get three electoral victories. The success of these two political figures thus can be interpreted as a consequence of their political, ideological and intellectual agenda that carried them to the mainstream political arena. Their major genius was creating a legacy and a tradition that tangled politicians in a web of constraints from which they could not easily escape.

The economic order that neoliberalism espoused focused on reducing labor costs, public expenditure and making work more flexible. Since the early 1980s the majority of nation states in the world with few exceptions – e.g. North Korea have adopted neoliberalism despite the vast inequalities in terms of economic development. Besides nation states the international intermediary bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have regulated these processes and determined the rules of global engagement. IMF is a global monetary cooperation established to secure financial stability, promote international trade, economic growth and high employment. OECD was founded in 1961 to ensure economic progress and world trade through offering a platform to compare policy experiences and searching for answers to common economy-based problems.

With the increasing impact of economic globalization, these intermediary bodies started to play more important roles in implementing and practicing neoliberal policies, since they are eligible to apply sanctions on member countries, although they remain soft powers¹⁶. With the assistance the United States they

¹⁶ Soft power is a concept developed by Joseph Nye (2005) to refer to the ability to attract rather than use force or money as means of persuasion.

framed in 1989 the economic policy prescriptions, known as the “Washington Consensus” for the recovery of countries in Latin America from the economic and financial crises of the 1980s. Though consensus package primarily aimed for the crisis-wrecked countries in Latin America later spread to the other developing states. The Washington Consensus recommendations including competitive exchange rates, market determined interest rates and trade liberalization (Williamson, 1989).

Inevitably, the Washington Consensus speeded up the adoption and the spread of neoliberal ideology. Mainly aiming for the recovery of the developing economies that suffered from the severe financial crisis, the consensus remained inefficient in developing an investment climate, defeating poverty, strengthening bureaucratic institutions or addressing needs and demands of minority or disadvantaged groups. Countries such as Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, which went through a political transformation and economic recession in 1980s, did not receive permanent benefits from the consensus package, in terms of settling lasting issues such as unemployment or poverty.

Nevertheless the institutional reforms and regulations of neoliberalism spread around the world especially throughout 1980s and 1990s Starting from late 1970s, neoliberalism transformed the international political order. Deregulation of financial markets, weakening of unions, privatization and opening up goods to international markets hit the top of the economy agendas of the US and the UK governments and then spread across other developed and developing countries in different quarters of the world. Not only developing countries but also the welfare states such as New Zealand and Sweden and even the emerging independent states of 1990s following the dissolution of the Soviet Union adopted neoliberal economic order.

Despite the dominant US hegemony over certain regions such as the Middle East, Harvey (2005) underlines that neoliberalism has had a global impact starting from 1980s. He points out that contextual conditions and institutional arrangements during conversion to neoliberalism differed depending on the country in question.

In Turkey too conversion into neoliberal ideology had its own unique patterns. Following the military takeover in 1980, Turkey experienced a fierce process of de-politicization between 1980 and 1983 to end the clashes between rightist and leftist groups that put their stamp on the 1970s. The first general election held following the 1980 military coup was in 1983 when the newly formed Motherland Party came to power, lead by Turgut who was also the architect of the 1980 stabilization package, which brought the neoliberal agenda into Turkey.

The package eliminated multiple exchange rates and price inspection, reduced the provision of basic goods and services, increased interest rates, provided incentives for exports and foreign investment, and liberalized rules for imports (Ekzen, 1984). Accordingly, the politics of the two consecutive periods (1983–87, 1987–91) of MP rule were that of the neoliberal preference for strict control over wage labor, decreases in wages, and the gradual reduction of public social expenditures (BSB, 2008).

It must also be noted that the adoption of neoliberalism in Turkey was more than military ensuring societal stability. The process also included implementation of neoliberal economic policies, which was legally ensured by the replacement of the term “social state” with a new “regulatory state” in 1982 Constitution. Thus, by the time of the transition to a civilian regime in 1983, neoliberal restructuring was institutionalized and following governments continued to implement neoliberal policies.

The spread of neoliberalism also resulted in the transformation of the state. The neo-liberal state has been able to reverse the various political and economic gains made under Keynesian welfare state policies and institutions. Duménil and Lévy (2009) asserts, neo-liberalization from the very beginning has been a project to restore the class power and to preserve the characteristics needed for capital accumulation and power of societal elites. The neoliberal system, thus, has resulted in much transformation not only within institutional structures but also in

divisions of labor, social relations, attachment to the land, technologies and ways of life and thought.

Neoliberalism has emerged as the primary hegemonic ideology with pervasive influence on social life. It impacted on patterns in which individuals perceive, interpret and experience the world. The intensification of capital on modes of production brought up a new set of cultural logic and ethics. Here, capital is not solely referred as money but is treated as the primary organizing characteristic of the modern society. The freedom, within the neoliberal perspective, is degraded into the freedom of economic elites, which is determined by the capital. With the adoption of neoliberal thought and practice, social institutions such as the universities, think tank organizations, media corporations, financial institutions as well the international non-governmental actors such as the IMF and WTO have been transformed. In sum, neoliberalism emerged as a hegemonic ideology that impacted on ways of thought and political economy practices, which also inevitably shape the common sense by which individuals understand and interpret the world they live in. The extension of the economic rationality into the formerly non-economic formations and institutions such as the non-governmental organizations, occupation-related associations and civil society groups, resulted in the reshaping of the citizen's relation with the government and emerging market actors. One of neoliberal model's successes has been eroding the civilian character of the citizen and breaking her ties with the civil society, which is an essential component of the public sphere.

The discourse of individual freedoms enabled neoliberalism to integrate into the common sense of the masses. As Barnett (2010) underlines, neoliberalism is diffused and translated across various contexts easily that it does not contend itself by transforming only the economy, but also impacting on social life, culture and the politics. Ideologically, it has also brought along certain changes in subjectivity, by normalizing "individualistic self-interest, entrepreneurial values, and consumerism" (Barnett, 2010, p.3). At this point, Harvey (2006) also underlines the power of neoliberalism in becoming hegemonic through a vaguely operating mechanism of naturalization:

“For any system of thought to become hegemonic requires the articulation of fundamental concepts that become so deeply embedded in common-sense understandings that they become taken for granted and beyond question.” (Harvey 2006, p. 146).

Consent was constructed through common sense and long-standing practices of cultural socialization that are rooted in regional and national traditions. These traditions varied from belief in God to views on the position of women in society, as well as the fears against the “others” such as immigrants. The common sense prior to the success of Reagan and Thatcher governments was constructed with the discourse on freedom that is reshaped in the context of neoliberalism. The freedom discourse could be employed to justify almost any neoliberal policy that would be reflected as in line with the public interest.

Emphasis on individual freedom and expression is not only important to oppose fascist, dictatorial or communist regimes, but also to foster collective decision making mechanisms in which the state has a minimum role. Neoliberalism emphasized that without supporting private property rights and free markets, individual freedoms cannot be protected. Thus within the neoliberal perspective, individual freedoms can be obtained only if governmental intervention is reduced to minimum and free trade and market policies are fostered.

Such justification of neoliberal ideology has been challenged even before the spread of neoliberal ideology. Individual freedoms, which are one of the primary traditions of the liberal ideology, had been one of the primary motivations of social unrests in mainly the oppositional movements of Eastern Europe, when the Soviet economies were worn out by the impact of the Cold War. The student movements of 1968, which emerged mainly in Paris and spread to different territories including Chicago, Bangkok and Mexico City demanded for more individual freedoms and expression. Thus, freedom, which is appropriated by the liberal ideology, remains at the heart of social movements that has the potential and power to transform the political history.

3.3. The global crisis of neoliberalism

Harvey (2005) asserts that while in theory, the neoliberal state should favor “strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade”, the somewhat chaotic transformation of state institutions, powers and functions over the last three decades indicated that the neoliberal state may be unstable and represent a contradictory political form (p.64). While the structural crisis of capitalism of the 1970s created conditions that enabled the establishment of neoliberalism, the crisis of 2000s marked its end (e.g. Duménil and Lévy, 2009). Theorists such as Bourdieu (e.g. 1998) who described the neoliberal program as a destructive machine against collective structures to protect the pure market logic foresaw the upcoming crises deriving from the neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal globalization, the erosion of nation-states, newly emerging economic actors such as the IMF and political organizations that operate to ensure the social and economic efficiency remained insufficient in terms of overcoming diverse social, economic and political problems, which resulted in the emergence of unrest movements in different quarters of the world throughout 2000s.

The inefficiency of the current neoliberal economic model resulted in the emergence of rising criticism. Critics underlined the anti-democratic and exploitative nature of the neoliberal economic model along with negative impacts of globalization over sustained economic stability of nation states. The problems, which critical observers associate with neoliberalism varied from the casualization of the labor with the flexibilization of the labor market, to the increasing corporate influence and power over meso-scale economic actors and institutionalization of the civil society and its repositioning as a mechanism serving for the benefit of the upper classes (Chomsky and McChesney, 2011; Harvey, 2007).

Duménil and Lévy (2009) explain that there are two strands of determinants to the crisis of neoliberalism. A first set of factors refers to the unchecked quest for high income, which is typical of the neoliberalism. Besides the pressure on labor, regulations were lifted and all barriers to globalization were suppressed. The consequence was the establishment of financial-global

mechanisms around the globe that are highly fragile. The second set of factors that resulted in the decline of neoliberalism were rising deficit of the foreign trade, household crisis and the increasing financing of the US economy by the rest of the world.

One of the reflections of the neoliberal politics over social life in various geographies has been the increasing income gap between the rich and poor segments of the society. The formation of a 'human capital' that is employable by the industry and 'creditworthy' for insurances have been established at the expense of producing an increasing number of the 'new poor' (Lazzarato, 2009). Such poverty cannot be related to backwardness since it is not an indication of economic underdevelopment. As it is derived from a certain political will, neoliberal poverty differs from poverty in underdeveloped economies. Instead it is one that is created anew by dispositifs of segmentation, division and differentiation within a society that is 'objectively' wealthy (Lazzarato, 2009). Inequality and precarity are not problematic matters in neoliberal perspective; they are rather treated as matters, which demand for their own specific conditions to deal with. It is rather the "absolute poverty" that matters, which prevents the individual from entering the game of competition. (Lazzarato, 2009, p. 128). In order to create and justify such form of poverty, the welfare state institutions have been in operation, which serve for the ends of neoliberal capitalism, as they also turned democratic institutions into oligarchies of wealth.

The influence of the neoliberal ideology, thus, has not been restricted to national boundaries. Since by nature, the neoliberal regimes seek for low tax regimes, limited state interference and unlimited access to markets and essential resources, networks of political and business alliances worked for the assurance of these key principles at international levels. The West, mainly the US, led these networks especially throughout 1990s and 2000s. The Middle East region, for instance, clearly reflects suitable conditions for interference and operation; with the securing spheres of alliance between the US and Israel, military challenges in Iran and Pakistan, defeating threats of the Taliban and al-Qaida and the political instability at the Horn Africa. The US, as the dominant hegemon political actor in the region, established a governmentality that involves a wide range of political

rationalities and governmental technologies that support and produce a mode of subjectivity that is self-disciplining and self-governing. European Union (EU) also played a secondary but key role in promoting neoliberal governmentality with Western conception in the region (Tagma and Kalaycioglu, 2013). The neoliberal hegemony has thus been fostered by political strategies that would speed up the dominant neoliberal players' entrance into complex regions – as potential markets.

Malfunctions of a global neoliberal regime could be observed with the emergence of the Arab Spring in the region that was governed by procedural democracy that goes along with the aims of fostering a neoliberal polity and the exclusion of other forms of democracy and political orientation, such as social democracy and egalitarian concerns (Tagma, Kalaycioglu and Akcali, 2013).

Table 3.1. Causes and outcomes of protests in post-Seattle movements

Movement	Causes	Crisis resolution or outcome
Icelandic protests (2008-2011)	→ Financial crisis as a consequence of deregulations of banks → Debt uploads when foreign companies were accumulated by banks → Problems in refinancing debts of companies	→ Emergency legislation passed by the Icelandic Parliament → Success of IMF Stand by Agreement → Government decision to apply for membership in the EU in 2009
Iranian election protests (2009-10)	→ Disputed victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in presidential elections	→ 4.000 detained in protests → Censorship of the news media and the Internet → Estimated 150 deaths and prisoner tortures
U.K. student riots (2010)	→ Planned spending cuts to further education → Increase of the cap on tuition fees by the Conservative-Liberal democratic coalition	→ Welsh assembly announced it will not permit an increase in fees for Welsh students
Arab Spring (2010)	→ Dissatisfaction with the rule of local governments → Human rights violations, political corruptions, economic decline, extreme poverty, unemployment and demographic structural factors (i.e. education inequality)	→ Government overthrown in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya → Governmental changes in Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco and Lebanon
England 'Blackberry' riots (2011)	→ The death of Mark Duggan, a local who was shot dead by the police on 4 August 2011 → Unemployment, poverty, government cuts, racism and classism	→ Excessive use of police forces and violence → 5 deaths and 16 injured → 3,100 had been arrested by 15 August → £200 million worth of property damage
Occupy Wall Street (2011)	→ Income equality → Increasing influence of corporations on politics	→ Symbolic appeal in highlighting economic disparities and identifying targets of blame
15-M Movement (2011-2012)	→ Economic crisis and high unemployment rates → Rejection to two-party system	→ Government agreement on a constitutional reform that self-imposed a spending cap
Turkey's Gezi Park protests (2013)	→ Environmental concerns and contesting the urban development plan for Taksim's Gezi Park → Increasingly Islamist and authoritarian regime → Restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of the press, Internet use and lifestyles in general	→ 11 estimated deaths, 11.000 treated for tear gas exposure and 800 injuries caused by tear gas cartridges → Excessive use of teargas and police violence → Media censorship and disinformation → Temporary block on EU accession talks

Brazil's V for Vinegar Movement (2013)	→ Initiated by Free Fare Movement demanding for free public transportation → Increases in bus, metro and train prices → High cost of living → Multiple issues regarding infrastructure, education and health care	→ Reduction in prices of public transport → National Pact to improve education and public transport → National Pact to fiscal responsibility and control of inflation → Destination of petroleum royalties to education and health

Despite the global impact of neoliberal ideology has been continuous since 1980s, 2000s witnessed the crisis of neoliberalism, which set the fourth structural crisis in capitalism since the late nineteenth century (Duménil and Lévy, 2011). In the 2000s several developed countries experienced waves of economic crises. Unemployment rates in Spain, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, and the UK increased between 2010 and 2011. Eurostat reported that Eurozone unemployment reached record levels in September 2012 at 11.6%, up from 10.3% the prior year (Smith, 2012). Iceland, experienced a terrifying financial crisis between 2008 and 2011, when the country's systemic banking collapsed as they had difficulties in refinancing their short-term debt. The 2007-2010 period, which Duménil and Lévy defines as "the great contraction", enriched the top five percent of the Americans at a significant cost to the country as a whole. This increasing imbalance in economy resulted in a decrease in domestic investment in manufacturing, unsustainable household debt, increasing dependence on imports and financing and the growth of a fragile global financial structure.

The global crisis of neoliberalism in 2000s, thus, was a consequence of a global economic model, which fosters social inequality for the sake of maximization of the profit. The neoliberal representative model has been an applicable model thanks to the neoliberal interpretation of the notions such as democracy, which enabled construction of hegemony over the masses through mechanisms of consent. The established system is based on preservation of the capitalist economic model and property rights rather than citizen interests. The system thus serves for the interests of the dominant elite, as the ruling ideas are the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships. Speaking in Marxist terminology, ideology is reduced to bourgeois ideology, by establishing an unequal and exploitative relationship between the dominant and subordinate classes (Cammaerts, 2015). The bourgeois ideology normalizes and naturalizes

social contradictions that mark exploitation based on various social grounds including race, gender and sexuality. The neoliberal ideology, thus, shape the relationships of individuals with their conditions of existence and the economic interests of the ruling elite. This situation was also marked by protesters with their placards during #occupywallstreet movement and 11-M, which mentioned the political slogan “We are the 99%”, to refer to the income and wealth inequality in developing and developed countries.

The contemporary crisis inevitably effected on economy of Iceland, politics of the Arab countries, the United Kingdom, Spain, Brazil and Turkey as a consequence of a wave action. Like a domino effect, the crisis of neoliberalism spread to various geographies including the Middle East, North America, South Asia, Europe and even North Atlantic. Theorists Duménil and Lévy (2009) state that the unemployment rates in Spain, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, and the UK increased between 2010 and 2011. France had no significant changes, while in Germany and Iceland the unemployment rate declined. Eurostat reported that Eurozone unemployment reached “record levels” in September 2012 at 11.6%, up from 10.3% the prior year (Smith, 2012).

As a result, a remarkable number of social unrest movements started to emerge around the world. Governments faced counter-movements in Tunisia (which then spread to Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara and Yemen), Iceland, the United Kingdom, the United States (Occupy Wall Street), Spain (15-M movement), Turkey (Gezi Park protests) and Brazil (V for Vinegar Movement). Although some of the main reasons of protests remain similar to those mobilizations occurred before Seattle (i.e., neo-liberal free trade policies), demands have flourished and the organization types of activists evolved, especially with the rapid development and increasing uses of new information and communication technologies.

Decentralized, flexible, local/global activist networks constituted important organizational forms of civil unrests. Thus, the first crisis of neoliberalism marks one of the most influential incidents of the post-Seattle

period, with its evolving forms of mobilization and communication, as well as political, social and economic impacts at global level. As noted in Table 1, the impact of this crisis has been at economic levels in Iceland (financial crisis as a consequence of the deregulation of banks), Spain (national economic crisis and high unemployment rates) and Brazil (high costs of living), the consequences has been political in the Arab region (dissatisfaction with local governments and human rights violations), Turkey (increasing authoritarianism) and Iran (election fraud), where neoconservative regimes were pressurized by citizens in line with the political public interests. Decentralized networks formed by activists on online social networks assisted mobilization processes towards mentioned crises of neoliberalism that targeted the existing global economic system, which deepens social inequality. Demands started to extend from city transport to public services, legalization of drugs, abortion, public spending, privatization and call for social justice, which reflected the diversity and dispersiveness of social movements in 2000s.

Despite seeming differences, economic instability and social inequality marks the bases of all protests of the post-Seattle period, since they also inevitably impact on human rights, democracy and governmental management patterns. This situation is also in line with the core argument of the new social movement theory, which argues that contemporary social movements are mainly focusing on a variety of issues that cannot be categorized under a single topic such as environmental concerns or antiwar stance.

3.4. Major social movements and unrests in the world in the 2000s

To better analyze and understand Gezi Park protests and alternative civic forms of communication, one needs to assess how the first crisis of neoliberalism impacted on other regions. In line with this aim, the following sub-sections will assess the causes and outcomes of protests case by case in the post-Seattle period and civic attempts of participation in diverse communication environments enriched with the new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

3.4.1. Icelandic protests (2008-2011)

Iceland's crisis that set in after the spectacular collapse of the country's banking system in October 2008 was indeed a deep and difficult crisis. It came in the wake of a build-up of what has been described as the largest bubble economy in history, in relation to the size of the national economy. With the easy flow of borrowed foreign capital, at low interest rates, the economy had ample resources for rapid growth, which soon turned into an excessive speculation bubble. Already by the end of 2004 Iceland had become the world's most heavily indebted economy. External debt escalated and excessive risk behavior became predominant in the Icelandic financial and business environment, driven by the quest for accumulation of assets, profits and bonuses. Before the collapse of the banks in October 2008 the foreign debt had grown to about eight times the size of the country's GDP, a high-risk situation and totally unsustainable once the growth was slowed down (Buiter and Sibert, 2008; PIC, 2010).

The financial collapse was accordingly also of historical proportions, given the size of the three main banks that were at the center of the whole saga. The fall of the stock market index from its height was steeper and faster than the collapse on Wall Street in 1929-32 and the debt accumulation associated to the bubble was exceptionally large (Ólafsson, 2011). The crisis was at the same time a banking crisis, a currency crisis (the value of the Icelandic Krona came down by about a half), an economic recession and a crisis of politics and societal trust. So it was a very serious setback for the Icelandic economy and society.

Concerned with the state of the ailing Icelandic economy, a singer-songwriter, poet and gay rights activist, Hordur Torfason, staged a one-man protest in October 2008. Torfason stood out on Austurvöllur with an open microphone and invited people to speak. The following Saturday a more organized demonstration occurred, and participants established a group called Raddir fólksins. The group decided to stage a rally every Saturday until the government stepped down. Protesters called for the resignation of government officials and for new elections to be held. Torfason led the protests from a stage near the front (Henley, 2008). On 20 January 2009, the protests intensified into

riots in Iceland. Between 1,000 and 2,000 people clashed with riot police who used pepper spray around the building of the parliament (Althing). At least 20 people were arrested and 20 more needed medical attentions because of exposure to pepper spray. Demonstrators banged pots and honked horns to disrupt the year's first meeting of Prime Minister Geir Haarde and *Iceland's* parliament, the Althing. Some broke windows of the parliament house, threw snowballs at the building, and threw smoke bombs into its backyard. Because of the uses of pots and pans the local press called the protests as the 'Kitchenware Revolution' (Anonymous reporter, 2009). Mainstream media was criticized for ignoring news on protests in Iceland (i.e. Jacobs, 2012; Savastia, 2013).

The protests stopped with the resignation of the old government led by the right-wing Independence Party. A new left-wing government was formed after elections in late April 2009. It was supportive of the protestors, and initiated a reform process that included the judicial prosecution of the former Prime Minister Geir Haarde.

Social media did not play a crucial role in mobilizing citizens to protest against government's economic policies. However it impacted at the end and resulted with the rewriting of the constitution of Iceland using a crowd-sourcing technique via social media (Savastio, 2013). The government held a referendum asking voters if they agreed to use the crowdsourced document as the frame for the new constitution — 66% voted yes. Half of Iceland's 235,000 eligible voters took part in the referendum, according to reports. The council utilized the Internet to raise ideas from the public. A first draft was made available online in April 2011 which citizens commented through a Facebook page. The council also remained open about decision-making, posting status updates to twitter and YouTube (Prakash, 2012).

When citizens of Iceland engaged and participated in rewriting of the Icelandic Constitution, they formed collectivities with other citizens of Iceland and connected with them through civic bonds that Dahlgren (2009) sees as foundation for vibrant civic cultures. For Dahlgren knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices, and identities are essential dimensions of civic culture notion.

Access and interaction were essential in this context as the communication channels used by the Constitutional Council offered space and encouraged the public to utilize that space to promote their democratic values, exchange knowledge and put them into action through concrete practices. Although this radically innovative experiment has not been the pure success that supporters expected to be due to the many institutional challenges that the final draft encountered, regardless of the historical outcome, it is possible to keep track of what has happened so far and try to learn something from it on theoretical and normative grounds.

3.4.2. Iranian election protests (2009-2010)

Since the collapse of the Shah regime in 1979 an Islamic Republic rules Iran. The Republic is founded on a system of governance in which the Supreme Leader rules the nation. The Supreme Leader has the right to appoint members the Guardian Council that approves laws and candidates for elections. It is the Supreme Leader, not the President of Iran that controls the military and the police (Rieffer-Flanagan, 2013).

The Islamic Republic received huge opposition since its establishment. Mojahedin Khalq, the Marxist-Islamist oppositional leader of 80's challenged Ayatollah Khomeini government throughout 1980s.s. After Hafte Tir bombings in 1981, Khomeini declared any oppositional leaders or parties and their supporters as "enemies of God" and conducted a mass campaign of torture, rape and execution against members of oppositional organizations. In 1988, Khomeini ordered execution of all political prisoners, which resulted in approximately 30.000 dead. 1988 remains a turning point in modern Iranian history since no organized opposition challenged the Iranian government after that experience. The new reformist government of Mohammad Khatami who came to power in 1997 pledged to recover Iran from an eight-year war with Iraq. However, in time, the reformist movement began to draw criticism for questioning the Islamic traditions of the republic. Most Iranians and observers regarded the reform movement as a failure. In 2005 Tehran Mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who competed against the reformist Ali-Akbar Rafsanjani was elected for the presidency (Rieffer-Flanagan,

2013).

Ahmadinejad's speeches, which usually called for the destruction of Israel and claimed that the Holocaust was fabricated, gained international infamy. During the presidency of Ahmadinejad, the funding of anti-Israeli groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which have been recognized as terrorist groups by the United States went up exponentially. Despite Iran's huge reserves, oil and gas sectors have been neglected in favor of a nuclear energy program which cost billions of dollars and was condemned by Israel and the United States as a cover up for a much larger nuclear weapons program. As a result, the United Nations has placed sanctions on the Iranian government, which has had a heavy impact on the economy.

Another controversy that took place was during the 2009 Presidential elections. Iran's national election on June 12, 2009 was a referendum on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's embattled leadership, which has resulted in economic discontent, international isolation, and greater restrictions on personal freedoms. Claims of "irregularities", including the claim that the Iranian government distributed 400,000 tons of free potatoes to the poor in a blatant effort to bribe voters, hit the public agenda even before the vote. This resulted in a wave of civic unrests in which supporters of rival candidates chanted "death to potatoes" (Phillips, 2009). Ahmadinejad claimed victory only hours after the polls closed. Despite the endorsement of the election results by the Supreme Leader Khamenei, several large street demonstrations in which protestors clashed with police forces took place.

Press reports (Phillips, 2009; Siamdoust, 2009) revealed that the Iranian government moved quickly to control the public information flow about the incidents. Governmental surveillance included blocking or interfering with access to mobile networks, the Internet, and satellite television, and restricting access to foreign and domestic media representatives. Since the government of Iran owns and operates radio and television outlets on constitutional grounds, and that law must supervise newspapers and publications by the government, the regime holds a considerable advantage in shaping public information. Even after the protests

ended, the crackdown on news coverage continued. On June 20, the Iranian government closed down the Tehran bureau of Al Arabiya, the Dubai-based Arab satellite news station. The day after, the BBC announced, “Jon Leyne, the BBC’s permanent correspondent in Tehran, has been asked to leave by the Iranian authorities” (CNN, 2009). Reporters Without Borders stated that the government arrested at least 24 reporters, in addition to expelling journalists, denying visas to foreign journalists and restricting access to Internet services (CPJ, 2009).

According to a U.N. agency responsible for data collection on the telecommunications sector, approximately 31 percent of Iranians had access to the Internet in 2008, which was the second highest percentage in the Middle East, after Israel (International Telecommunications Union, 2009). Although the Iranian authorities monitoring the Internet blocked proxies, after two weeks a few proxies were still working in Iran. Iranian Internet users and activists used social media to trade lists of open web proxy servers as means to get around the restrictions. So although it is debatable whether Iranian election protests may or may not prove to be a model for a contemporary social movement to foster political change and activism, the lessons of the crisis illustrated the impossibility of a total governmental surveillance in a web 2.0 enabled world.

3.4.3. Arab Spring and ‘Egyptian Revolution’ of 2011

The Arab Spring is the wave of demonstrations, protests and civil wars in the Arab world that began on December 18, 2010. The global neoliberal economic crisis of 2007-2008, which resulted in the total collapse of large financial institutions, the bailout of banks by national governments and downturns in stock markets around the world indirectly influenced the Arab Spring revolts. Since the majority of the political institutions and parties in the Arab world are still governed by old authoritarian reflexes, the domination of conservative religious parties especially in Tunisia and Egypt put the need for institutional reforms in the center of political discussion.

Arab uprisings were widely caused by dissatisfactions of citizens with local governments, human rights violations, increasing food prices¹⁷ and political corruption¹⁸. Although revolts have been occurring in the Arab world since the 1800s, the protests movements in the 2000s targeted not foreign rulers but the Arab states themselves. Tunisia experienced a series of conflicts starting from 2008, as the most notable protests occurred in the mining area of *Gafsa* region that included rallies, sit-ins and strikes. In Algeria, discontent had been building over education, health care and corruption while in Western Sahara, the *Gdeim Izik* protest camp was erected by a young group of *Sahrawis* in southeast of *El Aaiun* in October 2010 in protest of labor discrimination, unemployment, looting of resources and human rights abuses (Afrol, 2011). Egypt was heavily influenced by the world food crisis, which resulted violent demonstrations over food prices that gripped the industrial city of Mahalla since 2006 (AllAfrica, 2008).

Starting from 2011, the governments faced counter-movements in Tunisia which later spread to Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara and Yemen. The catalyst for the escalation of protests was the self-immolation of a street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia. A municipal inspector confiscated the wares of Bouazizi, who was unable to find work and selling fruit at a roadside stand. An hour later Bouazizi soaked himself with gasoline and set himself afire in protest of his economic hardship. His death on 4 January 2011 brought together various Tunisian groups dissatisfied with the existing system, including unemployed, political and human rights activists, labor organizations, trade unionists, students, lawyers and professors.

Before the 2011 riots, Egyptian civil society experienced two fraudulent elections in 2005 and 2010. Women's protests were suppressed with the police violence (i.e. 'Black Wednesday') and police bloodily repressed textile workers' rebellion on 6 April 2008, which resulted with the occupation of Cairo by

¹⁷ World food prices dramatically increased in 2007 and 2008, mainly due to the droughts in grain-producing nations and rising oil prices. Total food import bills rose by an estimated 25% for developing countries in 2007. Since food aid is programmed by budget rather than volume, rising food prices meant that the World Food Programme (WFP) needed an extra \$500 million to sustain the current operations (Wiggins and Levy, 2008)

¹⁸ Zizek argued 2009 Iranian elections might also had an impact on occurrence of uprisings in the Arab world (Al Jazeera, 2011).

protesters. The recent struggle between workers and the police resulted in the establishment of April 6 Youth Movement¹⁹, which drew approximately 70.000 followers to its Facebook page. Leaders of April 6 Youth Movement, including Mohammed Adel and Asmaa Mahfuz played a key role in the occupation of Tahrir Square on January 25. One of the primary networks established was a Facebook group called *We are all Khaled Said*, established in the name of a young protester killed by police in a Internet cafe for sharing a video revealing the police corruption in Alexandria in June 2010 (El-Gobashy, 2011).

The group, primarily established by the Google manager Wael Ghonim and activist Abdul Rahman Mansour drew thousands of supporters around the world in a short period of time (Ghonim, 2012). The group called for a protest on January 25, the National Police Day of Egypt, in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to protest the police violence that took place for the last thirty years. However, it was the emergence of Tunisian Revolution that invigorated the protests in Tahrir Square. Asmaa Mahfuz, who narrated the self-immolation protests to Egyptian youth via a vlog on January 18 said:

“(...) I recorded this video to give you a simple message. If you stay home, you’ll deserve what they do to you. If you stay home, you’ll be guilty. Go out, send SMS via your mobile phones, write messages on the Internet and let other people know about what is going on”²⁰.

Violent clashes between the police and protesters resulted in 846 people killed and approximately 100.000 injured only in Egypt (BBC, 2011). During the uprising, protesters, whose grievances were focused on police brutality, freedom of speech, corruption, food price inflation and low wages, burned up to 90 police stations and the capital city of Cairo was declared “war zone” (Hussein, 2012). As a result, former president Mubarak dissolved the government and turned power over to the Supreme Council of Armed Forces in February 2011. On May 24, the former President was ordered to stand trial on charges of premeditated murder of

¹⁹ April 6 Youth Movement page can be accessed via <http://www.6april.org>

²⁰ The complete vlog recorded by Esma Mahfuz is available via <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgjIgMdsEuk>

peaceful protesters and found guilty of complicity in the murders of protesters and sentenced to life imprisonment (Hussein, 2012).

Eighteen days long protests resulted in the removal of Hosni Mubarak from the power and ended up his 30 years long political career. The state of emergency in Egypt since the beginning of 1980s, corruptions among bureaucrats and investors who had close ties with the Egyptian government and repression of civil society resulted in discontent among citizens towards the system. Unemployment, poverty, food price inflations and worsening economic conditions were the economic reasons behind the revolts in Egypt.

The revolts in the Arab region signaled the importance of three main problematic issues: The first was that the legitimacy of authoritarian Arab regimes which were established after the World War II. At this point, the outcome of Arab Spring revolts to transform the political regimes still remains unanswered. Establishment of a potential new political regime composed of new political elites may reproduce the already existing authoritarian structures likewise.

The second problematic was the weakening ties between the civil society and the populist dominant ideologies of Arab regimes with the disintegration of the normative political structure in the region, which opened the way for the emergence of new dynamics that would result in new contemporary social movements.

The last issue related to the revolts was the growing gap between rich and poor populations in the Arab region, which was augmented by the global financial crisis. The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) revealed concerns that the global economic crisis had a negative impact on the Arab region, especially on the non-exporting oil countries. The number of unemployed increased by at least 3.6 million between the years 2009 and 2010, according to the statistics of Arab Labor Organization (UNU-WIDER Angie newsletter, 2010).

In case of both social movements in Egypt and Tunisia, discussion on

social media traversed national borders. In the aftermath of Mubarak's resignation, an average of 2.400 tweets were tweeted a day by Internet users in neighboring countries about the political situation in Egypt. The tension with the election of moderate Islamist Mohamed Morsi to the presidency in June 2012 kept the dialogue in social media intense since secularists and the military members strictly opposed his election. The tension resulted the re emergence of mass protests in Tahrir Square and the removal of Morsi from the office via a coup d'état in July 2013²¹. Similarly, in Tunisia, the number of tweets was 2.200 a day on average following Ben Ali's resignation (O'Donnell, 2011). Political conversations and discussions on blogs in both countries were also intense. Government officials have perceived blogging as an oppositional political activity.

Following the protests, 5 bloggers in Egypt, including Mahmoud Abdel Nabi, Mohammad Bader, Abdullah Al-Shami, Mahmoud Abou Zeid and Metin Turan were arrested. Abdel Nabi, a correspondent for a critical news website *Rassd*, was arrested while covering clashes between supporters of the ousted President Mohamed Morsi and supporters of the Egyptian army in the Sidi Beshr neighborhood in Alexandria. The clashes resulted in at least four killed and 84 injured (Atassi, 2013). Bader, cameraman for Al-Jazeera Mubashir, was arrested while covering clashes between Egyptian security forces and supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi at Ramses Square. Al-Shami, Egypt correspondent for Al-Jazeera was arrested while covering clashes between Egyptian security forces and supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi during the dispersal of pro-Morsi sit-ins at Rabaa Al-Adawiya in Cairo (Al Jazeera Staff, 2014). Abou Zeid, a freelance photographer, was detained while covering clashes between Egyptian security forces and supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi during the dispersal of pro-Morsi sit-ins at Rabaa Al-Adawiya in Cairo (CPJ, 2013). Turan, a reporter for the state broadcaster Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, was also detained while covering the security forces' crackdown on supporters of Morsi at Al-Fateh Mosque at Ramses Square, (Anadolu Agency, 2014).

²¹ The coup d'état was led by the minister of defense Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who officially became the president of Egypt with 2014 elections by winning against a single opponent candidate with more than 93% of the votes.

3.4.4. United Kingdom riots (2010-2011)

Student protests in United Kingdom took place as a series of uprisings in November 2010 and spread to other parts of country though the focal point was Central London. Protestors were largely students. Main aim was to resist the planned spending cuts on education and criticize the excessive increase on tuition fees, proposed by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition (Bohannon, 2012).

The first major protest emerged on November 10, organized in collaboration with the National Union of Students and the University and College Union and drew approximately 50.000 individuals. On November 24, The National Campaign against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC) called for a mass walk-out to occupy university campuses throughout UK that resulted in a massive uprising on November 20, in which The NCAFC called protesters to use social media to invite others to join them (Coughlan, 2010). Jessica Linley, a law student gained “Miss England” status for media coverage of the cause, in which she stated she would not be able to afford to go to a university if the tuition fees would be increased (Gabban and Batty, 2010). Overall, the student protests failed to prevent government’s reforms on tuition fees and policies on spending cuts. The government condemned instances of violence and vandalism while protesters criticized excessive use of force by the police.

After a brief period of time, in 2011, another riot took place in England, although its causes are still subject to debate in media and academia. The structural factors of riots were claimed to be systematic racism, classism, and economic decline, as well as cultural factors like criminality, hooliganism, breakdown of social morality, and gang culture (Bohannon, 2012). A comprehensive report concluded that major contributory factors included opportunism, perceived social injustice; deprivation and frustration in the way communities were policed (Rees, 2011). A study conducted for the *Sun* newspaper (yougov.co.uk, 2011) concluded that 42 % of participants explained “criminal behavior” as the main causes while 26% stated “gang culture”, 8% thought “government cuts” and other responses included “racial tensions” (5%), “unemployment” (5%) and “poor policing” (3%).

Unrests restarted on 6 August 2011 following a disturbance in Tottenham with the death of Mark Duggan, a working class black young man shot by police on 4 August (Wimpress, 2011). The tension increased as the police restrained a girl under eighteen for acting in a disorderly manner in public. Violent clashes between police and protesters continued with the police vehicle and civilian home destructions, which rapidly drew attention of the media. The resulting chaos, which was also called “Blackberry riots”, generated a lot of looting, arsoning, and mass deployment of police (Wimpress, 2011). The following days similar scenes were seen in other parts of London, with the most rioting taking place in Hackney, Brixton, Walthamstow, Peckham, Enfield, Battersea, Croydon, Ealing, Barking, Woolwich, Lewisham, Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester (Wimpress, 2011).

Between 6 and 11 August 2011, thousands rioted in London boroughs. As of 15 August, about 3,100 people had been arrested, of whom more than 1,000 had been charged. According to the Ministry of Justice (2011), of those who faced the courts in relation to the riots, 35% of working age were claiming out-of-work benefits (English population, 12%), 42% of young people received free school meals (English population, 16%) and 64% lived in one of the most deprived areas in England.

Throughout the rioting, many protesters failed covering their faces. Some posed for pictures with stolen goods, posting them on social-networking sites. CCTV cameras for government surveillance filmed and photographed looters with their faces visible. Police forces and investigators used websites like Flickr and Facebook pages to find galleries of the looters to help solve and prevent cases of vandalism and further damage. Interactive maps were implemented via Google Maps to share satellite views of ongoing events in the streets throughout protests. For instance, James Cridland, the managing director of free media resources created a Google Map that tracked verified locations of unrests. News channels also utilized this public service and captured live footages to inform individuals about potentially dangerous areas.

Connectivity among protesters led to a greater ability to organize and execute massive gatherings. This has not occurred only in the riots in England, but with other collective gatherings such as the Arab Spring and the Egyptian revolution of 2011. However, in this instance, one specific mobile phone technology played a key role. BlackBerry Messenger acted as a preferred method of communication during the riots since many BBM messages are untraceable by the authorities (Halliday, 2011). For instance, one BBM broadcast called on "everyone from all sides of London" to vandalize shops on Oxford street:

"Everyone from all sides of London meet up at the heart of London (central) OXFORD CIRCUS! Bare SHOPS are gonna get smashed up so come get some (free stuff!!!) F*** the feds we will send them back with OUR riot! >:O Dead the ends and color war for now so if you see a brother... SALUT! If you see a fed... SHOOT!" (Halliday, 2011).

Rioters were able to instantly contact specific individuals or broadcast a message to an entire contact list, spreading information about where the riots were currently taking place, safe routes along roadways to travel. BBM was also well suited for this form of networking, since many rioters owned a BlackBerry and had access to its instant messaging service, as BlackBerry controlled twenty-four percent of the total market and thirty-seven percent of the teen market. BlackBerry became increasingly popular among teenagers; despite the technology was specifically intended for communication in business (Halliday, 2011). Thus, it was difficult for authorities to track communications of protesters. The use of social and mobile media by protesters drew criticism especially in media (i.e. Radio 4, The Daily Telegraph) that blamed Twitter and also BBM for fostering gang violence. Twitter was again utilized through the hashtag campaign “#riotcleanup” (Brown, 2011) in order to maintain peace and order in the disrupted London (Brown, 2011).

London riots took place in neighborhoods suffering from social inequality, which undermines social cohesion. As Till (2012) explains, the rioting in London occurred in “everyday places” and along with the dividing “borders of social inequality”. It is these dividing lines that need to be drawn attention as they indicate fault lines drawn through the capital. Triggered by the social inequality

these fault lines led to unexpected scenes of unrests such as the student riots of 2010 and London riots of 2011, emerging as a consequence of poor policy and mismanagement.

3.3.5. 15M

15M mobilizations started on May 15, 2001 in Spain, during a time when the country approached towards regional and municipal elections. Thousands of students, unemployed and laborers joined crowds in the streets over 50 Spanish cities to speak up against the lack of real democracy and endemic corruption.

15M are the second movement coincided with elections in Spain (Hughes, 2011). The first occasion was on March 11, 2004, when over 11 million protesters participated in mass demonstrations following Madrid train bombings in which 191 individuals lost lives. The demonstrators aimed at expressing their anger towards Spanish government, who blamed Basque nationalists for bombings although the real attackers were a group of Islamist terrorists who opposed the involvement of Spain in Iraq War. The widespread belief among protesters was that demonstrations impacted on the consequence of the national elections, as Spanish Socialist Workers Party came to power, winning over the Popular Party formerly in charge.

Thus, 15 movements marked the second biggest countrywide protests following 2004 demonstrations, in which decentralized networks such as Democracia Real Ya remained at heart. The events took place on May 15 were organized online thanks to online alternative and radical groups. Bloggers and left-wing activists mainly used online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and the Spanish social networking site, Tuenti. This networked environment allowed the emergence of Democracia Real Ya organization, which in three months received support from over 200 organizations including humanists, NGOs, ecologists, neighbor associations, youth groups, students' and teachers' organizations, mortgage defaulters, the unemployed, and solidarity groups (Hughes, 2011).

The website, <http://www.democraciarealya.es>, played an instrumental role in framing the 15 May movement and developing a sense of solidarity and common identity among participant networks. The manifesto of the website declared the values and principles the movement stood for an ethical revolution, including equality, progress, solidarity, respect for cultural, economic, social and political rights, environmental sustainability, human well-being and happiness. The who are we section, framed the profiles of participants including the low-waged, young people and the unemployed, as the objects of discontent by embracing a universalist claim through standing against deep-rooted problems such as racism, homophobia and xenophobia. Networked citizen associations dominated the formation of 15M movements, characterized by their de-centric nature and intensive use of ICTs. Thus, 15M succeeded in cracking the hegemonic discourses that justified the prevailing system and benefited from the help of a transnational wave of contention with many shared concerns.

Although it is still an early stage to assess the long-term impact of the 15M, it can be estimated that the ideological clash between reformists and radicals will shape the future direction of the movement. The direction will also be potentially influenced by how the continuing economic crisis will be overcome in following years and by the institutional measures adopted to address it, as unemployment still remains as a devastating social problem in Spain since 2008 global economic crisis.

3.4.6. #Occupywallstreet

Occupy Wall Street (also called as OWS or #occupywallstreet) started on September 17, 2001, in New York City's Zuccotti Park in New York City's Wall Street financial district. The Zuccotti Park was "occupied" as a symbolic territory for its proximity with the Wall Street. Word of mouth quickly spread via individual networks and digital technologies. With the slogan *We are the 99%*, which served as a rhetorical reflection of unrest, the OWS movement employed direct action including encampments, marches and demonstrations.

Heavy uses of online social networks resulted in a widespread critique of corporate media, which paid little attention to OWS related protests in its first days. Starting mainly with the Adbuster poster for the New York City protests that used a hashtag slogan #occupywallstreet, Twitter became one of the major online social networks associated with OWS. As the movement grew and protests spread around the city and the country, online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter served for coordination of activities and publicization of critiques towards contemporary capitalism. In line with the argument of Jenkins (2006), who claimed that “those silenced by corporate media have been among the first to transform their computer into a printing press”, protesters mostly utilized social media to spread their word.

The impact of Occupy Wall Street movement has been mostly due to its symbolic appeal in highlighting social inequalities and economic disparities. The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), which was signed into law by George W. Bush on October 3, 2008, allowed the United States government to purchase assets and equity from financial institutions to strengthen the financial sector in order to prevent the second Great Depression. However, the financial institutions and leaders who were the main actors behind the 2008 crisis remained unscathed. They resumed business as usual while the public continued to suffer the pain of a financial recession. Protests in Zucotti Park near Wall Street reflected this critique by labor and other activists, as well Democratic politicians and the general public. OccupyWallStreet movement condemned global social and economic inequality, greed, corruption and the perceived undue influence of corporations on government particularly from the financial services sector.

By nature, Occupy movement remained highly decentralized and based on consensus decision-making. Its core dynamics were inspired by anarchists' impulses that fostered mobilization and sympathetic action. Labor, students and activist organizations were encouraged to point out their own issues in protests, while anyone could simply join to speak out her view regarding social inequality. Thus, issues raised up varied from tuition reduction to higher tax rates on great incomes, which mostly targeted Wall Street transactions. The decentralized nature of the Occupy movement enabled the protests to be kept on the news. Moreover, it

also helped the movement to sustain a shift in political conservation. However, it also brought about certain limitations. Critics who claimed that the movement was inefficient due to its reluctance to announce specific policy goals, its pointing out of complicated problems with simple actions and the failure to declare victory after being inevitably ousted from the highest-profile encampments. Although, the anti-capitalists were waiting for a social change occupywallstreet fell short of creating a permanent social impact despite extensive social media coverage and outreach.

3.4.7. Brazil's 'V for Vinegar' Movement

On 6 June, the radical left Free Fare Movement (Movimento Passe Livre, MPL), an autonomist non-party association established in the early 2000s, headed a protest of around 2.000 individuals requesting the inversion of an increase on public transport in São Paulo. In past years, the MPL had headed comparable protests in different urban areas, some of which accomplished fractional triumphs, including the inversion of fare increases and the presentation of free (or reduced cost) open transport for students (tarifazero, 2013).

The MPL protests in Avenida Paulista, São Paulo's fundamental thoroughfare, where the biggest companies, banks and business collaborations are based, was scrutinized by the press for disturbing the stream of activity, for vandalism, and for making doubtful requests. The police ambushed protests and numerous captures took after. The MPL returned in bigger numbers in the days following, and the police reacted with brutality. Journalists were injured, and some were shot with rubber bullets. Savage police violence served to bring protests to the attention of the country. After those occasions the metropolitan, state and federal governments were thrown into confusion and the aftermath from those street crashes threatened to engulf President Dilma Rousseff, who was at that point defensive due to Brazil's raising macroeconomic issues (Portalimprensa, 2013).

Under the appearance of regular coverage, the television and daily papers called individuals to avenues, and – significantly – supported de-radicalization of

their requests (Saad-Filho, 2013). In a morning show on *TV Globo*, one of Brazil's best-known presenters taught mothers how to help their children manufacture tasteful placards for their next demonstration. In quick progression, the protests grew in size and spread across Brazil.

The sustainability of the movement was achieved also throughout June and July 2011. However, protesters lost focus in following months as protest agenda included a great variety of demands. Demands started to extend from city transport to public services, gay rights, pro and anti-supporters of FIFA, legalization of drugs, abortion, public spending and privatization (For instance, the slogans ranged from *Brazil Must Change Now!* to *I Want a Louis Vuitton Bag*) (Saad-Filho, 2013). In common with recent protests in Iran, Spain, Egypt and Turkey, Brazilian protests that largely included young workers, students and the middle class were largely organized through social media and television (Saad-Filho, 2013). The protests were spontaneous moves without any clear leader.

The riots were accompanied overwhelming scrutiny and brutal repression of the police. Ten individuals lost their lives at Favela da Maré as an immediate aftereffect of the police operation. Penetration by the police and the far right was both apparent and widespread in most protests. Unidentified gangs destroyed banks, shops and work places, sometimes under the gaze of police force. The left was often blamed for the destruction.

In sum, mass protests of June 2013 were the biggest and the most noteworthy incidents in Brazil for an era. The movement can be compared with the protests that set off the breakdown of the military autocracy in 1984, which spread across the country and culminated in demonstrations with more than one million people in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro. In contrast to the earlier movements around the world after Seattle the 2013 protests in Brazil communicated an extensive variety of demands. They began with students and youthful left-wing activists and quickly expanded into middle class protesters. Similar to other post-Seattle movements, ICTs also played a key role for organization of groups and expression of demands.

3.4.8. Euromaidan

Euromaidan movement emerged as a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest in Ukraine that started at the night of November 21, 2013 in Kiev with the demand of closer European integration. The beginning of protests coincided with the suspension of the Ukrainian government to sign Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement with the European Union. The scope of protests expanded with calls for the resignation of the President Viktor Yanukovich and his government. Other demands included the coordination of a committee to communicate with the European community and the cessation of political repression against EuroMaidan activists, students and oppositional leaders (kyivpost.com, 2013). The pro-European Euromaidan protests are marked as the second largest mobilization since the Orange Revolution of 2004 that witnessed Yanukovich resignation as prime minister over accusations of irregularities regarding voting.

Throughout the Euromaidan movement and the following Ukrainian revolution, both the Russian and western media were accused of propagandizing and of waging an information war, since coverage of both parties represented crisis almost totally different (Sukhov, 2014). The common belief was that Russian state television employed techniques of psychological conditioning “designed to excite extreme emotions of aggression and hatred” in the viewer (Ennis, 2015). This situation made a majority of citizens to turn to social media in a spontaneous manner. The hashtag #euromaidan (Ukrainian #євромайдан, Russian #евромайдан), emerged quickly in the Twitter-sphere at the beginning of protests and was utilized as a useful communication tool by protesters. The study of Barbera and Metzger (2014) revealed the communication frequencies became more intense on February 18, 2014, the time when the police attacks became more violent and over 250.000 tweets were sent in a day. Researchers also noted the dynamics in case of Ukraine and Turkey were similar, in the sense that social media usage increased in times when the mainstream media did not locally cover protests. Thus similar with the case with Turkey’s Gezi Park protests, social media and alternative platforms of communication were marked for their flexibility as useful communication tools during Ukrainian crisis. Twitter and

Facebook stood out as effective means to convey messages about the violence to the international community, to organize those willing to get involved in the protests and to coordinate resources for the injured and those in need in Maidan square.

Looking at the case with the Euromaidan, it can be concluded that in the future, protest movements may develop more rapidly than in the past, as online social networks make it easier for individuals overcome barriers during action. The widespread belief that movements originating online through social media channels are not likely to come up with lasting change needs to be reconsidered. Thus, in a way, the Ukrainian experience encouraged explorations on whether specific network patterns are more likely to produce meaningful consequences during social movements.

3.5. Conclusion

The current crisis of neo-liberalism has deep roots in the capitalist world-system. It is related to a variety of issues including militarization, ecological degradation and injustices that stemmed from global free market policies. Contemporary social movements, including the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and the 15M movement, represented a growing rebellion of individuals that demand social and economic justice as well as democracy, solidarity and peace by pointing out the shortcomings of the current neoliberal ideological structure.

As such contemporary social movements differed from traditional social movements of the 1920s and 1930s and the new social movements of 1960s and the 1970s in terms of their demands, mobilization patterns and actions. These movements mainly remained short-lived and failed in sustaining long-term impact although they succeeded in reaching particular short-term goals and creating movement related awareness among ordinary citizens.

Although the contemporary social movements analyzed in this section emerged in different contexts and in various geographies, they shared two common grounds. First they emerged as a reaction to the neo-liberal world order,

which resulted in a number of negative consequences, such as social inequality and widening gap between the rich and the poor. It can be observed that the main reasons behind these movements are social and economic. For instance, citizens of Iceland protested against the artificial economic growth in national economy, which emerged as a result of the Icelandic banks running into debt and borrowing from each other. In other two instances, demands were at the micro-level: students in the United Kingdom rioted to criticize the increasing education expenditures, while students in Brazil called for cheaper transportation.

Second new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and tools played an essential role in terms of communication, data verification and mobilization in contemporary movements. Although we are still at an early stage to reach a final conclusion on how the new ICTs impacted on mobilization processes of contemporary social movements, they remained instrumental in terms of disseminating protests-related message to wider audiences.

CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING THE GEZI EXPERIENCE AS A CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENT

4.1. Introduction

Gezi Park movement began as a wave of demonstrations that emerged in reaction to the urban renovation plan of the Gezi Park area in Beyoğlu district of İstanbul. As the wall between the park and the road was destroyed on 27 May 2013, a small group of activists stepped in to prevent the cutting down of the trees. Around 50 environmentalist activists camped out at the Gezi Park that night in order to prevent its demolition. The following morning, municipal police burnt down the tents of activists who slept at the park. Still, activists succeeded in blocking the bulldozers and preventing municipal police forces from entering the park. However, the brutal police raid throughout the following days (especially on the May 30th and May 31st) attracted thousands of individuals to the protests on field, which soon led to nationwide demonstrations.

Gezi Park movement marked an important turning point for Turkish civil society. Although it started as a small protest against an urban redevelopment plan, it turned into a larger expression of anger against governmental policies over social, cultural and economic life in Turkey. Gezi Park movement was also important for Turkey in the sense that it became the largest nationwide movement in Turkey since late 1970s with more than 2.5 million participants (Ete and Taştan, 2013). The movement was different both from the polarized ideological clashes of 1970s and identity based social movements of the 1990s. It reflected the characteristics of evolving global social movements of the 2000s as well as the tensions caused by increasing secularist/religious divide in Turkish society.

In order to understand the Gezi Park movement one should explore the political, economic and cultural changes that Turkey has gone through throughout the 2000s. Although JDP implemented important democratic reforms until 2006, its ideologically moderate-Islamist, politically neo-liberal vision began to surface more in its discourse and policies since the second half of the 2000s. Increasing

authoritarianism of JDP went hand in hand with a fiercely neo-liberal economic growth model that ensured the interests of JDP's emerging Islamist elites. Although Gezi Park movement emerged primarily as an environmentalist act, it later turned into a critical reaction against what is perceived as governmental interference with secularist lifestyles and traditions of the country. Deepening social inequalities, urban transformation of İstanbul and the increasing influence of Islam in everyday life were also among reasons behind the emergence of the movement.

Taksim district was a suitable arena to speak up against the policies of JDP since Taksim is a symbolic space of clash, not only among politicians but also between Islamist and secularist segments of the society. The dominant belief among conservative Islamist segments of the society has been that Taksim area did not represent the Muslim Ottoman history of the city. A variety of mosque construction proposals had been made for the Taksim area throughout 1960s, especially during election periods, to gain votes of conservative electorate. Therefore, the JDP's plan to re-construct the Ottoman military barracks in Gezi Park with a mosque would not only revive the Ottoman history of the city, but also impose the area an Islamist character.

As a consequence, Gezi Park protests received important support from secularist segments of the society. However, its impact was not only limited to secularists. The movement had a complex nature with a variety of demands raised by different social and cultural groups in Turkey. The protest participant profile ranged from LGBT activists to revolutionary Leftist parties, Kurdish nationalists, Kemalists, feminists, anti-capitalist Muslims, university students and white and blue-collar workers.

The current chapter aims to shed light on the historical background, context and social base of Gezi Park movement. The principle argument of the chapter is that Gezi experience must be perceived as a reactionary movement against the reflections of JDP's Islamist and neo-liberal political vision. To fulfill this aim, the following sections first explore the political transformation that Turkey has gone through under the JDP rule since 2002 and then proceed with a

more detailed discussion on the political vision and urban policies of JDP. The chapter continues with an historical examination of Gezi Park as a contested symbolic space between secularist and Islamist segments of Turkish society. Following sections focus on the social base of Gezi Park movement and its potential to democratize dialogue among different social actors.

4.2. Political transformation of Turkey under JDP

A new period started in Turkey's political history when Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002. The elections proved that Turkish citizens resented the unstable coalition governments of the 1990s and early 2000s and voted for an alternative political actor. However, the success of JDP has not been limited to the 2002 elections and surpassed the limits of protest votes. The party won five consecutive national elections and its votes reached its peak in 2011 with 49.8% (Çarkoğlu, 2011). This success is perceived extraordinary because no party has dominated Turkey's political scene since 1965 with such strong political support (Yildirim, 2014).

During the term of office of the JDP an important change has occurred in Turkey's political institutions as the Kemalist bureaucracy and state structure have been transformed in line with the conservative Islamist agenda of the JDP (Wallerstein, 2013). In the process of reshaping the Army and state bureaucracy, JDP did not choose a radical path. Its policies were geared to challenge the hegemony of Kemalist establishment and manage gradual shift power relations in favor of the conservative Islamist powerbase of the JDP (Sommer, 2014). This shift of power was felt strongly in local governments, which JDP dominated, in all successive elections in the 2000s.

In the early 2000s the JDP was applauded for its willingness to integrate with the EU. Declaring its commitment to European Union's Copenhagen criteria, the political climate in Turkey improved thanks to JDP's efforts to democratize existing bureaucratic institutions (Ulusoy, 2010). The democratization attempts also resulted in important reforms on Turkish media with the liberalization of the Press Law and permission for radio and television channels to broadcast in

languages other than Turkish. The latter was perceived as an important step in the “democratic opening” to improve relations with the Kurdish population in Turkey. In 2009 JDP launched an initiative to form a framework for the resolution of the Kurdish problem (Ünver, 2010). With the democratic opening, JDP also aimed to increase its votes among Kurdish populations. However, the military interventions in southeastern cities of Turkey that aimed to end the PKK terrorism, the democratic opening process remained inconclusive. Consequently, Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP), a pro-Kurdish left-wing party, succeeded in surpassing the 10% threshold during the November 2015 elections, as the third party with the most votes.

By 2011, JDP claimed its legitimacy through its tactical strategies that transformed the jurisdiction, military and universities. Since then JDP’s political agenda and discourse have increasingly targeted identities, cultures and behaviors at societal level. The political atmosphere that favored Islamist movements in the Middle East after the dissolution of the Soviet Union also remained beneficial for a political party with a moderate Islamic worldview (Kerimov, 1996).

Political and social transformations that Turkey went through in the 2000s not only caused concern among secularists segments of the society but also other various political and cultural groups, especially the minorities (Schafer, 2015). Women’s associations opposed governmental proposals over matters such as birth control, adultery and violence against women.

Several studies that examined JDP government and its policies interpreted these transformations and the power shift in Turkish politics under the light of Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony (Moudoros, 2014; Tugal, 2009; Yavuz, 2009). While Yavuz (2009) categorized politics of JDP as “conservative revolution”, Tugal (2009) labeled it as “passive revolution”. With “passive revolution” Gramsci (1998) referred to a dialectic condition between restoration/revolution in which restoration prevails. In this context, it is an essential but slow change in a particular society where insurgencies are tamed (Gramsci, 1998, p. 106). From this point of view it can be stated that no radical revolution or change has taken place in Turkey since 2002 but a hybrid form of

Islamist ideology and the previous system emerged (Çavuşoğlu & Strutz, 2014). Even though the JDP succeeded in breaking taboos that are related to the nation-state and the dominant Republican ideology, it also employed a modernist development discourse to preserve its secular voter base.

Besides the idea of “passive revolution”, other Gramscian concepts such as “hegemony”, “force” and “consent” are also relevant when considering politics of JDP. As Gramsci (1998) emphasizes, a government cannot survive simply by utilizing pressure and force but needs to construct and preserve hegemony to compensate force with manufactured consent. A particular hegemonic power needs to gain consent to justify its presence since it cannot solely exist by force or by appealing to certain segments of a population. A particular hegemon, thus, struggles to integrate such demands into its own discourse. If a hegemon fails to produce consent, the hegemonic power always tries to pressurize and marginalize claims that oppose the discourse of the hegemon (Hall, 1979). This has also been the case with JDP, which structured its hegemonic power by forming a balance between force and the consent.

JDP established a corporatist style with a dominant religious discourse that makes its hegemony unique (Cavusoglu and Strutz, 2014). Corporatism was traditionally defined as a resolution against the rising individualism and functional specialization in capitalist societies. It is mostly perceived as a political economy model that involves trade unionists and interest groups into the state system by limiting their existence in terms of their scope and their number.

Ziya Gökalp, one of the theoreticians of the Kemalist ideology, interpreted the corporatist model from the cultural sense, not solely from the economical perspective. Gökalp introduced cultural corporatism into Turkish politics as a mechanism to defend common social values (Parla, 2009). Gökalp perceived the nation as a cultural corporation that treated the society as an organic structure in which individuals hold responsibilities to state authorities. In such a regime, regional inequalities, class differences and individual rights are bargained over construction of a strong leadership and a national identity that made other characteristics less significant.

Within the context of Turkey, it should also be added that corporatism should be considered through its relations with secularism, nationalism and developmentalism (Bugra, 1994). Similar to corporatism, Turkish understanding of developmentalism differs from the traditional interpretation of developmentalist approach in the sense that the emphasis is put on constructing a cultural modernist agenda as well as an economic one. “Reaching the level of modern civilization” has been one of the primary aims of the state since the establishment of the Republic. Developments have been treated as tools driven by citizens through civic responsibilities to lead the nation succeed its aims (Bugra, 1994). Being a good capitalist in this sense has been perceived as leading the nation to achieve economic development.

It must be noted here that with the rise of JDP, work ethics and religious ethics have been linked to form a unique combination that linked corporatism with an Islamic vision. Similar to corporatism, the Islamic vision framed the society as functionally heterogeneous. With JDP, Islam became a tool of corporatism by asserting that disharmony caused by heterogeneity and differences can be overcome with the Islamic mechanism of solidarity. JDP emphasized that citizens must work in cooperation and in brotherly fashion to create social harmony.

Actually since 1980s, Islamic political parties have adopted and sustained a neo-liberal political model that ignored class differences and conflicts. The language of the religious bourgeoisie disguised class struggles through its emphasis on gratitude, destiny and the trust in God. In this view, it is not the union memberships but the religious communities that ensure improvement of working conditions and job security. Religious charities stand as major social justice actors that react to solve problems such as poverty through charities (Bugra, 2008). Social support creates consent among the urban poor, who are aided by religious communities that raise charities and offer financial assistance in fields of education, transport, food and fuel distributions, accommodation and health services (Hale, 2006). Religious charities encouraged the formation of collectivities of the disadvantaged; such as the neighborhood associations that advocate the rights of the urban poor that are coercively excluded (Ahiska and

Kosova, 2011).

In order to understand the context in which JDP emerged in Turkish political arena one also needs to explore its antecedents such as the Welfare Party. Despite remained a marginal party in Turkish politics in comparison to the success of JDP; Welfare Party (WP), led by Necmettin Erbakan, had an important role in paving the way for the emergence of Islamist political tradition in Turkey. WP was the continuation of its forerunner, NSP that was closed down following the 1980 military coup. It took three years for Erbakan and his fellows to establish WP. Reaching only a marginal success in general elections throughout 1980s, the popularity of WP began to increase starting from early 1990s. WP succeeded in gaining 16.9% of the votes in 1991 general elections and formed a coalition government with the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) and Reformist Democracy Party (RDP) (Aras and Bacık, 2000). The popularity of WP continued to increase until 1995 general elections when the party received the highest share of the votes cast (21.38%). The coalition government formed by WP under the premiership of Erbakan was forced to withdraw by the military in 28 February 1997 (Özkan, 2015). The incident was referred as a “postmodern coup” (Szarejko, 2014) and the WP was banned from politics in 1998.

The WP experience and the 28 February postmodern coup revealed that it was a hard for Islamists to gain political control in Turkey. Following the coup, WP party representatives and associates stated that Islamists have been excluded from participation into Turkish politics due to the “age-old guardians of secularism” (Özkan, 2015, p.72). Therefore, it can be stated that the oppression of Islamist parties in Turkish politics until late 1990s also played a key role in the success of JDP.

With a moderate Islamist agenda that combined liberal and conservative values, JDP succeeded in gaining votes of not only conservative segments of the Turkish society, but also of liberals who criticized the postmodern coup and defended Islamists’ right to enter politics. Another important contributor to JDP’s political success in 2002 general elections was the disappointments caused by the unstable coalition governments of 1990s in Turkey. Despite being a new political

actor during 2002 general elections, the strength of party's organizational structure persuaded citizens to vote for JDP. Ocakli (2015) explained that organizational cohesiveness of JDP's local branches contributed to the success JDP in Turkish politics throughout 2000s. The party's on-going achievement also made it capable of raising funds for social causes from like-minded party supporters (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008).

Although sharing a common ground with its forerunners such as WP JDP's voter-base has surpassed the limits of religion and class-based categories. The strength of party's organizational structure and social network enabled JDP to increase its supporter-base through 2000s. The party also differentiated itself from its forerunners by putting more emphasis on its neo-liberal agenda along with an inclusive and moderate Islamist world-view. Thus, economic strategies and urban policies of JDP are as essential as the tension between secularism and Islamism in order to explore the party's wider impact on Turkish society.

4.3. Economic vision and urban policies of JDP

JDP came to power in 2002, following a major economic crisis in 2001. The main reason behind the 2001 economic crisis was that Turkish national economy relied mainly on foreign investments to sustain its growth. However, Turkish government and the banking system lacked the means to foster such growth. Budget deficits, high interest rates and inflation-based economic fluctuations resulted in a political tension between the then Prime Minister (Bülent Ecevit) and the President (Ahmet Necdet Sezer) which led to a major economic crisis. The crisis caused a critical decrease in per capita income from \$2,986 to \$2,110 (Öniş and Rubin, 2004). Moreover, more than 500,000 high-skilled individuals lost their jobs (Özdemir, 2009).

In such a critical period, JDP emerged as a new and influential political alternative, with its promising discourse that emphasized economic stability, integration with the European Union and social equality. The party held 68 meetings in 40 days and became one of the first parties in Turkey that conducted online election campaigns to gain more votes (Duman and İpekşen, 2013). The

national elections of 2002 resulted in the victory of JDP, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who had served as the mayor of Istanbul between 1994 and 1998. JDP won 363 seats with the 34.3 % of national votes. Republican People's Party also passed the 10% threshold and won 178 seats with 19.4 % of national votes.

The JDP-led government sustained a rapid economic growth between the years of 2003-2006 (approximately 7.1% per year). The backing of IMF in the aftermath of the 2001 economic crisis attracted foreign investors and the relatively stabilizing economy created the opportunity for the government to lower interest rates. The interest of foreign investors allowed JDP government to direct their resources to its constituents in various cities of Turkey, which created opportunities for the emerging business class (Corke et al., 2013). The government also succeeded in reducing the double digit inflation rate to single digit in this period (Öniş and Güven, 2011). Similarly, real per capita income increased by over 35% (Öniş and Güven, 2011).

However, starting from 2007, the growth rate in Turkish economy started to decrease. The growth rate decreased to 0.7% in 2008, when the world economy also got into crisis. In 2009, the growth rate decreased to -4.7%, reaching to a negative value for the first time since the 2001 economic crisis (Tahsin, 2013). The following years witnessed a fluctuating and unstable growth rate ranging from 1.8% (2014) to 5.7% by January 2016 (tr.tradingeconomics.com, 2016).

During its years of office, JDP governments mostly concentrated on investments in the fields of economy, education, health and transport services. The political economy of the JDP era can be explored by considering its investments in the fields of construction, which mainly benefited the new business class. The controversial Urban Renewal Project (URP) is marked for being one of JDP's major investments. URP, which was launched in 2012 and is expected to cost approximately \$400 billion when it is finished, aims to renew more than seven million buildings mainly based in İstanbul. The reflections of the project can be observed in Sulukule, Küçükçekmece Ayazma-Tepeüstü and Tarlabasi districts of İstanbul (Korkmaz, 2013).

For instance, the Sulukule project aimed at constructing 645 new apartments, 45 offices, 10 streets and 3 avenues to a 91.000-m² field where Roma people resided. The property owners were expected to pay the price difference when their properties were renovated after the finalization of the project. Similarly, the renewal of Tarlabasi district, a low-income neighborhood in Beyoglu area, resulted in the removal of local residents who were mainly composed of migrants from other cities, Africans, Roma people and sex workers (Ünsal, 2015). Chamber of Architects filed a claim against the project by stating that the expropriation of the area was unlawful for being unfair to the rights of local residents. On the other hand, government officials stated that local residents would become house owners in Kayabaşı district of Başakşehir (beyoglubuyukdonusum.com, no date).

Küçükçekmece Ayazma-Tepeüstü district was also included in URP, to renew slums with new residence and office projects (Korkmaz, 2013). In contrast with the Sulukule Project, property owners were expected to move to a different district in Küçükçekmece, called Bezirganbahçe, where they would move to new apartments constructed by the Turkish Housing Development Administration (TOKİ). The Housing Development Administration, which was originally established in 1984, is used by the JDP as the planner, regulator, and owner and sometimes as the contractor of the urban renewal process. Since the rights of the land are transferred to the contractor agency local residents are left with a limited legal claim.

With the new TOKİ model, JDP period witnessed a boom in the construction sector and the emergence of new giants in the construction – especially the house-building sector. Major actors of the construction sector such as Ağaoğlu, Aşçıoğlu, Varyap, İhlas, Torunlar, Kuzu and Egeyapı erected the most prestigious residencies of İstanbul in renewed districts (Sönmez, 2015). These new economic actors have also preserved close ties with the JDP government.

TOKİ has been at the target of thousands of residents, who were forced to leave their properties. The administration also received criticism for shifting away

from its main responsibility of social housing to providing smart houses for the elites. By 2015, the number of claimed files against TOKİ surpassed 39.000 on the grounds of late submission of the promised properties or submission of defective houses (milliyet.com.tr, 2015). Other criticisms included that it transformed the historical urban space of especially İstanbul (Dinçer, 2011). Critiques emphasized the URP would harm the historical character of the city by replacing old buildings with modern and luxurious residencies. Three years after Gezi Park movement, Eyüp Muhcu, the Chief of the Chamber of Architects, explained, greater problems were waiting for individuals living in İstanbul, as a consequence of the URP:

“There is no public scrutiny. This situation is going to result in horrible disasters such as floods and earthquakes. The URP has also decreased living standards. In order to make İstanbul a liveable city again, we need public measures and rehabilitations. But this is not possible with today’s understanding. Enormous disasters are waiting for us” (interview with Muhcu, t24.com.tr, 2016).

Another criticism has been that URP removed low-income local residents of central districts to the peripheries by persuading them to live in suburbs of İstanbul. Since local residents were mainly composed of ethnic minorities, migrants, sex workers and other socially marginalized groups, the urban development plan was also perceived as a discriminatory social project that favored the interests of the urban elite (Evren, 2007).

On the other hand, government response to the displacement of locals has been to incorporate them into a mortgage system, with an “affordable” market-rate housing (Karaman, 2012). The mortgage system, which was made available by law in 2007, not only targeted the displaced local residents of renewed areas but also aimed to attract other Turkish citizens and even foreign investors. By January 2016, house sales with mortgage composed 31.4% of overall of house sales in Turkey (turkstat.gov.tr, 2016). On the other hand, house sales with mortgage decreased by 19.9% in January 2016, in comparison with January 2015 (turkstat.gov.tr, 2016). The decrease in sales can be explained with the fact that house prices in Turkey increased by 18.9% in 2015 in comparison with the

previous year, while the global average in terms of price increase remained at 2.7% (Collinson, 2015). The decrease in sales triggered the speculations that Turkey may have to face a crisis due to the housing bubble in the near future (Karakaya, 2016).

The implementation of URP also resulted in the emergence of anti-URP protests. Several protests in Tarlabasi (Çavuş, 2014), Fener-Balat (sol.org.tr, 2012), Süleymaniye (fatihhaber.com, 2015) and Küçükçekmece (bianet.org, 2010) were organized to attract attention to the unfair housing policies. The renewal plan was also one of the major reasons behind the emergence of Gezi Park movement. Mücella Yapıcı, architect and founding member of the activist group called Taksim Solidarity, explained that Gezi movement succeeded in creating public awareness about the urban renewal process (Letsch, 2014).

Besides housing projects JDP reinvigorated the construction sector by means of massive public projects such as the Canal İstanbul. Canal İstanbul project aims to build a 43-km long waterway to link the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara. It is expected that İstanbul will be divided into two by a waterway and the Marmara entrance of the Canal to be placed in Silivri. The project, which was announced by Erdoğan in 2011is, aimed to be completed by 2023, at the 100th year of the Republic.

Similar to URP, Canal İstanbul received harsh criticism especially from experts and academicians, who pointed out the potential harms that can be caused by its implementation. Experts argued that the project would harm the sea ecology and even cause water scarcity in the Marmara region (bianet.org, 2016). Despite criticism, Erdoğan asked engineers to speed up the project to complete the construction of Canal by 2023 (Çelikkan, 2015).

Other mega projects of JDP, which are in process, include the production of first Turkish airplane, production of Turkish cars, and construction of a third airport to İstanbul and construction of two nuclear power stations (akparti.org.tr, 2016). Similar to Canal İstanbul project, the airport and nuclear power station projects drew strong criticism from environmentalists. The Environmental Impact

Report 2013 revealed that 657.000 trees had to be cut down for the installation of the new airport (Balkan and Ünal, 2013). Greenpeace representatives explained that the nuclear power station, which is going to be constructed in Akkuyu region of Mersin in Turkey, would damage the sea ecosystem (t24.com.tr, 2012) and in return, agro-industries in the region would suffer from the depriving conditions.

Overall, JDP has built its neo-liberal vision on a construction-based economic growth. The construction of neo-liberal hegemony has been achieved through large-scale urban development and housing projects. The announced mega projects have led to expectations especially among JDP supporters and increased their loyalty to the government.

On the other hand for critics, the urban renewal plan and mega projects became a major cause for resistance. Critics raised their voices in order to demand their rights to city and to create awareness regarding the downsides of the government-led construction projects. One of the major outcomes of the resistance was Gezi Park movement. The implementation of housing and construction projects thus paved the way for the emergence of one of the largest social movements in Turkey's history. Besides victims and critics of the URP, concerned secularists, ethnic and/or religious minorities, individuals who resented governmental interventions in different lifestyles, LGBT collectives, feminists, atheists, anti-capitalists, university students and white and blue-collar workers joined the movement.

4.4. A brief look at social movements in Turkey

Social movements and political insurgencies played an important part in the political history of Turkish Republic (Şimşek, 2004). However, earlier social reactions and political insurgencies were at the mainstream level which led to three successive military interventions since the 1960s. Political parties remained as major actors in terms of representing the demands and rights of citizens, while the military perceived its intervention into parliamentary system as part of its duty to protect the Republic in times of political turmoil.

When the Republican People's Party, which ruled Turkey government for two decades, lost its majority to the Democratic Party in the first free and multi-party elections in 1950, a new period started in Turkey's political history (Sütçü, 2011). Despite a decade long domination of the Democratic Party, political imbalances started to occur as a consequence of economic recession, pressure from international actors and growing anti-democratic tendencies of the government. The situation resulted in the closing of the Democrat Party by the May 27, 1960 military intervention (Harris, 2011).

The period between 1960 and 1980 marked the fertilization of civil society and political consciousness especially among the university students. While the political instabilities and military interventions continued during this period, student unrests surged especially in metropolitan cities such as İstanbul and Ankara in the late 1970s. The economic recession and the prioritization of industrial bourgeoisie interests were resented by especially the leftist groups, who demanded for improvement of the domestic economy in a fair manner that would benefit all social segments of the society. The tension between rightist and leftist groups turned into a street violence that resulted in the killing of approximately five thousand individuals. The influential young leaders of the leftist movements such as Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan (Karacan, 2015) were sentenced to death for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which outlaws attempts to overthrow the constitutional order.

Despite being a bloody period, the late 1970s also boosted the political consciousness of individuals at civic level by encouraging them to get involved in politics in their daily lives. However, another military intervention on September 12, 1980 (Mooney, 1991), interrupted the politicization of everyday life in Turkey and ended the tension between rightist and leftist organizations. One of the outcomes of the 1980 coup was the strengthened role of the military in politics.

Following the 1980 military intervention in Turkey, the de-politicization period started in tandem with the liberalization of the domestic economy (Şimşek, 2004). In mid-1980s, however, roots of new social movements, which included Kurdish ethnic nationalism, feminism, Alevi cultural movement, Islamism,

environmentalism and general human rights activism started to emerge. In comparison with the anti-capitalist student movements and right wing-left wing clashes of the late 1970s, new social movements in the 1980s had more focused agendas and they aimed to direct attention to single issues. For instance, with the rise of feminist movement, women in Turkey started to discuss their problems and demands, while Alevi movement garnered sympathy especially among the secular segments of the society. Although feminism and Alevi cultural movement are still active the realization of their demands has remained problematic.

The old guard of the Republican regime and secular segments of the society perceived the rise of political Islam in the 1990s as a threat against the secular modernization project of the Republic. The repression of political Islam continued in both civil society and mainstream politics until 1996 when the Islamist Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan, the ideological predecessor of the JDP, formed a coalition government with the True Path Party. In 1997 the coalition government was forced out of power by the military for having an Islamist agenda. The incident is often referred as the first “postmodern coup”. Following the military intervention, Welfare Party was immediately banned from politics in 1998. Therefore, it was not until 2002 the political Islam achieved a permanent success. The success of JDP in 2002 elections could be read as a result of the increasing popular and intellectual reaction against the repression of the political Islam in Turkey. For instance, liberal intellectuals also politically supported the JDP in the 2000s.

Among new social movements, the Kurdish nationalist movement received the least sympathy largely because of the on-going armed conflict between the Turkish army and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The general opinion of the society has been that the PKK and Kurdish movement are serving for the same interests. Founded in 1978, PKK started an armed struggle against the Turkish Republic in 1984 with demands for political and cultural rights and the wider recognition of Kurdish population residing in Turkey. PKK, which primarily encouraged university students to join its cause, later shifted its attention to the mainly Kurdish population of the southeastern Turkey. The ideological stance of the organization can be defined as the synthesis of the revolutionary

socialism and Kurdish nationalism, which demand the establishment of an independent and Marxist-Leninist state in the region, called Kurdistan. Despite the existence of a general societal prejudice against the Kurdish cause for considering the PKK and the Kurdish movement equal, ordinary citizens and intellectuals started to express their sympathy towards the movement following the decreasing tension between the army and PKK forces in the mid 1990s. Turkey's candidature for into the European Union also broke prejudices against the Kurdish movement, since the accession process required the empowerment of civil society through citizen participation into civic life.

Three distinctions should be made when considering the new social movements in Turkey. Firstly, they differ from the anti-capitalist protests of the late 1970s mainly led by university students and the workers' movement. In theory, anti-capitalist and labor movements were associated with Marxism, and they were marked for representing traditional social movements. Secondly, in comparison to the United States and the European countries new social movements emerged late in Turkey. While demands over issues such as women's rights and environment flourished especially with the rise of counterculture, which rejected traditional modes of authority in the United States and the United Kingdom, these issues came into surface in Turkey in the mid 1980s. One of the reasons for that was the insufficiency of information and communication technologies, which slowed down the circulation of movement related information. In contemporary social movements of 2000s movement related information has been circulated rapidly around the Internet, which have increased individuals' awareness about their rights. Thirdly, unlike the leader-led anti-capitalist and worker movements, issue-specific new social movements were not leader-driven. Especially the environmental and feminist movements were driven by non-governmental organizations that fostered the emergence of organization-led strikes and protests. These new social movements were also geographically coordinated and organized and they were mainly concentrated in metropolitan cities such as Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir. With the development of new information and communication technologies, NGO-based organizations in metropolitan cities integrated with associations in other cities of Turkey, although these organizations did not necessarily intertwine with each other.

4.5. Gezi Park as a contested symbolic space

It is important to note that neo-Gramscian studies often emphasize the spatial dimension of hegemony (e.g. Jessop, 2005; Kipfer, 2002) as urban space is where the hegemon reaches the most essential means of its power – the everyday life. It is, thus, essential to understand the dynamics of the production of the urban space in which the capitalist power of the hegemon becomes apparent (Kipfer and Keil, 2002). The ideological standpoint of political parties is often reflected on the urban design that they advocate. Urban politics are mainly affected by hegemonic political strategies that shape the perception of reality.

Interpreting the last decade from the perspective of hegemony and the relation between the force and consent, it can be stated that neo-liberal policies, especially spatial policies, played a key role in the success of JDP (Oğuzlu, 2013). The redistribution of space in Turkey has been a process in which the urbanization (Ekmekci, 2014) resulted in the production of consent among disadvantaged segments of the society. The spatial and socio-economic dimensions of neo-liberal Islamism as a political ideology has been an important component of JDP worldview which the party inherited from the previous Islamist movements but formed its own version.

Similar to the Ottoman and previous Republican governments, JDP contemplated urban spaces of Istanbul as a showcase of its political vision. Its program for the 2011 national elections heralded a variety of large-scale urban projects for Istanbul (Bilgic, 2015). Building a second north-south waterway through the city (carving Istanbul up into two peninsulas and one island), constructing a third bridge over the Bosphorus and the establishment of a third airport (Hattam, 2011) were among the plans that were called *Crazy Projects*. JDP also planned to re-organize Taksim Square by constructing a large pedestrian area that connects all roads to Taksim under the square and demolishing the Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM), the only cultural center in Istanbul, in order to construct a new opera house in the baroque style. Another plan that concerned the area was the reconstruction of an Ottoman artillery barracks (Gül, Dee and Cünük, 2014)

that was destroyed in 1940s to build İnönü Promenade that is known today as Gezi Park the only green area left in the central Istanbul.) The detailed project, which came into surface later, revealed that the barracks were aimed to be reconstructed as a luxurious shopping mall (Sözen and Yavuz, 2014).

The Municipality of Istanbul run by the JDP approved the proposal for the construction of underground motorway in September 2011. The Council of Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage approved the pedestrianization project in 2012 and the project was operationalized in October within the same year (Gül, Dee and Cünük, 2014).

Even though there was a widespread consensus in the public opinion that renovations were needed in the area, the Taksim project along with the other so-called Crazy Projects drew harsh criticisms from architects, professional bodies, community organizations and NGOs (Gökay and Xypolia, 2013). Korhan Gümüş, the president of Human Settlements Association and a member of Taksim Solidarity Platform²² defined the crazy projects as contemporary cases of

²² Taksim Solidarity Platform played a key role in symbolic beginning of Gezi Park protests, as a small group of environmental activists from the Taksim Solidarity Platform gathered in Istanbul's central Gezi Park to protect it from a planned demolition. Unions and associations that officially form or support Taksim Solidarity Platform are as follows: Istanbul Dentists Association, Istanbul Pharmacists Association, Istanbul Medical (Doctors) Association, Federation of Engineers and Architects Associations of Turkey (TMMOB) –, Environmental Engineers Association, Electrical Engineers Association, Mapping and Cadastral Surveyors Association, Civil Engineers Association, Mechanical Engineers Association, Architects Association, Landscape Architects Association, Town Planners Association (Istanbul branch), Stage Actors Profession Association, DISK – Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions, KESK – Confederation of Public Sector Workers Unions, Education Union – Universities Branch (Branch 6), Culture & Arts Union, Joint Unions Power Platform, Beyoğlu* Neighbourhood Clubs Platform, Bosphorus Neighbourhood Clubs Platform, The Elderly Pensioners Movement, Filmmor (purple film) Women Cooperative, Association of Istanbul Women's Organisations, Istanbul Halkevi, Istanbul Culture Forum, Istanbul SOS Initiative, Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV), Public Art Laboratory, Blacksea Protesters Platform, Haydarpasa Solidarity for Town and Environment, Lambda Istanbul, Nazim Hikmet Cultural Centre, Autonomous Art Council, Artists Initiative, Sulukule Platform, Taksim Platform, Collectivist Council of Engineers, Architects and Town Planners, Platform for Life instead of 3rd Bridge, Anatolian Culture and Research Platform, Association of Archaeologists – Istanbul branch, Asmalimescit Association, Atakoy Residents Support and Environmental Protection Association, Ayaspaşa Association, Bedrettin Derneği, Beyoğlu Entertainment Places Association, Cihangir Improvement Association, ÇYDD – Modern Life Support Association, Balance Ecologic Living Association, Galata Association, Gazhane Environment Volunteers, Gulsuyu Gulsusu Life and Support Centre Association, Istanbul METU Alumni Group, Women's Human Rights – New Solutions Association, Blacksea Environment and Culture Association, Kizildere Association, LGBTTT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Transgender) Association, Civil Servants Association – Istanbul branch, Streets are Ours Association, Social Rights Association, Taksim Gezi Park Protection and Improvement Association, Tarlabasi Landlords and Tenants Development and Social Support Association,

authoritarian urban management (Kılınçarslan, 2012).

Figure 4.1. Panoramic view of Gezi Park in Taksim district, Istanbul



Source: AlJazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/taksim-projesine-iptal>

Harsh criticisms and objections were raised against the JDP Municipality of Istanbul largely due to the lack of consultation with the relevant professionals and the wider public. The government's arrogant attitude and the involvement of the Prime Minister to the discussions augmented the tensions between JDP and civil and professional associations such as unions of architectures, which described the plans as “architectural misrepresentation” of the city (e.g. Akcan, 2013). Other criticisms pointed out technical matters that would not potentially improve pedestrian conditions and access (Gürsel, 2012; Kılınçarslan, 2012). The harshest criticism was raised by artists, politicians in opposition and activists in relation to the reconstruction of the Artillery Barracks for it would destroy the trees at Gezi Park and harm the contemporary heritage of the city (Akin, 2012).

Several critics argued that the reconstruction of the barracks was an

Tokatlılar Association, Tozkoparan Association, Society to Improve Consumer Conciousness, Consumer Protection Association – Istanbul branch, All Restorers and Conservers Association, All University Lecturers Association – Istanbul branch, Turkey Disabled Association, Validebağ Volunteers Association, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Republican Public Party (CHP), Labour Party (EP), Public's Voice Party (HSP), Workers Party (IP), Freedom and Solidarity Party (FSP), Turkey Communist Party (TKP) and Greens and Left Future Party (YSGP) (taksimdayanisma.org, 2014).

ideological rather than technical matter (Brosens and Bedir, 2014; Karakayali and Yaka, 2014). Taksim, located on the opposite of the Golden Horn, has long represented the modern secular Turkish Republic in opposition to JDP's historical social vision that combine the conventional Islamist values and customs with that of Ottomans.

Since the Ottoman era Taksim has been a modern urban space of Western style social and recreational activities. This has been the especially case starting from 1940s as Taksim area, especially the İnönü Promenade became a center of recreation where men and women come together and equally participate in the social atmosphere of the city. Thus, JDP's proposal to reconstruct the barracks and destroy AKM has been perceived by critics as an attempt to destroy the modern secular Republican heritage of Taksim area.

In contrast, Islamists and conservative communities have long perceived the secular Westernized character of Taksim as problematic. They widely believed that Taksim area does not represent the historically Muslim Ottoman character of the city. Therefore, Islamist conservative political parties called for the construction of a mosque at Taksim as the symbol of Turkish and Islamic identity (Gökay and Xypolia, 2013). This would be a victory for the Turkey's political Islamist movement. A variety of mosque construction proposals for Taksim area have been made starting from 1960s, especially in times of general elections (Batuman, 2015). Mosque construction, thus, also became a prominent and recurring theme for Islamist political leaders such as Necmettin Erbakan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Table 4.1. Timeline of events during Gezi Park movement

Date	Event
Oct. 31, 2012	The pedestrianization project started in Taksim.
Nov. 8, 2012	Istanbul Mayor of the period, Kadir Topbaş, stated that a shopping mall might be constructed at Gezi Park.
May 27, 2013	Taksim Solidarity activists gathered in the park to prevent bulldozers from cutting down the trees.
May 28, 2013	Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) deputy of the period, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, intervened bulldozers and had police remove the barricades around Gezi Park.
May 29, 2013	Prime Minister of the period, Erdoğan stated, "Whatever they do, we have made up our minds and will do it".
May 30, 2013	Police staged another operation at dawn, dispersing the crowd.
May 31, 2013	Police dispersed hundreds of protesters with tear gas and water cannons early in the morning. Taksim Solidarity Platform attempted to make a press statement. However,

	they were also subjected to tear gas and pressurized water. Three journalists, Ahmet Şık, Orman Orsal and Emrah Gürel got injured the same day.
June 1, 2013	Police forces blocked roads neighboring Gezi Park however withdrew in the afternoon. The park was left to protesters.
June 2, 2013	Erdoğan stated that he dismissed protests before leaving on a four-day trip to North Africa. President of the period, Abdullah Gül, urged people to calm down. Clashes continued throughout the day in Beşiktaş district of İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara. A car hit a 20 year old, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, during protests in İstanbul.
June 3, 2013	A turning point happened when the Beşiktaş football team's diehard fan group, Çarşı, who was the battles' frontrunner in the district, agreed with the police to a "truce."
June 4, 2013	Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister of the era, Bülent Arınç apologized for the excessive use of police force on the Gezi Park protesters. He also announced approximately 244 police forces and 60 protesters got injured. Turkish Doctors' Union claimed that the number of injured people was higher.
June 5, 2013	Representatives of Taksim Solidarity met Arınç. The same day, Ethem Sarısülük, who was allegedly shot by a police officer in Ankara was brain dead.
June 6, 2013	A police commissioner died falling from a bridge while pursuing protesters in the southern province of Adana. The same day, Erdoğan refused to back down, saying the Artillery Barracks will be built no matter what.
June 7, 2013	Speaking at the June 7 conference with a large group of foreign guests, Erdoğan said the events that had unfolded "with the excuse of Gezi" had been subjected to "horrible disinformation."
June 8, 2013	Football fans, led by Beşiktaş fan group Çarşı, marched to the Taksim Square by night. There was no police intervention in the square. However, clashes in Gazi neighborhood of İstanbul and Ankara were intense.
June 9, 2013	Taksim Square was the scene of a massive Gezi Park gathering, while Erdoğan gave six separate speeches in Ankara, Mersin and Adana. In the night, Ankara and Adana witnessed heavy clashes between police and protesters.
June 10, 2013	Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç said representatives of the movement would meet with the prime minister on June 12. Heavy clashes continued especially in Ankara and Adana.
June 11, 2013	Riot police entered Taksim Square after a ten-day détente in the harshest crackdown since the movement started. Police used tear gas and water cannons throughout the clashes, which lasted all day and well into the night. The İstanbul governor called on Gezi protesters to return home, saying he no longer could guarantee their safety.
June 12, 2013	German pianist Davide Martello and Turkish musician Yiğit Özatalay performed a joint piano concert at Taksim Square in support of the Gezi Park protesters.
June 13, 2013	The İstanbul Governor of the period, Hüseyin Avni Mutlu called mothers to bring their child home. Many mothers instead chose to join their children on field.
June 14, 2013	The Health Ministry opened an investigation into the İstanbul Chambers of Medicine for organizing a temporary health center at Gezi Park. However, the Turkish Doctors' Union (TTB) has said that helping wounded people is a humanitarian duty.
June 15, 2013	Police used tear gas and water cannons against the protesters at Taksim Gezi Park and cleared the area of protesters, ending the days-long occupation of the park. All tents and placards belonging to the protesters were seized and destroyed by construction vehicles. The police began to stand guard at Taksim Square to prevent any gathering there.
June 16, 2013	In a mass meeting in İstanbul's Kazlıçeşme, Erdoğan met thousands of supporters. The police prevented many protesters from entering the park throughout the day.
June 17, 2013	A single man, Erdem Gündüz, started standing silently in Taksim square. His protest lasted for eighteen hours. He started at the flag of Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal on the Atatürk Culture Center.
June 18, 2013	Hundreds, who stood still for long hours at Taksim Square, imitated the performance of Gündüz.
June 19, 2013	A group of eight men held a counter-protest in Taksim Square against the anti-government demonstrators whose "standing" protest entered its third day.
June 20, 2013	Police raided tents installed in Gündoğdu Square of İzmir. A group of thirty people attacked a forum organized in Yeniköy Park in support of the protests. One participant was injured during the attacks.

Source: hurriyetdailynews.com, "Timeline of Gezi Park Protests", 2013,
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests..aspx?pageID=238&nID=48321&NewsCatID=341>)

On the other hand, Kemalists perceived proposals such as building a mosque at Taksim as retrogressive Islamist attacks against the modernist reforms

of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In the eyes of Turkey's secular intellectuals reorganization plan for Taksim was a challenge for the Republican values associated with the Square. Betül Tanbay, a professor of mathematics and a member of the Taksim Platform, for instance, drew attention that Barracks' reconstruction plan was approved on the same day that the the first Islamist government of Turkey was forced to resign fifteen years ago in 1997 (Kongar and Küçükkaya, 2013).

The tension between secularist and Islamists have challenged the boundaries of the nation especially in urban spaces, echoing the fact that while the modern city is an interplay of liberation and play for some it is a space for power and repression for others (Cullinane, 2013).

Uysal (2012) who analyzed the power struggles and dynamics of contemporary urban social protests in various districts of Istanbul pointed out how Taksim area has always hosted political protests, meetings and demonstrations. Especially throughout the 1970s, ideological struggles between left and right wing political parties and fractions made the area a symbol of socialist ideology and social movements, especially of the labor. For instance, Labor Day of 1977 became the most symbolically significant day for Turkey's left wing political history because of a violent shooting incident in Taksim area that killed 34 and injured hundreds of protestors (Mayo, 2013). This incident was a result of the highly unstable political atmosphere and armed struggles among militant political communities that lasted until the end of 1970s. Since 1977, the Labor Day have often become a day of contestation between labor unions which want to celebrate it at Taksim Square and the government which try to prevent protestors from reaching the square.

Thus, as one of the most central urban areas of Istanbul, Taksim has a long and complicated history that bears a strong symbolic value in Kemalist Republicanism, socialism and Islamism. Therefore, Gezi Park has a symbolic significance both for the proponents and the opponents of the Gezi Park movement (Hornstein, 2015). The ideological and spatial significance of Gezi Park resulted in the emergence of a nationwide movement, which was rooted in

the solidarity of various non-governmental organizations, and occupational associations that adopted a critical stance towards the JDP's neo-liberal Islamist urban policies and their implementations since 2002. As such the Gezi movement had similarities with the indignados movement and V for Vinegar movement in Brazil, which started a week after the beginning of Gezi Park movement.

Although Gezi Park movement emerged as “a right to the city” movement (Kuymulu, 2013) it quickly turned into nationwide protests against the existing political and social order which is marked by the rise of political Islam and neoliberal conservatism. Soon demands varied from the “right to live”, “rights to liberty and security”, “ban against abuse and mistreatment” to “right to travel” and “rights to justice” (Bilgic and Kafkasli, 2013). The spirit of protest spread across different social, cultural and religious groups that objected to diverse issues such as unrestrained neo-liberal economic policies, environmental and urban destruction, increasing pressures over the organized labor, the militaristic authoritarian and conservative tendencies of the JDP regime, threats to freedom of expression, hate crimes which mostly target Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual individuals etc. Even a group of concerned mothers, who were worried about their children on field joined the protests to show their solidarity.

While some scholars read the Gezi Park movement as a class struggle among different social segments of Turkey (e.g. Backmund, 2013), the Gezi experience presented a more complex picture. Class struggle remained understated due to the inability of radical left organizations in terms of emphasizing the class dimension of the uprising (Azeri, 2014). As Azeri (2014) argues, Gezi uprising carried “the potential of a radical practical criticism of capitalist society; a radical egalitarian and libertarian potential that transcends the horizon of the existing political organizations” (p.595).

From the beginning JDP perceived the protests as a backlash by its opponents. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used a very strong and provocative language about the movement in his public utterances. He pictured the protests as a non-democratic attempt to overthrow JDP in order to prevent the rise of Turkey under an Islamist government. The “us” and “them” discourse used especially by JDP

officials polarized the society into two poles as proponents and opponents of the Gezi movement. The discriminatory discourse strengthened the group identity and solidarity among protesters.

In the following section first the democratizing potential of Gezi Park movement in terms of enhancing public dialogue and deliberation will be discussed. Later short- and long-term outcomes of the movement will also be examined with a view to discuss their potential for creating a lasting political impact.

4.5. Democratizing dialogue in Gezi Park movement

Resistance against the Internet censorship (Bulut, 2008) was one of the first steps that paved the way for Gezi Park movement when individuals mobilized on online social networks and took over to the streets in 2012 to protest limitations and censorship on the Internet use. Slogans on placards varied from “Government cannot mess with my clothes, languages and web link” to “Don’t touch my porn”.

Gezi Park movement as a massive nationwide series of protests featured similarities with other contemporary social movements of the 2000s. Over the three weeks from the start of events, the overall number of protesters was reported to be at least 2.5 million by the Turkish Interior Ministry (House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2013). The movement started as a civic reaction to the proposal to destruct Gezi Park in order to make way for the new underground motorway and a new shopping mall in the form of an old Ottoman military barracks.

The wall between the park and the road was destroyed on May 27, 2013, and a couple of trees in the area also got harmed during the process. A minor group composed of environmental activists stepped at the front of the building machines to prevent further destruction. Around 50 individuals set up tents and slept at the park for the night. The following day in order to force protesters to leave the park municipal workers set the tents on fire. As a result of the excessive use of teargas and water cannons during the brutal police raid on the Park on May

30, a peaceful sit-in protest of a decentralized environmentalist movement turned into a full-fledged uprising against the pro-Islamist JDP. While the incidents spread all over Istanbul and also to the other cities of Turkey the organizational skills of networked segments of the protesters became apparent in their ability in building roadblocks for defense, shelters for protection and tents for residence. The reflexive capabilities of protesters indicated their potentials as *networks of outrage* (Castells, 2013) against bureaucratic institutions and police forces.

The response of the government to demonstrations was problematic from the beginning as it increased the tensions between the JDP and social groups in the field as well as putting a strain on Turkey international relations. For instance, the United States issues various statements regarding Gezi Park protests, one of which was revealed by the Spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, Laura Lucas (Resneck, 2013). Lucas warned that non-violent protests and demonstrations were acts of democratic political expressions and called for government officials to act in a responsible manner. The European Parliament also published a resolution and demanded Turkey to ask for public opinion over projects, especially related to urban development plans and criticized excessive use of police force (European Parliament, 2013).

From the early days the clashes at Gezi Park between the police forces and the protesters drew worldwide attention. International press criticized JDP's authoritarian style of government and harsh police intervention against protesters, which resulted in several casualties. The excessive use of police force and tear gas aggravated the tension between the government and protesters. Turkish Medical Association stated that there were approximately 8,000 injuries by the end of the third week of protests (Turkish Medical Association, 2013; referred in Amnesty International, 2013). Faced with the mounting from within and outside the country JDP government was forced to postpone the reconstruction plan for the Artillery Barracks to a later date, although certain renovations were made in the damaged Gezi Park following the protests. The park was re-opened to public on August 8, 2013 and the pedestrianization project got mostly completed with the opening of underground roads to Taksim Square from the north and south.

Even though Gezi Park movement emerged as an arena of clash between police forces and protesters, it, at times, allowed for the establishment of alternative arenas for communication and deliberation among different social and cultural groups with diversified demands and interests. Similar to other contemporary social movements, the Gezi Park movement allowed the gathering of individuals from diverse social, cultural and political backgrounds to speak up their demands (İnceoglu, 2015). While the movement gathered primarily young individuals including white-collar workers and university students, other visible communities included environmentalist organizations, LGBT and feminist associations, Kurdish organizations, community specific groups such as anti-Capitalist Muslims as well as various occupational associations and trade unions (Öncü, 2013). The representatives of opposition parties also took part in the protests.

The deliberative and communicative potentials of the Gezi Park movement were derived from the civic roots of the protests. While alternative communication channels such as online social networks threatened the domination of mainstream media outlets the citizens' involvement in political procedures went beyond traditional political participation. The motivation was to take collective action by individuals over shared interests and demands against the problematic social and/or cultural issues. Protests brought along new repertoire of collective action and reflected the impact of micro-practices of everyday life on macro-politics. The deliberation here did not necessarily represent reconciliation over conflicted issues.

Therefore, the movement enabled the establishment of a deliberative public sphere of protesters from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, even at times, between protest participants and police forces. It could be argued that the deliberative success of Gezi Park movement was derived from its disorganized social base, which did not represent the interests of a particular segment of Turkey's society. Gezi experience proved that civil society out of the government control could foster democratization of dialogue and communication and enhances

a pluralist worldview among individuals regardless of their social or cultural differences (Örs and Turan, 2015).

In terms of their organization and patterns of deliberation, Gezi Park movement and its contemporaries are claimed to have influenced conventional political parties and traditional associations. Along with its influence over traditional politics, the Gezi Park movement also succeeded in bringing new possibilities into the public sphere. Most of the time, protesters utilized a sarcastic language when revealing their demands through placards and slogans, which made it easier for different social groups to appreciate each other's existence. Therefore, the Gezi movement helped breaking the taboos of various social groups, which were biased against certain movements and religious, cultural or social preferences. For instance, before Gezi, it was almost impossible to see some social groups such as LGBT activists and anti-capitalist Muslims to join the same marches.

Moreover, discussions on social media further enhanced the communication among different social groups and individuals. Prior to Gezi, communications were mostly among like-minded social media users. Gezi movement enabled the emergence of a more diverse communication environment that fostered the discussion of various political ideologies and worldviews. Therefore, although protesters have not succeeded in transforming the political agenda of traditional political institutions in the long term, they have achieved in enhancing the public agenda through communication online and offline.

Another instance of the enhancement of communication can be observed in the way that the general public perceives the Kurdish movement. The Gezi experience enabled individuals who were less sympathetic towards the Kurdish movement to interrogate the government's role in shaping public perception of Kurdish rights movement through official statements and media representations. Individuals, who supported the republican and secularist tradition of Turkey, protested hand in hand with the Kurdish protestors against the increasing influence of political Islam over everyday (Buğlalılar, 2014). Therefore, Gezi Park movement enabled the development of brief slogans into long political discussion

among participants and transformed the protest field into a diverse pluralist public sphere integrated with the online communication networks.

4.6. Social base and atmosphere

Geographically dispersed socially diverse nature of Gezi Park movement made it hard to define. Although it is possible to identify different groups and their demands on the field, it is almost impossible to read Gezi experience from a single point of view. Despite the chaotic nature of the movement, individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds with a variety of demands succeeded in uniting under Gezi movement. Therefore, the social base of Gezi movement and the demands raised within it distinguishes Gezi from the previous social movements in Turkey.

Gezi Park movement was a civic endeavor similar to the other contemporary social movements of the 2000s. Its social base is primarily composed of civil society organizations, university students and young white-collar workers (Özdemir, 2015). The small-scaled protests that initially started at Gezi Park in late May turned into a nationwide movement with the support of civil society organizations, trade associations and informal meetings held by Gezi-related civic initiatives such as Taksim Solidarity Association.

Participants who attended the protests in Istanbul and other cities of Turkey, joined the movement mostly through informal networks, therefore, they did not necessarily have ties with traditional political parties or associations. Similar to Euromaidan and #occupywallstreet, the social base of Gezi was different from that of traditional social movements and political organizations.

Drawing a distinction between previous and contemporary social movements, Castells (2013) states that contemporary social movements do not require the existence of strong collective identities or powerful/influential collective leaders. Gezi Park movement also did not have a powerful collective identity or leader. Rather, it was an unorganized, unarmed, leaderless social movement of mainly the young people.

According to KONDA (2014), which conducted a field research during the Gezi Park, protests participants of Gezi were mostly comprised of young and well-educated individuals. Among the participants both male and female genders were almost equally represented. In line with the other contemporary social movements of 2000s, the majority of participants (78.9%) stated that they were not affiliated with any traditional political organization or parties. 93.6% participants identified their identities as ordinary citizens rather than as representatives of particular groups or organizations.

Though labor groups were also actively on the field (Özdemir, 2015) Gezi experience was not necessarily associated with the working class and labor activists (Ete and Taştan, 2014). It was mainly associated with the middle class, which was criticized for being apolitical especially since the 1980 military coup. Individuals born after the 1980 coup were criticized for not caring about or taking role in traditional political activity. They were mostly considered under the influence of the ideology of consumerism due to the liberalization of Turkey's economy since the 1980s. Therefore, the involvement of young people in Gezi was welcomed especially by older generations who had been active in right wing-left wing conflicts throughout the late 1960s and 1970s.

Gezi experience was marked for being a disorganized and heterogenous movement. Largely dissimilar associations such as RedHack (a Turkish Marxist-Leninist- Maoist computer hacker group which was founded in 1997) and Çarşı (best known as the supporter group of the football team, BJK) were also active and drawn sympathy from protesters throughout protesters (Yüksek, 2013). These two associations took their part throughout the movement, showed their support and withdrew their actions when the movement came to an end.

The Gezi Park movement witnessed the formation of forums in various parks mainly in Istanbul (Uğur, 2014) in addition to the emergence of Taksim Solidarity platform, which was founded by representatives of civil society organizations, occupational associations and trade unions. The platform, which claimed to be the representative of the Gezi participants, declared both short-term

and long-term demands. The short-term demands were that Gezi Park should have remained as a public park and the police violence that targeted protesters should have stopped. Other demands, which were raised by the representatives of the Taksim Solidarity platform, were as follows:

- Taksim Gezi Park will not be re-developed under the name of Artillery Barracks or any other project,
- An official statement on the cancellation of the current project will be made,
- The attempts to demolish Ataturk Cultural Centre will stop,
- Starting from the Governors and the Police Chiefs of Istanbul, Ankara and Hatay, everybody responsible for the thousands of injured people and two deaths, and everyone who prevented the use of the most basic democratic rights of the people; who gave orders for violent repression, enforced or implemented these orders will be dismissed from their posts,
- The use of tear gas bombs and other similar materials will be prohibited,
- Detained citizens who attended the resistance across the country will be immediately released and an official statement, which declares that there will not be any investigation about them, will be made
- Starting with Taksim and Kizilay squares, all the meeting and demonstration bans affecting all of our squares and public areas and all the de facto blockings will be abolished and stopped,
- Barriers to freedom of expression will be removed (quoted in disk.org.tr, 2013).

Although representatives of Taksim Solidarity Association succeeded in negotiating their demands with the government officials during the peak period of the protests, their attempts were not entirely successful. While the long term consequences of Gezi Park movement have remained controversial, the protesters succeeded in achieving their short time goal, which was the withdrawal of the shopping mall construction plan within the Gezi Park area. Protesters also succeeded in raising their voice against injustices and create movement related

awareness among individuals who were not necessarily associated with the movement.

4.7. Conclusion

Gezi protest offers us useful hints to understand emerging forms of public agency. Similar to other public square movements of 2000s, Gezi Park protests gathered individuals with various political views, lifestyles and identities. This resulted in the generation of new democratic imaginaries. Protesters spoke out their demand for the extension of democratic sensibilities through a public square movement, side by side with individuals with whom they did not necessarily share similar identities, political beliefs or class backgrounds. Participants ranged from “anti-capitalist Muslims” to Kurds, white-collar workers to LGBTI collectives, who resisted against the neoliberal capitalist vision of JDP, grounded on its Islamist worldview. Anxieties over the policies of the JDP turn the environmentalist occupation of Gezi Park into a massive nation-wide resistance. Those who opposed the JDP government took to the streets, blocked avenues and occupied central arenas of their cities for more than twenty days.

Social and economic policies of JDP played a key role in the emergence of Gezi Park movement. The implementation of large-scale urban development and housing projects provided a suitable environment for the emergence of new business elite, which benefited from the urban transformation of especially İstanbul. The URP has brought along several problems including the destruction of historical districts and victimization of local residents. Therefore, the urban redevelopment plans and other large-scale public construction projects became a source of contention against the JDP.

Gezi, as a unique urban movement in Turkey’s political history with a strong young, female and middle class presence, also brought the discussion of democracy in Turkey a new perspective. The protests resulted in the emergence of a new platform to voices not heard in the mainstream media and to actors that lacked representation in national elections or political alliances. Although, protests could be interpreted a manifestation of the *cold conflict* between Islamists and

secularists in Turkey, it goes beyond such polarization in the sense that the unique culture and spirit materialized in the park called for a more extended democratic sensibility that encircles different political identities, lifestyles, and religious tendencies. Therefore, protests could be read as both a rejection of the Islamic corporatist vision of JDP and the secularist republican regime, as both regimes are instituted in a top-down fashion and based on exclusion. But it must be noted that it is still an early stage to assess the potential of the Gezi movement in permeating into mainstream politics and to see whether protesters' call for the extension of democratic sensibilities will be sustainable.



CHAPTER 5: GEZI PARK MOVEMENT AND THE MEDIA in TURKEY

5.1. Introduction

The media coverage of social movements is influenced by the prevailing ownership and control patterns of media institutions and the relationship between mainstream media and powerful political actors. The nationwide Gezi movement brought the long-standing malaises of Turkey's news media into attention. Freedom of mainstream media, clientelism and self-censorship inevitably became a focus of interest during Gezi Park movement. Especially throughout the first three days of the protests, news related to Gezi Park movement was largely missing in the majority of mainstream media outlets. For instance, CNN Türk was criticized for broadcasting a documentary on penguins and a food show at the height of Gezi events while reporters of CNN International were reporting from field in İstanbul. A campaign was launched to pressurize CNN International to pull its name from CNN Türk in response to its treatment of Gezi movement.

The absence of Gezi Park coverage in mainstream media was a result of the changing media environment in Turkey. Since JDP came to power in 2002, many important purchasing transactions among media companies took place. These transactions resulted in the emergence of a mainstream media environment that primarily served for the interests of the government and its associates. Concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few pro-government companies resulted in the emergence of outlets that served as the JDP's "PR toolbox" (Çatalbaş Ürper and Görgülü, 2015).

As a result, citizens turned into alternative news sources during Gezi Park movement. The lack of journalistic coverage of the on-going events made protesters turn to online social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. Protesters used online social networks mainly to share audio-visual content, web links of live broadcasts from field, contact information of institutions such as hospitals

which protesters might need in emergency situations and security warnings (such as reporting the fields where clashes between protesters and police forces reached peak levels).

An alternative source of news for Gezi Park movement has been already existing alternative and participatory media organizations such as T24 and bianet.org, which provided up-to-date information regarding the on-going events and also published commentary pieces. However, existing alternative and participatory media organizations remained insufficient. Especially throughout the movement period, they remained reluctant in integrating dynamic content to their website, such as broadcasts made by amateurs via services such as u-stream and live-stream. The news format of existing alternative news organizations, especially bianet.org and T24, followed a similar fashion with the traditional news-pieces that prioritized the usage of images and texts in news.

Consequently, the need for more dynamic content and up-to-date news encouraged some protesters to launch their own online and amateur news outlets to disseminate information regarding Gezi Park movement. Among these outlets, çapul.tv became the forerunner for establishing its studio at Gezi Park and reporting live from the field. çapul.tv also differentiated itself from other video-based online participatory media of Gezi Park movement, such as videoccupy.org and Naber Medya, for obtaining its own reporters. Other media attempts included the Gezi Post-which was produced in leaflet format and distributed in districts surrounding Gezi Park throughout the movement- as well as mustereklerimiz.org- which compiled news pieces from relevant international newspapers during the movement-. The presence and operation of alternative online media outlets during a time marked by a heightened political conflict, online and offline censorship and government-managed pressures on self-expressions was extremely important for the mobilization and diffusion of Gezi movement.

This chapter argues that contemporary social movements provide valuable insights to examine the relationship between social mobilizations and the mainstream and alternative media organizations. First, it briefly interrogates the role of the Internet and online participatory journalism in contemporary social

movements. Then it moves on to investigate the reflections of Gezi Park movement on mainstream media and on the Internet. Lastly, it provides an overview of online alternative and participatory media organizations, which actively took part in and during Gezi Park movement.

5.2. The role of the Internet and online participatory journalism in contemporary social movements

The Internet is already an object of intense theorizing and empirical analysis in relation to two major themes: community building on or via the net (e.g. Jones, 1998; M. Smith & Kollock, 1999) and the relevance of the Internet for politics (e.g. Hague & Loader, 1999). One of the common departure points of these diverse points of views is that the Internet has a strong potential to create a space for politics that goes beyond governmental, parliamentary and party structures.

The adoption of new ICTs by protesters during post-Seattle anti-globalization protests (1999) offered prospects of a critical challenge to conventional methods of political participation. Post-Seattle contemporary social movements (including social unrest protests and riots) used the Internet to mobilize and coordinate geographically dispersed actions and individuals. Smartphones and mobile internet enabled citizen groups and social movements, like many other organizations and institutions, to mobilize, build coalitions, inform, lobby, communicate, and campaign in such an extent and speed that was previously unimaginable. However, the use of ICTs at critical times of social movements also presents some threats for social action. For instance, the clashes between the protesters and the police during Gezi Park protests led to a *Twitter war* in which Turkish users gravitated into two largely imagined communities as pro- and anti JDP. As anti-JDP groups were fueling political tweet-storms via live broadcasting from the clashes and initiating political hashtag campaigns, pro-JDP groups were actively initiating hashtags such as #TurkeyStandsBehindThePrimeMinister.

Divergent views on the relationship between contemporary social

movements and Internet services are found in literature (e.g. Bimber, 2000; Fuchs, 2008). So far, no consensus has been reached on the impact of new ICTs on contemporary social movements. Although the precise contribution of the Internet to contemporary social movements remains hard to estimate, many accepts that the Internet has given civil society new tools to support its claims. Fuchs (2008) indicates that the Internet has already become an object of intense theoretical and empirical analysis and points out the relevancy of the Internet for civil society. In relation to the link between contemporary social movements and new information and communication technologies Christian Fuchs (2008) criticizes one-dimensional and techno-deterministic explanations. Fuchs argues that neither technological networks produce protest networks nor the other way round is true:

“The network form of protest is not a result of the Internet; rather; protest movements welcome network technologies because they help them in advancing networked forms of protest” (Fuchs, 2008, p.278).

According to the critiques of the techno-deterministic approach, the Internet mediates the circulation of struggles of global protest movements. That means the production of meanings and practices of protest is virtually distributed and can spread and intensify in the cyberspace. The circulation of struggles can be defined as the fabrication of material connections and communications that destroy isolation and permit people to struggle in complementary ways, both against the constraints, which limit them, and for the alternatives they construct. New information technologies, thus, do not just emerge as instruments for the circulation of commodities but also as channels for the circulation of struggles. The dispersed nature and widespread use of the Internet works against the tyranny of majorities²³. Various egalitarian groups and individuals utilize the Internet and its services for social and political ends.

In addition to being a medium of discussion for exchanging news, strategies and goals for the dispersion of alternative knowledge, the Internet can be used for preparing and coordinating protests. Different forms of cyber-protest

²³ The term ‘tyranny of the majority’ is used in discussing systems of democracy and majority rule. It envisions a scenario in which decisions made by a majority that places its interests so far above those of an individual or minority group as to constitute active oppression, comparable to that of despots.

ranges from consciousness-raising, mobilization of activists for protests, the organization of offline protest, and support of offline protests by online activities to forms of online protest and electronic civil disobedience (hacktivism). Concerning actions taken through the Internet, Fuchs (2008) shares a common ground with Laer and Aelst (2010) in distinguishing between Internet-based and Internet-supported actions. He proposes that cyber-protests can take three main forms: cooperative, communicative and cognitive.

“Communicative coordination of social protests” means that social movements make use of networked telecommunication infrastructures in order to communicate and coordinate protests, as was the case with anti-globalization movements that are primarily coordinated via mailing lists, news groups and online discussion boards. (p. 283). Here the Internet is used for producing and distributing alternative and critical knowledge, freely sharing knowledge and technology, producing technology cooperatively and changing and destroying hegemonic knowledge by cyber-attacks. People use the Internet to copy, transmit and freely distribute digital knowledge as hacktivists and as part of the multitude’s struggle to defend open and common nature of online knowledge and services. Many may not even know that they are part of the movement. These movements have various causes such as the mobilizations and struggle against privatization of public goods, the capitalist appropriation of traditional knowledge, the free access to the Internet and the open source structure of digital knowledge.

“Cooperative cyber-protest” refers to online protests and electronic civil disobedience that takes place in virtual space as virtual protest. “Human actors cooperate in cyberspace in order to attack the information infrastructure and organizational medium of domination, electronic activists try to paralyze web sites of their adversaries’ (p. 284). Cooperative cyber-protests are forms of collective protest that, unlike demonstrations, sit-in protests and so on do not require co-presence of actors. Here the actors act as smart mobs that are able to act in concert even if they do not know each other.

“Cognitive cyber-protest”, which Fuchs conceptualizes as alternative online media form, is another form of cyber-protests (p.285). Alternative media

exist outside the structures of large corporations. They are often portrayed as independent, noncommercial outlets that offer marginal voices the opportunity to be heard. Alternative media are autonomous and refrain from the top-down approach as well as building vertically integrated structures such as that of print and broadcast media. They also express perspectives, which are in many ways different from those of the more mainstream media.

5.3. Reflections of Gezi Park movement in Turkey's mainstream media

Since the early 1990s Turkey has a vibrant and highly competitive media environment. According to the Turkish Institute of Statistics, the total number of newspapers and magazines published have reached 6.778 by 2011 (TUIK, 2011) and 90.1% of newspapers published have operated on a local basis. Currently, Turkey has approximately 3.100 newspapers 15% of which published daily (Freedom House, 2015). The country also has hundreds of television channels and radio stations including those broadcasting in minority languages (Freedom House, 2015).

In his critical political economic analysis of media industries Murdock (1990) identifies ownership and control as important factors that affect their content. Today, media companies in Turkey operate as part of large holdings that have large investments in other industrial and service sectors. Therefore, they have high stakes in establishing good relations with the government of the day and commercial interests of media owners intervene in editorial processes (Murdock, 1982). Media owners, who are active in other industries pay attention to maximize their economic interests since a contradiction may result in commercial losses.

The current structure of media system in Turkey is the result of the neo-liberal deregulation policies, which were implemented in 1980 right after the military coup. The privatization of broadcasting took place in 1990 by means of satellite channels transmitting their signals from European countries into Turkey, thus, effectively demolishing the state monopoly of the public broadcaster, TRT. Star TV which was founded by Cem Uzan and Ahmet Özal, the son of the then

President Turgut Özal, in 1989 became Turkey's first private TV channel, which started its test broadcasts in mid-1990. Soon, a host of private radio and television stations followed the example set by the Star TV. The de-facto privatization of broadcasting forced the government to amend the Constitutional and legal framework in such a way to acknowledge the privatization of deregulation of the sector.

The impact of neoliberal policies on media industries was felt in a more intense manner in the 2000s. For instance, between 2002 and 2008, thirty international and thirty-five national purchasing transactions took place in Turkey among media companies (Kurban and Sözeri, 2012). As a consequence, several companies operating in industry and service sectors also started to become active in communications and media sectors. For example, Ciner Media Holding, which bought HaberTÜRK TV, Bloomberg HT and Kanal 1 in the 2000s, also owned Ciner Commerce, Industry and Service and Ciner Energy and Mining Group. Similarly, Çukurova Holding, which owned national television and radio channels and services such as Show TV, Digiturk, Lig Radio and Alem, was also active in the fields of industry, construction, transportation, financial services and energy. The involvement of non-media actors with high stakes in other industries rendered news-making processes in Turkey to be open to direct or indirect pressures of the external actors which often resulted in practices of self-censorship. Concentration of media ownership and political and economic interventions negatively impacted on the news content provided by mainstream media outlets.

Table 5.1. Media owners in Turkey and other industries they were involved in before the Gezi Park movement

Name	Media investments	Other sectors involved
Albayrak Group	Yeni Şafak Daily, Yeni Şafak Internet, TV Net, Derin Tarih	Industry, construction, information and communication technologies, transportation, financial services, energy
Çukurova Holding	Alem, Alem FM, Akşam, Autocar, Digitürk, Eksen, Güneş, FourFourTwo, LigTV, Lig Radyo, ShowMax, ShowTURK, SkyTURK 360, ShowPlus, TürkMax, TürkMedya	Industry, construction, information and communication technologies, transportation and logistics
Doğan Media Group	Hurriyet Daily, Radikal, Posta, Hurriyet Daily News, Fanatik, Doğan Burda, Doğan Egmont, Doğan Kitap, Kanal D, CNN Türk, Radyo D, Slow Türk, CNN Türk Radyo, D-Smart, Doğan Haber Agency	Energy, industry, commerce, financial services, tourism, retail
Doğuş Media Group	NTV, Star, CNBC-E, NTV Spor, Kral, E2, HDe, NTV Radio, Virgin Radio, Kral Radio, Kral Pop, Radio Eksen, NTV Spor Radio, Capital Radio, Radio Voyage, Vogue, GQ, National Geographic	Construction, automobile, banking and finance, tourism, realty and energy
Samanyolu Broadcasting Group / Feza Journalism	Zaman, Today's Zaman, Aksiyon Dergisi, Zaman Amerika, Cihan Haber Ajansı, Gonca Dergisi, Samanyolu Mehtap TV, Dünya TV, Hazar TV, Tuna Shopping, Samanyolu Radio	
İhlas Media Holding	TGRT, TGRT News, TGRT EU, İhlas News Agency, TGRT Documentary, Türkiye Daily	Construction, tourism, marketing, production, health, education
Çalık Holding / Turkuvaz Media Group	Sabah Daily, FotoMAÇ, Sabah, ATV, Sinema, Sofra, Forbes, Cosmopolitan, Otohaber, Yeni Asır, Sabah Europe, Sabah USA, Şamdan, Cosmo Girl, Esquire, Bebeğim, Aktüel, Art Home, Para, Global Enerji, House Beautiful, Turkuvaz Kitap, Automotorsport, Transport, Cosmopolitan Bride, Radyo Turkuvaz	Textile, energy, construction, finance, telecommunications, mining
Ciner Group	HabeTÜRK Daily, Bloomberg HT, Yapım Production	Energy and mining, commerce, social projects

Source: Data is compiled from the websites of Albayrak Group, Çukurova Holding, Doğan Media Group, Samanyolu Media, İhlas Media Holding, Çalık Holding and Ciner Media Group official websites in January 2013, four months before the emergence of Gezi Park movement.

Sözeri (2009) explains that dispossessions by the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund also changed media ownership structures in Turkey. The Savings Deposit Insurance Fund, the governing body concerned with matters of fund management and insurance in the Turkish banking system, used to operate under the management of Turkey's Central Bank, while it currently operates independently. For instance, in 2007, The Savings Deposit Insurance Fund took over 63 companies, which included Sabah Marketing and Sabah Broadcasting, owned by Dinç Bilgin, one of the prominent media owners who built up a media empire which was seized by the Turkish government in 2002 over alleged financial irregularities (Habertürk, 2007). According to 2011 data, sales of seized companies provided the government approximately 1 billion 574 million dollars (medyafaresi.com, 2011). Newspapers such as *TV Guide*, *Star*, *Sabah*, *Takvim* and *İktisat* were taken over from companies in debt and sold to new corporations. Television channels such as TGRT, Yeşilçam TV, Cine 5, Gala TV, ATV, Maxi TV, Kral TV and Supersport TV were also among the media outlets that were later sold to different companies by The Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF, 2012).

An important trend since JDP came to power has been that the government aimed at creating its own media through “a new political economy of censorship” (Akser and Baybars-Hawks, 2012, p. 302), in which mainstream media conglomerates challenge the status quo of the government when their economic interests come under threat. This situation resulted in a polarization in Turkey's mainstream media as pro- and anti- JDP.

Figure 5.1. Seven pro-AKP dailies used the same headline on 07 June 2013



Source: t24, “Başbakan döndü medyanın canı feda” news piece, 07 June 2013, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/basbakan-dondu-medyanin-cani-feda,231486>

The polarized media environment inevitably impacted on the coverage of Gezi Park movement. For instance, seven pro-AKP dailies of the time, including Zaman, Star, Yeni Şafak, HaberTÜRK, Sabah, Türkiye and Bugün used the same headline “Demokratik Taleplere Canımız Feda” (We Can Die For Democratic Demands) when covering Prime Minister Erdoğan’s assessment of Gezi Park movement during his visit to Tunisia on 07 June, 2013. In an interview after Gezi Park movement, a reporter from *çapul.tv* explains the Turkish mainstream media “dugged its own grave” by its coverage of demonstrations:

“Turkish mainstream media dugged its own grave by broadcasting documentaries on penguins. Although they insistently ignored the protests, reporters of mainstream media outlets covered speeches of Prime Minister Erdoğan about the demonstrations for minutes. The attitude of mainstream media is the main reason that encouraged us to establish our own media” (İşeri interview with *çapul.tv* reporter, 2013).

Thus, the objective mainstream media coverage of Gezi Park movement was missing throughout the first two weeks of protests. After the second week, the pro-government media embraced an anti-protest stance and aimed to marginalize protesters. For instance, on 11 June 2013, Turkish media outlet HaberTürk reported the on-going events on television with the headline “Marginal groups are attacking the police with Molotov cocktails and stones”, while CNN International’s headline was ‘Police fire tear gas at the protestors’ for the same

news story (Yuksekk, 2013). Rıdvan Bıyık, a HaberTürk reporter, was attacked on 15 June 2013 by a protester during live broadcast, as he reported, “The marginal group in here provokes the police forces; they don’t pay attention to police warnings on leaving the park” (Gülcan, 2013).

During the movement, TRT reporters published a video in which a group of protesters were burning a Turkish flag (Gülcan, 2013). However, it was later claimed that the footage belonged to a 2010 protest led by PKK supporters. Haber-Sen, the Media Communication and Postal Employees Union, which included previous TRT reporters among its members, released a press statement that condemned the misleading Gezi coverage of TRT:

“Four citizens lost their lives during the on-going protests because of the police violence. The situation gets worse as irresponsible bureaucratic representatives make provocative press statements. TRT must report on going events in an objective manner, to fulfill its responsibility of public service. When we reach to a point of no return, it will be you and alikes, who will be trapped in the wreckage. And it will be our country, who will suffer the most from this situation” (nettavir.com, 2013).

On 03 June 2013, Yeni Şafak Daily published a news story claiming that protesters drank alcohol as they occupied Dolmabahce Mosque. Two years later, the imam of the mosque explained that nobody consumed alcohol in the mosque that day, although some of the protesters looked drunk (t24.com.tr, 2015).

Another pro-government news outlet, Takvim Daily claimed their reporters interviewed Christiane Amanpour, a presenter of CNN International. The interview was published with the headline “CNN Exposed” and the daily newspaper claimed that CNN International provoked Gezi Park movement by reporting live from the park (takvim.com.tr, 2013). It was later found out that the interview was fake and Amanpour responded Takvim Daily on Twitter with the tweet: “Shame on you @Takvim for publishing FAKE interview with me” (hurriyet.com.tr, 2013).

Pro-government 24-hour news channels also failed to present an objective account of the nationwide movement. While police attacks against protesters were missing in the coverage of NTV, Skytürk 360, CNN Türk and A Haber at the height of the events, they broadcasted a single attack organized by a group of protesters against police forces live on 11 June 2013 (Gülcan, 2013). BBC ended its Turkish broadcasting agreement with NTV following its failing coverage on Gezi-related events. CNN Türk was also criticized for broadcasting a documentary on penguins and a food show at the height of events while reporters of CNN International were reporting from field in İstanbul (Aydinli, 2015). Protesters aimed to pressure CNN International to withdraw its name from CNN Türk for its missing coverage on Gezi Park movement. On the other hand, Aydın Doğan, the owner of the Doğan Media Group, explained broadcasting a penguin documentary during Gezi Park movement was a result of “sloppiness”:

“It was a total sloppiness. Broadcasting a penguin documentary was not intentional. After midnight, the operation slows down at CNN Türk. A single news editor manages the operation after midnight. The following day, my daughter came and asked me: “What are you doing?” and continued, “You are broadcasting a penguin documentary?” It was the moment I realized the situation. It was sort of an occupational accident. It was never intentional” (birgun.net, 2015).

Whether intentionally or not, Turkey’s mainstream media failed to present an immediate and pluralist account of Gezi Park movement. Protests spread to buildings of mainstream media institutions such as Doğu Media Center, which owns NTV television channel. Protesters aimed at pressurizing the 24-hour news television channel to cover the on-going protests, as they chanted slogans “They cannot ignore Gezi anymore”, “Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance”, “Sold media” and “Can we make it to your news if we pay enough money?” (milliyet.com.tr, 2013). The NTV protests also made impact on social media as individuals who were not on field, followed on going events mainly via Twitter (e.g. – @salihkirall “Somebody, go and tell NTV, people are protesting in front of their building”; @Onat_Kurt “NTV awkwardly covers the protests, taking place in front of their building. They cover the demonstrations like they are happening in somewhere else, not in front of their office :))”) (t24.com.tr, 2013).

It was also possible to observe the influence of governmental pressures on the Gezi coverage of mainstream media. Catalbas Urper and Gorgulu (2015) argued, based on a quantitative content analysis of main evening newscasts of three television stations that mainstream media outlets failed to present a balanced and diverse account of Gezi Park movement in a timely and objective manner. The reports of newscasts were mostly related to national politics and daily happenings, which resulted in the portrayal of the nationwide resistance as a matter of the public order and as a conflict government between protesters and police forces. The mainstream media reports not only served for the interests of the government but also limited the impact of the Gezi movement over larger segments of the population. As a consequence, protesters and individuals who aimed to gather information regarding on going protests turned to alternative media channels as well as online social networks in search for reliable sources throughout and after the resistance.

Gezi Park movement, thus, caused significant governmental and legal pressures on the media. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan targeted international media members who embraced a critical attitude towards the JDP and police forces. Fifty-nine Turkish journalists lost their jobs as a consequence of their reporting about the protests. A popular history magazine published by the Doğu Media Group (NTV Tarih – NTV History in English) was closed down for its special issue on the Gezi movement (Freedomhouse.org, 2015). Gürsel Göncü, the editor in chief of NTV History explained that the decision was saddening for the magazine team, because they worked very hard until the very last moment:

“We learnt that the special issue was not going to be published, on the day we were about to send the issue to the printing house. As they (managers) saw the cover and content table of the magazine, they decided not to publish (...) After learning about the situation, I told them to reconsider their decision. NTV History has never been a partisan magazine that reported from a particular point of view. They reviewed the magazine again, however their decision remained the same. Still, we worked very hard until the very last moment” (Ekinci, 2013).

As a consequence of the increasing censorship and arrests of journalists Turkey regressed by 2014 from the 148th to 154th in the Press Freedom Index (Press Freedom Index, 2014).

The reaction of citizens against the reluctant and cautious attitude of mainstream media as well as mounting political pressures was reflected in the slogans such as “Revolution will not be televised”²⁴. Bilgiç and Kafkaslı (2013) found out that 84% of the demonstrators mentioned the lack of mainstream media coverage as a reason to join the protests in order to see for them and report from the field, where necessary (Orhon and Altunay, 2014). Thus, Gezi experience increased the awareness of individuals about identifying and reaching reliable news sources, and even being citizen reporters, who voluntarily share information from field.

As JDP took the majority with 49.5% of the votes in November 2015, the pressure over the anti-government mainstream media increased. Doğan Media Group, which is one of the leading media conglomerates in Turkey, became one of the main targets due to its critical stance against the government in recent years. One of the attacks was blaming an entertainment show program broadcasted in one of Doğan Media Group’s leading television channels, Kanal D, for conducting terror propaganda. Pro-AKP media immediately supported the allegations directed at Doğan Media Group. The headlines of these news stories varied from “Doğan Medyanın Terör Propogandası Tutmadı” (Terror Propoganda Conducted by Doğan Media Was Not Successful) (sabah.com.tr, Anonymous reporter, 2016) to “Doğan’ın Mağazalarında PKK Kitapları Satılıyor” (Bookstores of Doğan Media Group Sell PKK Books) (takvim.com.tr, Anonymous reporter, 2016). Therefore, the pressure over, especially the anti-government mainstream media continued after the Gezi Park movement, as JDP has preserved its political power.

²⁴ The inspiration for the slogan was a documentary with the same title, which explored the coup d’etat attempt in Venezuela in 2002.

5.4. Reflections of Gezi Park movement in Turkey's Internet-sphere

The rapid development of information and communication technologies made the media environment in Turkey even more complex. When we look at the Internet usage trends before Gezi Park movement, we see that a considerable number of Internet users in Turkey followed news online and expanded their individual social networks via services such as Facebook and Twitter. Alexa (2012) data revealed Facebook and Twitter were among the most visited top five websites by Turkey's Internet users. Turkey, having an Internet population of 36.455.000 was among the countries with the highest penetration rate of Twitter (31.1%) with 11.337.500 active users (Minto, 2013). With around 30 million users that composed approximately 40% of the overall country population, Facebook ranked 4th (Socialbakers, 2013). Other three websites included Windows live (online chat service), Google (Search engine) and YouTube (online video broadcasting and sharing service).

In terms of news consumption patterns, online news sources took over the mainstream dailies, which also impacted on the sales of daily newspapers. Additionally, online-only commercial news websites such as odatv.com and haber7.com started to draw attention among online newsreaders. Alternative and non-commercial news websites such as bianet.org, dorduncukuvvetmedya.com and baskahaber.org can also be counted among important news providers in Turkey, which started their operation prior to Gezi Park movement.

Table 5.2. Online news websites with most visitors before Gezi Park movement

Ranking among news websites	Overall ranking	Source name	Source link
1	7	Hürriyet Gazetesi	http://www.hurriyet.com.tr
2	8	Milliyet Gazetesi	http://www.milliyet.com.tr
3	11	Mynet	http://www.mynet.com
4	12	HaberTÜRK	http://www.haberturk.com
5	15	Donanim Haber	http://www.donanimhaber.com
6	17	Sporx	http://www.sporx.com
7	22	Sabah	http://www.sabah.com.tr
8	25	Gazete Vatan	http://www.vatanim.com.tr
9	26	Haber7.com	http://www.haber7.com
10	30	NTVMSNBC	http://www.ntvmsnbc.com

Source: Data compiled from Alexa.com in January 2013

Despite the existence of alternative news sources, however, the majority of online newsreaders preferred reading news online from mainstream sources. Statistics from Alexa (2013) revealed that online news outlets of mainstream media such as Hürriyet, Milliyet, HaberTÜRK, Sabah, Vatan and NTVMSNBC were within the top ten most visited news sources in Turkey by January 2013 while they were accompanied by online-only websites such as sporx.com, donanimhaber.com and haber7.com. Thus, before Gezi, the majority of online news sources were online outlets of mainstream media companies.

From the first days of the Gezi movement alternative media and online social network usage among the Internet users of Turkey greatly expanded. The protesters on the field used social networks as a major source of information to communicate about the demonstrations. Gezi Park movement has been an important experience in terms of making wider public familiar with social media tools as well as concepts such as hashtag, troll, jammer and many others. At a time of crisis, when receiving and sharing information was of vital importance protesters complaint about the jammers as much as they complaint about the teargas and water cannon attacks.

Some resembled Gezi protests to that of Occupy Wall Street in the U.S. and the Arab Spring in the Middle East, especially due to the widespread utilization of protesters of social networking services for various purposes of communication (Haciyakupoglu and Zhang, 2015). Following the social media campaigns, other groups also joined the protests ranging from extreme leftists to Kemalists and anti-capitalist Islamists.

Among online services, Twitter was among the leading networks where dialogues related to protests reached to its peak (Ozbilgin & Burch, 2013). Urban renovation plans of JDP became widely discussed topics in the Twitter sphere of Turkey. The hashtag #ayagakalk, initiated in April 2013, dominated the twitter-sphere in Turkey, to stage a gathering at Gezi Park of Taksim against the destruction of the public park in order to make way for a shopping mall (Kuymulu, 2013). The gathering turned into a one-day festival that brought

together thousands of Istanbul dwellers around concerts and artistic performances (Mumyakmaz, 2013). Turkish Twitter users sent around two million tweets with hashtags related to the park (i.e. #resistgeziparki, #OccupyGezi) a few hours into the protests (Egin, 2013). A list of top mentioned words in Twitter during the protests is provided in Table 1 (Varnali & Gorgulu, 2015). The total number of tweets sent daily in Turkey increased from 9-11 million to 15.2 million on May 31, the day when the events sparked (Ergurel, 2013). The highest number of mentions included the words “polis” (8.956.591 mentions), “Gezi” (8.473.164) and “Tayyip” (3.647.164) between the dates 15 May 2013 and 16 June 2013.

Table 5.3. List of top mentioned words in Twitter during the peak of Gezi Protests

Words	# of Mentions	Short Explanation
Polis	8.956.591	Police
Gezi	8.473.164	Gezi
Tayyip	3.647.085	First name of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Gezi Parkı	3.568.204	Gezi Parkı
Beşiktaş	2.928.353	A district in the city of Istanbul where the harshest of clashes took place.
Toma	1.641.375	Short for <i>Toplumsal Olaylara Mücadele Aracı</i> - The heavily armored vehicle armed by water and tear gas cannons used by the police for riot control.
Çapulcu	1.586.077	Prime Minister Erdogan used the word <i>Çapulcu</i> (looter in English) to name and defame the protestors, which quickly got reappropriated by the protestors, who then called themselves <i>capulcular</i> (looters).
Biber Gazı	1.438.739	Pepper Gas
Çarşı	1.209.014	Best-known supporter/fan group of Beşiktaş Football Club. Having a left leaning and an anti-fascist character Çarşı was a central mobilizing force during Gezi protests.
RTE	1.072.707	The initials of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Note: The numbers correspond to the dates between May 25 and June 16, 2013, taken from topsy.com. The table is taken from Varnali & Gorgulu (2015).

Besides Twitter, Facebook was also a commonly used platform for protestors. It was used as much as Twitter to receive information on the ongoing protests throughout the Gezi Park movement. Diren Gezi Parkı (<https://www.facebook.com/geziparkidirenisi>) and Taksim Dayanisması (<https://www.facebook.com/TaksimDayanismasi/>) were among the most popular pages throughout the protests to catch up with on-going events. Since Facebook did not introduce the “hashtag” service at the time of the Gezi Park movement, the content shared on the platform remained more diffused in comparison with

Twitter (Banko and Babaoğlu, 2013). However, it can be estimated that the service was among the most used online social networks during Gezi Park movement, as Turkey was ranked as the fourth country with the most Facebook users by 2013 (socialbakers.com, 2013).

As it was the case with other contemporary social movements such as the Arab Spring, early news of the protests spread to outside world through online social networks (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce & boyd, 2011; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). The platforms also served as useful for inverse surveillance as many protesters recorded and shared violent actions of provocateurs through social media.

While online social networks brought several advantages in terms of offering easy-access to communication, they also had certain disadvantages. For instance, the police used social media to gather intelligence on those behind the protests. 29 social media users were detained due to their tweets (Anonymous reporter, 2013). Government officials blamed social media for hosting “the best examples of lies” (Letsch, 2013). On June 4, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arınç said that information supplied on social networks, especially on Twitter, was unreliable (Arsu, 2013).

While the Internet was primarily used for sharing activist announcements and social movements related-news stories before Gezi, protesters utilized and integrated various services of social media to the movement throughout their resistance (İnceoğlu and Çoban, 2015). Social media networks and the Internet in general turned into politically oriented expressive platforms. This transformation became especially obvious in the so-called “hashtag wars” initiated by the pro-government and pro-protest groups. While pro- government social media users started initiating political hashtag campaigns such as #TurkeyStandsBehindPrimeMinister or #ReligiousYouthFollowingEachOther anti-government social media users launched hastags denouncing the government.

Some government members also personally joined the pro-JDP front in the social media war between the pro and anti JDP communities. For instance, one of

the members of the JDP accused a journalist with being a spy for writing a news piece about the agenda of a protest forum gathered in Yogurtcu Parki in Kadikoy district of Istanbul. As a consequence, the polarization among the society was not only visible in the offline world but also in online social networks. The heavy usage of community-specific meanings and verbal and visual symbols reflected the tension between the two poles of the society.

5.5. Online participatory media in Gezi Park movement

As discussed in the previous section, the oligopolistic and concentrated ownership of Turkey's mainstream media and their close relations with the governments of the day impacted on their contents. Online citizen and participatory journalism, which assisted protestors in reaching information about the events on-site and detecting misleading or false news played an essential role in the process to fill the gap left wide open by the traditional media outlets.

Not only already existing alternative media organizations shifted towards Internet services such as social networking sites, mail groups and other possible channels, but also new online media formations started to emerge. Practices of citizen journalism and live broadcasting were encouraged by the slogans that chanted "There are no media; we are the journalists". For instance, T1, a contributor of T24, explains that her main source of news was social media and she regularly reported from field throughout the movement, despite technological limitations:

"I was attached to my mobile phone throughout protests. As I was intensely using my mobile device, it was consistently running out of battery. (...) I used Twitter and Facebook both to share information from mainly Beşiktaş and Taksim districts regarding on going activities and police attacks. Social media were also helpful in terms of receiving news from participatory news networks. Still, it was not easy to receive news. Internet was very slow. I am not sure if it was slowed down on purpose" (interview with T1, 2016).

Similar to existing alternative media platforms, participatory outlets established during Gezi protests, mainly relied on social media. They

predominantly used social networking sites (SNS) (i.e. Facebook, Twitter), video-sharing platforms (i.e. YouTube and Vimeo), online audio distribution platforms (i.e. SoundCloud), live-stream video platforms (i.e. Livestream, UStream) and blogging services (i.e. Wordpress, Blogger).

In total, sixteen online participatory media platforms were in operation throughout Gezi protests²⁵ (See Table 9). The following part will present a brief profile of online participatory media outlets already active or established during Gezi Park movement. Participatory media platforms will be categorized as active prior to Gezi Park movement and established during the movement.



²⁵ It should be noted here that the 16 online participatory media platforms determined are presented to provide an overall profile of alternative media outlets active before or starting from the beginning of Gezi Park protests. As the Internet and its services are decentralized in their nature, it was hard to follow up the all-online media formations especially during Gezi Park protests. Government censorship on the Internet was another limitation to track online citizen journalism practices throughout the protests.

Table 5.4. Online participatory media platforms in operation or established during Gezi Park movement

	Name of platform	Media type	Date of launch	Main website	Presence on SM
Online television	Naber Medya/ RevoltIstanbul	Online television/ news portal	June 2013	nabarmedya.tv	Livestream, Twitter, Facebook
	Çapul TV	Online television	June 6, 2013	http://capul.tv	JW Player, Twitter, Facebook, Google+
	Gezi Parkı TV	Online television/ blog	June 7, 2013	geziparkitv.wordpress.com	Wordpress, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
	Vagus TV	Online television	N/A	www.vagus.tv	Ustream, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
	Hayat TV	Online television/ news portal	March 21, 2007	hayattv.net	SHOUTcastTV, Ustream, Twitter, Facebook,
Radio	Gezi Radyo	Online radio	June 8, 2013	geziradyo.org	Twitter, Facebook
News portal	Bianet.org	News portal	2001	bianet.org	Facebook, Twitter
	T24	News portal	September 1, 2000	t24.com.tr	Facebook, Twitter
	Müştereklerimiz.org	News portal	June 2013	mustereklerimiz.org	Twitter, Facebook
	Ötekilerin Postası	News portal	October 21, 2012	otekilerinpostasi.org	Ustream, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
	Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü	News portal	January 2013	muhimhadiseler.org	Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Pinterest
	Everywheretaksim.net	News portal	May 27, 2013	heverywheretaksim.net	Wordpress, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
	Dokuz8Haber	News portal	July 2013	dokuz8haber.com	Website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
Other	140journos	Twitter account	January 19, 2012	yaraticifikirlerenstitusu.com	Twitter
	Gezi Postası	Leaflet	June 8, 2013	gezipostasi.blogspot.com	Blogspot
	Videoccupy	YouTube video channel	June 2, 2013	videoccupy.org	Twitter, Facebook, YouTube

It was found that online participatory media established prior to the Gezi Park movement included platforms vagus.tv, Hayat TV, Bianet.org, T24, 140journos

and The Others' Post were also actively sharing news about the on-going events throughout the movement. Online participatory media established during Gezi movement included RevoltIstanbul, capul.tv, mustereklerimiz.org, Gezi Postası, videoccupy, Gezi Radio and Gezi Parki TV. In comparison with the platforms established prior to Gezi, the latter group of online participatory media was curated in a more amateur fashion and remains relatively short-lived. The only exception remained capul.tv, which continued its operation even after Gezi Park movement.

5.5.1. Hayat TV (Life TV).

Hayat TV is a Turkey based nationwide television channel, which was established on 21 March 2007. Also available via satellite services, Hayat TV established its online broadcasting in 2010. The channel aims to serve as the voice of the proletariat and makes this aim explicit in its manifesto:

“Who cares about the lives of workers, villagers, housewives, students, disabled, youth and children? (Mainstream) televisions do not broadcast anything more than a black screen. Hayat TV aims to go beyond this black screen and witness and tell narratives of ordinary citizens” (hayat.tv, 2015).

The channel provided one of the most extensive coverage of Gezi Park movement, at a time when mainstream media of Turkey was criticized for neglecting events. The television channel utilized digital media services including SHOUTcastTV, Ustream, Twitter and Facebook share contents published on hayattv.net website. Even one of the channel's reporters (İsmail Afacan) was injured in the eye as a police armored vehicle used a water hose (Greenslade, 2013). Protesters started attacking mainstream media offices in Ankara and İstanbul on 03 June 2013 (Greenslade, 2013), who aimed to criticize the lacking mainstream media coverage and the increased number of injured journalists.

The brutality towards media workers in Turkey, which resulted in the wounding of 14 journalists including Afacan, also drew considerable criticism among global press freedom organizations. The New York based Committee to

Protect Journalists (CPJ), Paris-based press freedom watchdog Reporters without Borders and Vienna-based International Press Institute have all condemned Turkish police actions against journalists during protests (Greenslade, 2013).

Since Hayat TV stood out as one of the most active media outlets during Gezi Park movement who reported live from field, it also directed the attention of government officials in a short period of time. On 13 June 2013, On June 13, 2013, the state media regulator Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), ordered Turkish Satellite Communications and Cable TV Operators Company (Turksat) to stop broadcasting Hayat TV's signal, with the claim that it lacked a license (Hurriyet Daily, 2013). The complaint was a result of a recent change in the rules requiring broadcasters to obtain a RTÜK license. The order received widespread criticism especially among Gezi Park movement protesters, as the date of both events intersected (haberler.com, Anonymous reporter, 2013). As soon as RTÜK acknowledged that Hayat TV had an open application for license (Kara, 2013), it requested Turksat to cancel the order on Hayat TV (Radikal, 2013).

5.5.2. Bianet.org

Bianet.org, established in 2000, was one of the independent and online media outlets active from the start of Gezi Park movement. Bianet.org was established by the IPS Communication Foundation in 2003 to “support the local media, monitor violations of freedom of expression, promote a more frequent and substantial media representation of human, women and children's rights; establishing and developing standards for journalism and a concept of professional ethics” (bianet.org, 2013). European Commission mainly has mainly funded Bianet so far (bianet.org, 2015). The platform offers news on culture, economy, education, people and religion, as well as on freedom of expression, labor, minorities, gender and health-specific news, that is often ignored by Turkey's mainstream media outlets.

During Gezi Park movement, Bianet.org actively produced news about on-going events. Since it follows the traditional news making tradition in a written format, Bianet.org offered news pieces and columns about the Gezi-related events

during and after the movement (e.g. Başar Gezgin, 2013; Eliaçık, 2014). Since the project does not contain an online television channel, the majority of news was in written and visual content. An editor of the organization, who was one of the main reporters of Bianet.org during Gezi Park movement, explain, the Gezi period was intense:

“Two of our editors were sitting in front of their computers whole day throughout the first three days of the protests. The information flow was intense. I was on field both for personal reasons and my profession as a journalist. I remember that I had to write news pieces with my mobile phone several times during the movement (interview with Bianet.org editor (B1), 2016).

The Bianet.org editor adds, it was not an easy time for the organization to continue its regular daily operation:

“The news production process was quite extraordinary for us (during Gezi Park movement). The time of the protests coincided with parliamentary and judicial recess. We normally have a lighter agenda during that time of the year. However, due to the emergence of Gezi Park protests, we had to work nonstop. It was a time in which even street stairs could make it to the news, for being painted into the colors of the rainbow by protesters (which symbolically represented the LGBT flag). It was a time when there were a lot of material that could be interest of the Bianet.org agenda” (interview with B1, 2016).

One of the main contributions of Bianet.org to Gezi Park movement was its success in terms of documenting and compiling important information about the nationwide protests. For instance one of the pieces published during the movement was an informative compilation about the Gezi Park forums gathering in different parks of İstanbul (Anonymous reporter, 2013); while in another piece, music archive of Gezi Park movement was compiled by reporters (Anonymous reporter, 2013). Therefore, even though Bianet.org was active during Gezi Park movement, the organization did not change the way it produced news in order to catch up with the rapidly changing agenda of the movement (interview with Bianet.org editor, 2016). Therefore, although Bianet.org was not able to provide hot topics of the Gezi Park agenda in a speed manner, similar to the way online television networks did, its cultural and intellectual contributions to the movement

made Bianet.org one of the important outlets of Gezi. The news organization also did not alter its operation processes, despite an increase its news readership and recognition. Bianet.org has continued its operation after Gezi Park movement and also continued publishing post-Gezi news stories, which has provided various intellectual reflections on the contrubiton of the movement to the Turkish society (e.g. Kaymak, 2014; Vardar, 2014).

5.5.3. Ötekilerin Postası (The Others' Post)

Otekilerin Postası (Others' Post) was primarily established on 21 October 2012, with the name "Hunger Strikes Post". The website was launched by two volunteer journalists, in order to draw attention to the hunger strikes started by imprisoned Kurdish citizens, who demanded the release of the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan (Watson and Tuysuz, 2012). Hunger strikes ended with the call of Abdullah Ocalan on his supporters to end the protest after holding a series of discussions with the officers of Turkish intelligence service, MIT (Butler and Cakan, 2012).

A pomegranate is the logo of the Other's Post. The collective explains its aim to be "the collective voice of minorities, the outcast, the marginalized, and those whose voices have been rendered invisible in the media; in short, the others" (Güler, 2013). Editors, who joined the Others' Post community edit and publish contents on platform's website, as well as via its Facebook page (/O.Postasi) and Twitter account (@OtekilerPostasi) with the assistance of participatory journalists from all around Turkey. Other's Post mainly covers violation of human rights of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities.

The actual number of platforms' followers on Facebook is inaccessible since the platform was banned three times, according to a statement provided on the otekilerinpostasi.org website (otekilerinpostasi.org, 2013). The platform sent an open letter to a national daily, BirGün, stating that Facebook closed their account for the charges of containing pornographic and sexual contents (BirGün Daily, 2013). Several academics (2013) protested Facebook's policy as

ensorship. The website launched its Facebook page for the fourth time on 13 August 2013 (otekilerinpostasi.org, 2013).

Figure 5.2.An image by the Other's Post from Gezi Park on 31 May 2013



The contribution of The Others' Post to the Gezi Park movement has been to show individuals that it was possible to broadcast via basic online tools at times, when mainstream media do not cover certain events. The members also believed that the need to alternative and participatory media increased after Gezi Park movement:

“The importance of alternative media increased after Gezi protests. During the movement, almost every protester recorded scenes from the movement and shared their videos via social media. However, we were different. Our experience became our advantage. We were already doing this before Gezi. I think this was one of the main reasons why people followed us during Gezi protests. Our experience made people trust us. (The Others' Post interview with Çetin, 2013).

Similar to Hayat TV, The Others' Post aimed at representing underrepresented groups such as Kurds, proletarian and LGBT individuals and kept its stance the same way throughout Gezi Park movement. Its popularity during the movement resulted with several censorship practices that aimed to shut down especially the Facebook page of the collective, in which they remained most active (Çetin, 2013):

“We need to discuss censorship practices and Internet surveillance more. For instance, the Others’ Post has been censored nine times. Despite pressures, we still work on creating an activist sphere on Facebook” (Futtu, 2014).

Pressures over the Others’ Post have not been limited with censorship practices. For instance, the editor of the Others’ Post was also taken into custody for his news pieces about Gezi protests (Yeşil Gazete, 2014). Despite political repressions over the platform, Others’ Post has continued its operations also after Gezi Park movement.

5.5.4. vagus.tv

vagus.tv was also among the online participatory media active during Gezi Park movement but established briefly prior to the protests. Launched by journalist Serdar Akınan as “an independent news platform established by journalists against the established media structure” (vagus.tv, 2013), vagus.tv provided written and visual content as well as video news shared via YouTube by various citizen journalists around the world. The website also called citizen journalists to contribute via “The Commons Camera” throughout protests.

Although vagus.tv was not established during the Gezi Park movement, the platform emerged as one of the most followed and viewed alternative televisions. Live stream links were shared while citizen journalists reported live from Taksim as well as from various other cities throughout the days when the protests were at its peak. Links of ustream.tv contents were published on vagus.tv website and shared via the platform’s social media accounts including YouTube (/vagustv), Twitter (@vagustv) and Facebook (/vagus.tv). The platform had 3,099 followers on Facebook and 11,174 followers on Twitter by September 20, 2013. According to twittercounter.com statistics, Vagus.TV added 56 followers averaged between June 1-August 1, 2013 and tweeted 124 tweets average (twittercounter, 2013).

Despite its popularity on social media, vagus.tv was challenged with financial limitations (Schleiffer, 2014). The situation became more obvious when

a \$10,000 left over from the “What’s happening in Turkey?” campaign, launched on indiegogo.com to advertise via NY Times to create international awareness about on-going protests, was transferred to vagus.tv (Aktihanoglu, 2013). Shortly after in January 2014, The Presidency of Communications banned vagus.tv for its news on the second row of corruption probe operation (Akgül, 2014).

5.5.5. 140 journos

140journos, which was established on 19 January 2012, for live news reporting based on Twitter was also among the alternative media platforms, which were actively reporting during Turkey’s Gezi Park movement. The platform where the community is majorly active is Twitter. The name 140journos reflect the community’s appreciation of Twitter and makes a reference to Twitter’s 140-character limit.

The group, which operates in an amateur fashion, mainly uses its Twitter account (@140journos) to cover LGBTQ movements, student trials, protests and terrorism cases. Co-founder Engin Onder, who was a 21-year old Bahçeşehir University student when the platform established, explains:

“We are all journalists now (...) what we have is our own devices...it actually removes the barrier between the person who sees the news and creates the news” (140 journos interview with Dlugoleski, 2013).

Since Twitter is the main communication channel of the platform, the format of news are kept as simple as possible in order to overcome with the character limit.

Figure 5.3. A screenshot from a tweet shared by @140journos on Twitter on 04 June 2013



Similar to its operation prior to the Gezi Park movement, 140journos continued sharing visuals and up-to-date news from various geographies by mentioning the original source of news as for instance, e.g. @kcakduman (as also shown in the figure). Before disseminating news, the collective act attentive to assess the story's accuracy from reliable sources (Zalewski, 2015).

One of the main contribution of 140journos to Gezi Park movement and the online participatory environment of Turkey in general has been that it became the first Twitter-based news source, which provided short news pieces with visuals where relevant. During times when the tension on field was at its peak, it was useful for Twitter users to keep up with the on-going news thanks to the short pieces shared by 140journos:

“People recognized that the mainstream media was not reporting about Gezi Park protests during the height of the movement. It was the point when they started looking for alternative news sources. People trusted 140journos, however their trusted created pressure on us. We did our best to share and spread verified news” (140journos interview with Karadeniz, 2015).

140journos also states that verification remained important during Gezi Park movement (Karadeniz, 2015; Poyraz Doğan, 2015):

“During Gezi, we only shared audio and visual content from unknown resources. We did not share text-based tweets. Audio and video contents allowed us to verify the reliability of the news piece. We also tried our best to verify news from unverified sources by consulting with various resources, which we trusted (140journos interview with Karadeniz, 2015).

Verification thus, remained important for 140journos, in a time when misinformation on social media was at its peak (Poyraz Doğan, 2015). The collective also decided to adopt its format to other online platforms after Gezi Park movement:

“We had Twitter in our hands during Gezi. However we also started looking for new platforms to share our news pieces after Gezi Park protests: Ekşi Sözlük, Periscope, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Vine, Facebook, Bobiler, Soundcloud...We hope to exist in all these platforms soon” (140journos interview with Karadeniz, 2015).

Even though 140journos mainly used Twitter as its main communication tool during Gezi Park movement, it has started looking for alternative ways to share its news pieces with wider audiences. It can be stated that 140journos emerged as a promising media experience and successfully sustained its operation throughout the Gezi Park movement.

5.5.6. T24

Another important actor that can be considered as online participatory media active prior to Gezi Park movement was T24. Doğan Akın founded T24 in September 2009 in collaboration with founding editors Metin Yener, Belde Bozkurt Oral and Selin Ongun (t24.com.tr, 2013). Aydın Engin and Oya Baydare also listed among co-founder of T24, who regularly contribute to the platform with their opinion pieces, while Hazar Özvarış works as the editor in chief (t24.com.tr, 2016).

In a short period of time, T24 emerged as one the promising Internet based news organs of Turkey. T24 is the first Internet-based news organ recognized by Turkish Journalists' Association, who awarded the platform with "best Internet-based news website award" (t24.com.tr, 2011). Hasan Cemal, a T24 author and a prominent journalist, has become the first Turkish journalist to receive the Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscious and Integrity in Journalism (harvard.edu, 2016).

One of the most important contributions of T24 to Turkey's news environment has been its accessibility for anyone who wants to contribute to the platform with opinion columns. While the mainstream dailies in Turkey mostly hire full time columnists, T24 preferred a different format and accepted opinion pieces from anyone who wants to contribute. T1, a regular contributor of T24, explains she decided to publish with T24 due to its accessibility and its unique stance in Turkish media environment:

"I think T24 differs has a special place in Turkish media. It is one of the most structured and critical Internet-based news organizations along with bianet.org (...) I haven't been able to contribute on a regular basis. I also have other things to do to maintain my life. But I know that the doors are always open for me when I have a story in mind" (interview with T1, 2016).

In an academic panel (bilgi.edu.tr, 2014), Akın explains that one of the major threats against independency of news organizations is the lack of financial resources (Engür, 2014). He further adds that the lack of financial resources has a wider negative impact over the successful operation of news organizations, when compared to political pressures in Turkey (Engür, 2014).

Shortly after the establishment of T24, co-founders, who aimed to create an alternative platform to practice independent journalism, established P24 as a side project. The aims of the project include supporting independent journalism and editorial processes in a media environment, where journalists are facing serious political pressures (p24platform.org, 2016):

“P24 aims to improve the media capacity of Turkey, encourage public demand for a free media environment, provide support for the best journalistic practices and foster transition from print journalism to the digital” (platform24.org, 2016).

Although P24 was not active during Gezi Park movement, it has become one of the important independent journalism platforms in Turkey. Contributors have ranged from academics to independent journalists (platform24.org, 2016). Despite the platform was not active during Gezi Park movement, it has published several articles and opinion columns after protests (e.g. – “Gezi Ruhu Hong Kong Sokaklarında”, Tunç, no date; “Alışmayacağız”, Anonymous reporter, no date).

Despite challenges, T24 successfully covered Gezi Park protests during and after the movement (T24 Gezi Chronology, 2014). Similarly, P24 contributed to the coverage of demonstrations by hosting several post-movement opinion pieces. Overall, it can be stated that T24 operated in a similar fashion with Bianet.org during Gezi Park movement. Since T24 editors follow the traditional journalism tradition, video recordings were rarely integrated into news pieces throughout protests, while opinion pieces and newsbreaks came into prominence. Therefore along with bianet.org, T24 mainly served for the interest of newsreaders, which sought for reliable news to read on the Internet curated in an organized fashion. For having a news format close to the online outlets of mainstream media institutions in Turkey, T24 emerged as one of the most widely read online platforms during Gezi Park movement and also later on.

5.5.7. Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü (Fundamental Incidents Institute)

Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü was established on January 2013 as an independent communication platform to provide and share information free from discrimination and hate speech. The institute was developed as an “Alternative Media Systems” project by academics from Istanbul University. The President of the platform is Halil Emrah Macit and the editor in Chief is Sedat Gündoğdu. Nüket Demirel coordinates the news agency. The platform also has a representative in Norway (muhimhadiseler.org, 2016). The manifesto of the platform contains seven main articles:

- “Providing a free platform for academic, cultural, political discussions where new ideas are also produced,
- Overcoming the hierarchical producer-recipient relationship by establishing a knowledge production-oriented perspective,
- Overcoming the structural limitations of existing commercial print and Internet media,
- Aiming to create alternative media platforms that will assist individuals evaluate the on-going political events from a neutral perspective,
- Producing authentic content in an Internet environment, where users are being exposed to loads of anonymous and unreliable information contents,
- Encouraging Internet users to become active producers of reliable contents by removing the barrier between production and reception,
- Serving as a platform where products of culture industries are being evaluated and discussed in a critical manner” (muhimhadiseler.org, 2016).

In an institute-related statement, where the details of the Alternative Media Systems project are shared, the collective explains its aims briefly as follows:

“As an independent communication platform, Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü aims to continue its operation as a network, where individuals can freely express their opinions without fearing discrimination (...) we believe our approach should be to break meta-narratives in order to create a democratic communication environment” (muhimhadiseler.org, 2013).

Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü mainly operates via its website (muhimhadiseler.org), and social media accounts on Facebook and YouTube. Major categories of Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü website include news on education, ecology, labor, youth, legal rights, women and culture (muhimhadiseler.org, 2013). The platform is open for contributions from academics working for other universities. By March 2016, the institute declared

that it would become an institutionalized news organization (Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü YouTube channel, 2016).

The collective also has an activist stance. For instance, the collective played an active role over social discrimination against Rüzgar Erkoçlar, a Turkish actor who had a sex change operation in 2013 (Egin, 2013), by launching an online petition campaign via change.org, in order to create awareness about homophobia among Internet users (change.org, 2013). The campaign succeeded in drawing 5.924 supporters, who signed the press statement, that criticized social pressure over Erkoçlar:

“We stand with Rüzgar Erkoçlar and support his right to live in Turkey society as an equal citizen. We stand against the homophobic hate speeches targeting Erkoçlar” (change.org, 2013).

Although Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü did not share news pieces in a similar fashion with T24 or Bianet.org, it emerged as one of the most important online sources that potentially contributed to the Gezi Park movement at the intellectual level (e.g. – “Devrimle Karnaval Arasında Bir Gezi”, Nas, 2013; “Gezi Parkı ve Militan Çevrecilik”, Gündoğdu, 2013). The platform provided mainly opinion pieces about the ongoing protests and offered avenues for alternative interpretations of Gezi Park movement.

Since the majority of content provided on Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü remained opinion pieces and academic discussions, its follower base did not witness a rapid increase during Gezi Park movement. The followers of the collective on social media increased from 438 to 509 throughout the three months following the start of protests (twittercounter.com, 2013). Therefore Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü can be perceived as a small community or an interest group, which was active during Gezi Park movement and aimed to serve as an alternative platform of intellectual discussions. After the movement, the collective has continued its operation in a similar fashion by publishing discussion articles and opinion pieces on on-going political events.

5.5.8. capul.tv

capul.tv (<http://www.capul.tv>) started broadcasting on 06 July 2013 from Gezi Park. The news that capul.tv started broadcasting live from the park became a trending topic on Twitter both in Turkey and worldwide, immediately after the channel was established (en.trending-topic.com, 2013). The establishment of capul.tv also drew the attention of certain mainstream papers of Turkey, including Milliyet (2013) and Radikal (2013), which provided information and links related to the platform as well as its broadcast stream.

Figure 5.4. en.trending-topic measures for #TT occurrences of ‘Çapul TV’ in Turkey and worldwide



The first broadcast of capul.tv was a documentary on French resister journalists. Its first live guest became a Turkish journalist, Ahmet Hakan. Names of the television programs such as “Öyle Bir Geçer Toma Ki...” (And a water cannon vehicle passes by...), “Yarışma: Kim Devrimci Olmak İster?” (Competition: Who wants to be a revolutionary?) and “Çizgi film: Toma ve Jerry” (Cartoon: Water cannon vehicle and Jerry), were chosen in a humoristic manner in order to attract more attention from the audience and to criticize mainstream media for ignoring the happenings in Gezi Park as well as in other parts of Istanbul and various cities of Turkey.

Volunteer journalists of capul.tv interviewed several protesters and broadcasted discussions that took place at various parks, including Yogurtcu Park in Kadikoy and Gezi Park in Taksim, in İstanbul. Broadcasts of Capul TV were viewed more than a million times in total in its first week, as an alternative media platform utilizing new communication technologies. Pages and accounts such as <https://www.facebook.com/CapulTv> and https://twitter.com/capul_tv established on social networking sites also enhanced the familiarity of social media users

about capul.tv. Followers of @Capul_TV reached 12.089 followers in ten days right after the beginning of protests on June 8, 2013 and were 95.514 in the following three months.

The main contribution of capul.tv to Gezi Park movement has been that it succeeded in attracting hundreds of Internet users, who were living in various geographies and aimed to learn about the on-going events especially at the Gezi Park district of İstanbul. By utilizing from services such as ustream on field, capul.tv volunteers provided live broadcasts from the park, which the majority of online participatory media organizations failed to realize. Another important contribution of capul.tv to the movement has been that it generated awareness among individuals that participatory media is necessary when mainstream media fails covering particular events. By ensuring its sustainability, capul.tv continued its operation after Gezi Park movement and kept on covering movement-related news from various geographies of Turkey with live broadcasts and short clips.

5.5.9. mustereklerimiz.org

mustereklerimiz.org was established right after the beginning of protests at Gezi Park on 28 May 2013. As an anti-capitalist group, the collective actively participated and directed the internal dynamics of movement from the coordination of action to the management of kitchen affairs. The group also provided insights from the park, summaries of the day and theoretical discussions on action plans, published both in Turkish and English. Thus, mustereklerimiz.org did not only emerge as an alternative and participatory media platform on providing news and discussions which were largely ignored by the mainstream media, but also as an anti-capitalist collective designed to actively participate and manage the dynamics of the movement, especially in İstanbul.

On mustereklerimiz.org, the group explained their aims as follows:

“(...) For us, the urgent need of the present time is to create and multiply the spaces of opposition and solidarity to break off from this powerlessness and fragmentation (...) We know that we will be able to break the waves attacking us, to dispel

the effect of disintegration caused on us by neo-liberalism, to the extent that we are able to create and multiply these common spaces” (mustereklerimiz.org, 2013).

The group also provided up to date short news pieces via its Twitter account @musterekler on various issues including theoretical insights (i.e. “David Harvey Interview: The importance of post-capitalist imagination #direngezi) that would contribute to the intellectual discussion on the movement, forum meeting schedules (i.e. we will be discussing immigration at Yogurtcu Park with academicians tomorrow at 7 pm), re-tweets from accounts providing up-to-date news from other cities (i.e. @direnankara) to important dates that signify massacres, mass killings or massive discriminatory practices such as the September 6-7 events (i.e. ‘What happened on September 6-7?’ <https://t.co/Y8XZYnjJK1>) which had special importance in Turkish history. @musterekler account drew more than 13,750 followers in less than 3 months, which was also complemented with a similar content on Facebook with the page addressed /mustereklerimiz for Facebook users.

The main contribution of mustereklerimiz.org to Gezi Park movement has mostly been at intellectual level. The collective translated various articles and opinion pieces from social movement scholars to share their Turkish version with their readers. The aim of the collective has been to direct attention to commons in a political order marked by neoliberal policies and moderate Islamism. In line, they organized a forum meeting on 20 December 2014 to discuss politics of the common in an era of global resistance (mustereklerimiz.org, 2016). However, the impact of the forum meeting remained limited and the planned successor meetings could not be actualized. Still, mustereklerimiz.org emerged as one of the most promising media of Gezi Park movement with influential impact and follower base on social media especially throughout the movement period.

5.5.10. Geziradyo.org

Geziradyo.org (FM 101.9) was launched on 08 June 2013 from a tent settled on the Gezi Park during protests with the slogan *we are all chapulling*. The

Gezi Radio team succeeded in broadcasting live from the park with the assistance of a transmitter, a radio antenna, a mixer and a laptop (İnce, 2013).

Figure 5.5. A sample Gezi Radio poster distributed at Gezi Park during the movement



Source: The poster is taken from Twitter account of Gezi Radio (@geziradyo), which is currently not active.

Throughout the movement, the radio operated between 10:00 and 22:00 and provided content related to news about protests, interviews with protestors and political collectives as well as music broadcasts. The collective also established Facebook and Twitter accounts to reach wider audiences. The radio station could be listened via FM 101.9 around Gezi Park and via the Internet worldwide.

The broadcasts of Gezi Radio remain unavailable, as the collective not record and archive their broadcasts. However, in a 2 and a half minute broadcast

of Gezi Radio, which is recorded and published via Open Security website, briefly express the collective's opinions about Gezi Park movement as well as their aims:

“This is Gezi Radio from a tent in Taksim Square. We have a message for foreign media. We are not here just to give you another account of police violence. We are here to give you an account of our demands, as our demands still remain unanswered. Most important of them is that, we want our public spaces to remain as such. We are citizens; we have a right to organize, together to discuss, to express. This freedom is not the one Prime Minister Erdoğan has offered us. He proposed a referendum and sent his police at us. Public space is a right; it is not open for compromise. It is a common good. Therefore, PM has not offered us anything concrete (...)

Gezi Park is also a public space and it is ours. We are not here because we enjoy tear gas, barricades and shots or being photographed. Police violence is terrible. But we are here to struggle for our common goods. (...) We are here to defend our commons, which are not open to bargain” (opendemocracy.net, 2013).

The main importance of geziradyo.org for Gezi Park movement was that it was the only radio station that was established as an online participatory media. The radio station succeeded in drawing attention of the media both at national (e.g. İnce, 2013) and international levels (opendemocracy.net, 2013) throughout its operation. Another importance of Gezi Radio was that it was one of the few participatory media organizations -with çapul.tv- founded in the park during the movement. However, the impact of the radio station has not been long lasting and it disappeared with the end of the movement. Moreover, the archive of the radio does not remain available since the platform did not upload the broadcasted content to any audio recording and streaming platforms such as the soundcloud.com. Therefore, it can be argued that the station did not succeed in establishing a long-lasting presence as çapul.tv did, which was another participatory media established during the movement.

5.5.11. Gezi Parkı TV

Gezi Parkı TV was established on 06 June 2013 at the height of the events. A university student established the platform with technical help from his friends, in order to record scenes from the field and publish via geziparkitv.wordpress.com

(geziparkitv.wordpress.com, 2013). During the movement, the founder of the platform explained Gezi Parkı TV was mainly established to serve as an alternative communication sphere, where protesters can freely express their thoughts and feelings:

“I established Gezi Parkı TV yesterday in order to give a voice to anyone who wants to speak up for their demands. The platform is open to all ideas. By the way, I am not a member of a political party or any other political organization” (interview with Gezi Parkı TV founder, internethaber.com, 2013).

Although the platform named itself as a television, it actually served as a thematic video platform based on Word Press blogging service. The platform also established a YouTube channel in order to store the videos shared via Word Press.

Figure 5.6. A screenshot from Gezi Parkı TV blog page

#181 – Our friend Natalie tells what Gezi Parkı looks like from outside



Throughout its operation, Gezi Parkı TV collective named each video consecutively and included scenes from protests organized at various parks of Istanbul (i.e. #164), interviews with protestors (i.e. #134), volunteer journalists (i.e. #182 and 183), domestic and international students (i.e. #181), soccer fans (i.e. #180), self-claimed poets (i.e. #178), mothers (i.e. #173) and celebrities including Barbaros Şansal (#157), a Turkey born fashion designer and Serra Yılmaz (#170), a Turkey born actress residing in Italy. The collective also shared

links of videos through its Facebook page (/geziparkitv) and Twitter account (@geziparkitv) in order to reach wider audiences. However, the number of views remained limited (200 views average per video).

According to the collective, the primary aim of Gezi Parkı TV had not been to produce and share news. The main purpose of the collective had been to spread thoughts and feelings of protesters on field:

“Protesters in here... They all want to talk. On the other hand, platforms where individuals can freely speak are only a few (...) so far we have received constructive criticisms from protesters. Some of them joined our recordings and shared their protest related experiences. We even hosted celebrities (...) our main aim is not to report, but to let people talk” (interview with Gezi Parkı TV founder, internethaber.com, 2013).

As Gezi Parkı movement came to an end by the end of June, the operation of Gezi Parkı TV also stopped. It is not surprising to see that the operation of Gezi Parkı TV remained short-term, as the main aim of the collective has been to spread ideas and feelings generated at Gezi Park at the height of the events.

Although the influence of Gezi Parkı TV over recipients has remained limited (which can also be inferred from the low number of Gezi Parkı TV viewers), one of its primary contributions to the movement has been its conceptual video archive. Although currently inactive, the blog page of the collective presents short stills from the Gezi Parkı movement, which keeps the memories of the movement alive. Individuals from diverse backgrounds and such as football fans, older protesters, university students, tourists and exchange students are represented in shorts clips of Gezi Parkı TV, where Gezi experiences and interpretations of these individuals are also shared. Therefore, it can be stated that the collective contributed to the visual memory of the movement, by publishing brief dialogues with protesters, who were hardly represented by the mainstream media outlets.

5.5.12. videoccupy

videoccupy.org project was launched during the first week of the Gezi Park protests, on June 2, 2013 (videoccupy.org, 2013) to create a collection of video postings recorded via various personal communication tools including mobile phones, video cameras and i-Pads. In an interview (emegingundemi.blogspot.com, 2013), a member of the collective describes the establishment process of videoccupy.org as follows:

“As soon as we realized that the number of individuals were starting to increase at Gezi Park, we organized a small meeting with a couple of documentarist friends, who were familiar with video broadcast technologies. We started sharing video recordings from the park on our web page” (interview with videoccupy member, emegingundemi.com, 2013).

The collective member also adds that the missing mainstream media coverage also motivated them to record videos and share them on the Internet:

“We differed from mainstream media. We were not making news. This was not our primary aim. Our aim was to record scenes from the life in the park. But of course, the missing mainstream media coverage was a motivation for us. We were a mediator to let people see the reality of the movement” (interview with videoccupy member, emegingundemi.com, 2013).

The website of videoccupy had a plain template, including a statement by the founder video activists on why the project was launched as well as links to social media accounts of videoccupy.org. The statement, which was written during the movement, explained the aims of the collective as follows: “videoccupy project aims to create a visual memory of Gezi Park movement and archive scenes from protests. Our archive includes videos recorded via mobile devices, video cameras and tablet PCs” (videoccupy.org, 2013). The videoccupy.org web site remains in active by 2016 (videoccupy.org, 2016).

videoccupy.org was an also open project for citizen journalists who wished to contribute to the platform on a voluntarily basis: “If you want your

videos to be included in our archive, you can send the link of your recordings to our email address” (videoccupy.org, 2013). Throughout protests, collective gathered video recordings on its YouTube channel²⁶, and shared YouTube video links via its Facebook²⁷ and Twitter²⁸ accounts. The number of videoccupy followers reached to 2,973 on Facebook by September 21, 2013 and from 108 to 728 on Twitter throughout the three months following the start of protests (June 5, 2013-September 5, 2013) (twittercounter.com, 2013).

In comparison with other video-based media outlets such as *çapul.tv*, the impact of videoccupy remained limited. Its operation also came to an end as the Gezi Park movement started to lose momentum. Despite short-lived, videoccupy was an important experience to see how ordinary citizens can launch YouTube channels in order to record and broadcast on-going events to the world, when mainstream media institutions provide partial or sided content.

5.5.13. Everywheretaksim.net

Everywheretaksim.net was established by the International Solidarity with Occupy Gezi Platform, composed of a group of academics, intellectuals, artists, curators, workers, scientists and students (everywheretaksim.net, 2013). The web site aimed at archiving the visuals, texts, news and videos related to the occupy movement in Turkey. Rather than reporting live from parks or forums where opposition gatherings to protest the government were held, the platform offered an up-to-date collection of visual and textual materials from several sources including other alternative media platforms and activist Twitter users via its accounts on Facebook (/everywheretaksim.net) and Twitter (@Resist_Gezi). Its operation came to an end by August 2014 and it joined other online participatory media of Gezi Park movement that remained short lived.

²⁶ Videoccupy YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDhtsYy5VC09T0ixjHmhBQQ>

²⁷ Videoccupy Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Videoccupy>

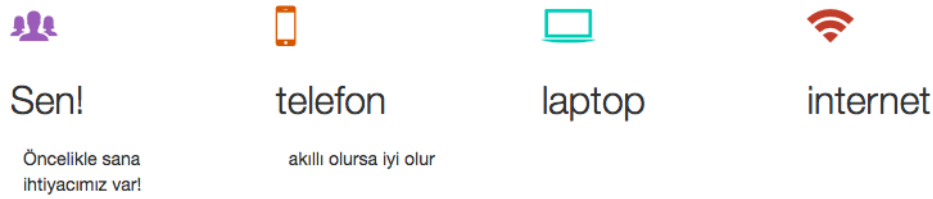
²⁸ Videoccupy Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/Videoccupy>

5.5.14. Naber Medya

Naber Medya was established in 2011 as an alternative media platform in Istanbul. The media group defines itself as a “platform providing the opportunity for citizen journalists to broadcast live from all around the world” (nabermedya.blogspot.com, 2011).

The platform broadcasted news on small and large-scale movements and revolts, such as the labor and solidarity day movements of 2012 and 2013 and the occupation of Starbucks coffee shop in Boğaziçi University on 6th of December 2011, which were largely ignored by the mainstream media.²⁹ Throughout the protests Naber Medya started online and live broadcasting from several different cities of Turkey by mainly focusing on the happenings at the Gezi Park. The group broadcasted via <http://www.nabermedya.tv> and provided up to date news as in broadcast or in text format on their Facebook page, /NaberMedya.

Figure 5.7. A screenshot from Naber Medya call for participatory journalism



Naber Medya also launched a Twitter account (@RevoltIstanbul) after the beginning of Gezi Park movement, which drew more than 5.000 followers in less than 3 months. The platform also called for potential contributors to share their content via e-mail to be broadcasted via Naber Medya throughout the movement. In comparison with capul.tv, Naber Medya operated in a more amateur fashion

²⁹ The students of Bogazici University, one of the globally renown and quality universities in Turkey, occupied a newly opened Starbucks store at the Bogazici University Northern campus in Istanbul protesting the University administration for opening the university campus area to international brands and thus making it a marketplace rather than an educational public space. They stayed in the store overnight, used the kitchen of Starbucks to cook meals and sang. Academicians have also reported to support the students. More information on the movement can be found on Celebration at Bogazici Starbucks blog, where the ending of the occupation was also announced by the group: <http://starbuckssenligi.blogspot.com>

but succeeded in drawing attention on social media throughout the Gezi Park movement. In the long term however, its daily operation mainly relied on video recordings rather than live broadcasts.

5.5.15. Gezi Postası (Gezi Post)

Similar to other contemporary social movements of 2000s, Gezi Park movement was also marked by intense uses of new ICTs. Such intense use inevitably resulted with the emergence of a variety of online participatory media outlets, which was published as a leaflet. Designed in a leaflet format, the first issue of Gezi Post was published and distributed on June 8, 2013, to protestors on Gezi Park, as well as to those who live nearby buildings around Beyoğlu district and to shopkeepers- mainly to bookstores for free. The creators of the Gezi Post encouraged their readers to copy, reproduce and distribute the post around their neighborhoods via an announcement at the first issue of Gezi Post (Gezi Post Issue: 1, 2013). Producers continued publishing Gezi Post until 29 July 2013 on a weekly basis (gazetegezipostasi.blogspot.com, 2013).

Erkmen (2015) explains that the main themes of Gezi Post can be categorized under six themes, which are “support to Gezi Park movement and Gezi forums”; “Taksim commune and public spheres of Gezi Park movement”; “background of Gezi Park movement”; “political power and action”; “violence” and “social groups integrated with Gezi Park movement” (p.231).

Figure 5.8. The front page of Gezi Postası vol. 11



In terms of “support to Gezi Park movement and Gezi forums” researchers explain that Gezi Post reflected the nationwide support to Gezi Park movement, by mainly including coverage from Ankara (e.g. Hello from Ankara to Gezi: Swan Park Wants Its Swans Back –Gezi Post, 2013, 8 June, p. 4) (Erkmen, 2015). “Taksim commune and public spheres of Gezi Park movement” theme is reflected on the coverage of announcements about protests-related events and activities and instructions on what to do when taken under police custody. “Background of Gezi Park movement” theme reflects the main reasons behind the emergence of Gezi Park movement, by quoting protesters’ demands such as “Gezi must remain as a park and it must be opened to the public” (Gezi Post, 2013, 6 June, p.1) and “All protesters taken into custody must be released” (Gezi Post, 2013, 6 June, p.1) (Erkmen, 2015). Fourth theme reflects the spirit of the resistance, which is positioned against the political power, with statements such as: “We don’t care about the agreements you sign. We are not going anywhere until our demands are

realized and actualized” (Gezi Post, 2013, 11 June, p.1-2). The “violence” theme is covered in stories, which include news about police violence and number of killed and injured protesters (Erkmen, 2015). Lastly, “social groups integrated with Gezi Park movement” themed news pieces emphasize the demands of various social groups such as LGBT groups, Kurdish nationalists and environmentalists who integrated their causes into the agenda of the movement (e.g. - “From Dersim to Fırat, we will be the voice of the massacred” (Gezi Post, 13 June, p.3).

Due to its thematic nature, Gezi Post remained short-lived and only fourteen issues were published between the dates 8 June and 29 July 2013. However, the Gezi Postası was important for the movement was important in the sense that it contributed to the daily agenda of the protesters with the issues rose. Moreover, the leaflet format of Gezi Postası also revived the 1960s and 1970s new social movements in which leaflet production held important place in order to share and distribute ideas among ordinary citizens (Jones and O’Donnell, 2012). Therefore, Gezi Postası offered a “novel” experience for protesters by differing itself from mainly online forms of participatory media outlets, despite short-lived.

5.5.16. Dokuz8Haber

Dokuz8Haber differs from other online participatory media of Gezi in the sense for being established by the end of Gezi Park movement (demokrathaber.net, 2014). However, the platform also has organic links with the movement for being in connection with the certain media, which were active during the movement. Aiming to integrate professional and amateur journalistic practices, Dokuz8Haber started its operation on July 2013 to provide accurate and reliable news at firsthand (dokuz8haber.com, 2016). The platform, which is co-founded by Gökhan Biçici, the editor of the İMC TV television program “Labor World” and a member of www.emekdunyasi.net editorial board, aims to serve as a news network that integrates professional and semi-professional journalists:

“I talk about a news platform where amateur and professional journalistic practices are hand in hand. Dokuz8haber has connections with alternative news providers such as The

Others' Post, Alternative Informatics Association Habervesaire and Jiyan, even with journalists residing in Ankara (Kesanbilici interview with Biçici, 2013).

On 16 June 2013, Biçici was taken under custody while watching protests against police intervention in Şişli, despite he explained that he was a journalist and even showed his press card to the police forces. Spending two days under custody, Biçici was released two days later (emekdunyasi.net, 2013). As a consequence of his personal experiences with Gezi Park movement and the failure of mainstream media to cover events, Biçici decided to establish his own collaborative news network:

“We were inspired by Gezi Park movement while establishing dokuz8haber. However, we had the idea to establish dokuz8haber even before Gezi (...) During protests, demonstrators' message was clear: 'I don't want the penguin media, I want resisting journalists'. Protesters overcame censorship practices by using social media. News providing platforms on social media allowed social media users to receive news about the on-going events. This situation was inspirational and encouraged us to speed up the process to establish dokuz8haber” (Kesanbilici interview with Biçici, 2014).

As can be inferred from the account of Biçici, dokuz8haber.com is a project influenced by the impact of Gezi Park movement. Since its establishment, the platform operates mainly via its website dokuz8haber.com, as well as on social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The collective has close connections with several alternative and online participatory media of Turkey, such as Ayağa Kalk Taksim, Demokrat Haber, Emek Dünyası, Gezi Postası, Haber Vesaire, Jiyan, 140 Journos, muhimhadiseler.org, Naber Medya, Park Gazetesi, Ötekilerin Postası and Dokuz 8 Ankara group as well as with independent reporters from Ankara and Diyarbakir (Kesanbilici, 2014). The main income source of dokuz8haber is donations made by supporters (emekdunyasi.net, 2013).

Since its establishment, the most notable project of dokuz8haber has been its “Election Follow-up” Project for the Turkey's local elections, held on 30 March 2014 (dagmedya.net, 2014). The project aimed at covering news related

with the local elections by collaborating with academicians and journalists (dagmedya.net, 2014). The collective used #sandıktayım (#iamvoting) hashtag in order to collect and publish reliable content from volunteer contributors.

By the end of the elections, dokuz8haber team explained the “Election Follow-up” project as their first “actual” journalistic experience, by referring to the collective’s past experiences as the “test trial” (dagmedya.net, 2014). The follow-up experience was also important in the sense that the collective succeeded in operating both in Turkish and English languages, which provided an opportunity to inform international audience simultaneously. Since the follow-up experience, the collective continues its operation and stands as a promising organization in Turkey’s alternative and participatory media scene.

5.6. Conclusion

In Turkey, online news readership in general increased in the 2000s, although the majority of Turkey’s Internet users focused their attention to online editions of mainstream media, such as hurriyet.com.tr. When the mainstream media outlets ignored the on-going events especially throughout the early days of the protests, Internet users resorted to online social networks and alternative news sources.

With the intensification of the resistance and diffusion of protests, individuals and groups gathering around Gezi Park movement began to rely on alternative means of communication in order to overcome censorship and political partisanship of mainstream media outlets. Besides certain alternative media platforms, which had been established before Gezi Park protests, there were other brand new activist/guerilla media platforms such as RevoltIstanbul, Müştereklerimiz, Gezi Radyo, Gezi Post and Videoccupy and çapul.tv, which were established in the midst of the protests. The activist media platforms utilized various social networking sites and interactive services such as Livestream, UStream, Twitter and Facebook in order to reach wider audiences.

Although online social networks mainly Facebook and Twitter had already a considerable number of users, Gezi movement transformed the way they were used by running parallel to the increase and diversification of the patterns of political expression and participation. Additionally, usage of online video broadcasting services such as ustream and livestream increased as a result of the increase in citizen journalism practices. Individuals started to record videos and even broadcast online from different quarters of Turkey, where the movement was taking place. For instance, *çapul.tv* team established their own online broadcasting network and started broadcasting live from the park by the end of the first week of the movement. Other attempts included publication of the Gezi Postası leaflet, which set the agenda of the movement, as well as formation of civic attempts such as *Müştereklerimiz* and *Mühim Hadiseler Enstitüsü*, which contributed to the intellectual heritage of the movement.

Gezi experience demonstrated the democratic deficiencies of mainstream media and increased the public interest in alternative and participatory media. However, the public interest in alternative and participatory media seemed temporary since the majority of the media outlets established during the movement ended their operations in the following months. *çapul.tv* emerged as an exception for it continued to operate long after Gezi protests. *çapul.tv* seemed to owe its resilience to its civic roots and past experiences. It, however, remains open to discussion whether the alternative and participatory media experiences of Gezi movement offered a sustainable model for a more democratic and participatory media environment in Turkey. It can be argued that whether and to what extent online participatory media contribute to the democratization of public sphere in general and media system in particular will be determined by their organizational, technological, economic and editorial opportunities and limitations.

CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDY – AN ORGANIZATIONAL STUDY ON ÇAPUL.TV OF GEZI PARK MOVEMENT

6.1. Introduction

çapul.tv, which was established during the course of Gezi events remains as an important online participatory media experience for continuing its presence and ensuring its sustainability even after the demise of the protests. Although çapul.tv has experienced certain drawbacks throughout its operation the online television network continued its operation after the Gezi Park movement by broadcasting amateur news content from various fields where resistance movements are taking place. Members continued supporting the network by contributing to its daily operation on a voluntary basis. The resilience of çapul.tv makes it an important case to study the strengths and weaknesses of online participatory media in order to assess their potentials and limitations for the democratization of media environment in particular and the public sphere in general.

Therefore, the current chapter aims to present an organizational study on çapul.tv in order to reveal the factors that contribute to its endurance while at the same time pose challenges for its survival in the long run. The organizational study of çapul.tv is also important in the sense that it provides empirical evidence for the organizational sociology of online participatory media. Despite the existence of several inquiries on online participatory media at the theoretical level (e.g. Carpentier, 2013; Havens, 2014) empirical studies on their organizational settings remains largely insufficient. The current study aims to make a contribution to the existing gap at the empirical level by studying the organizational sociology of online participatory media at the grassroots level.

The chapter begins with explanations on methodological procedures and continues with the organizational examination of çapul.tv in relation to its structure, name and logo, location and premises, technological facilities,

organization of content production, financial resources, human resources and history. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of *çapul.tv* that determine its contribution to the democratization of media environment and the public sphere as an online participatory media.

6.2. Organizational sociology of online participatory media

Organization is defined as “the process of arranging various parts of an event or an activity” (merriam-webster.com, 2016). Max Weber who structurally analysed of bureaucratic relations and institutions is considered as the founding figure of organizational sociology (Weber, 1964). His organizational explorations were later expanded to the study of non-bureaucratic institutions such as non-governmental organizations (Donaldson, no date; Watkins, Swidler and Hannan, 2012) and independent or semi-independent civic formations (Rossi and Bulow, 2016) as well as to the studies on business administration (e.g. Aguilera et al., 2006), health (e.g. Fennell and Flood, 2010) and education (e.g. Reilly, 1998).

The organizational studies aim to explore the ways individuals establish organizational structures (Clegg and Bailey, 2008). Existing studies on organizational sociology mainly focus on organizational settings and social relations in institutional and bureaucratic organizations (e.g. Aguilera et al., 2006; Fennell and Flood, 2010).

With the increasing interest of researchers to explore organizational characteristics of various social institutions various sub-fields of organizational studies have emerged. Among them organizational behavior aims to study social relations in organizational settings (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995); organizational theory provides explanatory and methodology perspectives to organizational studies at theoretical level (e.g. Lagaard, 2006); organizational psychology aims to explore human behavior in organizational settings by applying psychological theories and perspectives (e.g. Schein, 1970); and organizational sociology explores characteristics of internal structures or organizations such as hierarchy of relations (if applicable) and social practices (Donaldson, no date; Lammers, 1981).

The organizational sociology approach has drawn attention among media scholars (e.g. Havens, 2014; McQuail, 1985) mainly at the theoretical level. McQuail (1985) suggested that the study of mass communication required an interdisciplinary approach in which organizational sociology could be used to assess the institutional impact of the media. Havens (2014) and L'Etang (2007) argued that organizational sociology stood as a useful approach to understand the internal dynamics of formal and non-formal media institutions.

Recently organizational studies have extended their focus into participation (e.g. Lee, 2015). Lee (2015) proposes that understanding patterns of participation in modern organizations becomes crucial in the “age of engagement” (p. 281). In the context of media studies, Carpentier (2013) explains that organization has a key role in understanding social formations in which media activities are taking place. He further adds that with the integration of new ICTs to their operation, participatory media organizations can have the potential to diversify and transform existing media structures (Carpentier, 2013).

Organizational inquiries on participatory media show that in comparison to mainstream media participatory media is more reflexive and open to interplay with new information and communication technologies. As Christian Fuchs (2010) argues, alternative media including participatory media outlets are mainly marked for being bottom-up structures that do not seek for profit. They are media organizations which are also open to collective ownership, consensus-decision making, knowledge management and sharing without the need for an authority or expectation for financial gains. They often rely on technologies that allow easy and cheap reproductions and use tools that allow content to be shared, copied, distributed or changed in an open way (Fuchs, 2010). They are available to every individual without the obligation of professional training since most participatory media are decentralized, self-managed and reflexive networks of everyday-life, which Melucci (1996) positions at the center of social movement activity. Such organizations also lack authority or symmetric power distribution and are economically self-managing. They are non-commercial media, which are financed

through donations, public funding and/or private resources (Fuchs, 2010). Volunteer contributions also compose an important element of their news sources.

Despite the relatively long history of organizational studies, the empirical interest in studying non-commercial participatory media formations has remained limited. Although the importance of organizational structure of media institutions are recognized by several scholars (e.g. Havens, 1984; McQuail, 1985; Carpentier, 2013), empirical research that employ organizational sociology perspective to the study of participatory media remain scant. The present thesis aims to help fill this void by providing empirical evidence through the analysis of *çapul.tv* as a case study of online participatory media.

6.3. Research design, methodology and questions

As Baxter and Jack (2008) explain case studies that utilize a variety of resources is a useful method to explore organizational sociology (p. 544). Yin (2003) asserts that case study is particularly fruitful when the contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon focused. The case study method allows the researcher to explain “why?” and “how?” questions by analyzing the phenomenon with relevant resources and within the relevant contextual conditions.

The current study aims to provide empirical findings on the organizational sociology of online participatory media at the grassroots level in order to explore their role and importance in contemporary social movements as well as to assess their organizational, technological, economic and editorial strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the nature and potentials of online participatory media is important for they determine their contribution to the democratization of media system in particular and the public sphere in general. This thesis also aims to contribute to the literature on online civic engagement by exploring online participatory media in their relationship with civic culture. *çapul.tv*, which played an important role during Gezi Park movement, the most prominent contemporary social movement so far in Turkey, is chosen as a case study due to its ability to survive after the Gezi movement and its roots in the civic culture.

The main research questions of the current study are as follows:

1. What was the role and importance of online participatory media for Gezi Park movement?
2. What are the organizational, technological, economic and editorial strengths and weaknesses of *çapul.tv* as an online participatory media?
3. In what ways can *çapul.tv* be considered as a civic culture?

Table 6.1. Primary and secondary sources of the study

Primary sources	Secondary sources
In-depth interviews with <i>çapul.tv</i> founders, reporters and supporters	Newspaper, academic articles and interviews related to <i>çapul.tv</i>
Interviews conducted with members of online participatory media active during Gezi Park movement	Sendika.org news archives
Statistics on followers of <i>çapul.tv</i> website and <i>çapul.tv</i> Facebook and Twitter pages	<i>çapul.tv</i> presentations and information on resistance reporting seminars
News archive of <i>çapul.tv</i>	Academic sources on state of media in Turkey during and after Gezi Park movement
Firsthand observations at <i>çapul.tv</i> studio	

The main research techniques applied are in-depth interviews, statistical analysis of *çapul.tv* website visitors and social media followers, content analysis of news items and firsthand participant observations.

6.3.1. In-depth interviews and first hand participant observations

A total of six in-depth interviews were conducted with *çapul.tv* members, which were complemented with first hand participant observations at the *çapul.tv* studio. Additionally two interviews were conducted with the members of online participatory media active during Gezi Park movement. The interviewees were chosen based on the knowledge of prior case studies. My purpose was to interview various types of individuals based on the type of work that they were doing. Therefore, I aimed to interview the founders, reporters as well as individuals who are involved in *çapul.tv* on a voluntary basis. I also aimed to

conduct interviews with individuals who got involved in the collective for various lengths of time and who would differ in terms of their levels of contribution.

I conducted six in depth interviews at *çapul.tv* (with two co-founders, two reporters and two presenters/supporters). In-depth interviews were conducted on one to one basis to reveal the underlying motives of the interviewee's attitudes, behaviors and perceptions. First, I contacted with R1, whose e-mail was recorded in my mailbox, thanks to the *çapul.tv* e-mail newsletters sent to the channel's followers and supporters. I explained to R1 my intention to interview co-founders of the channel. R1 provided me their contact information and I contacted them by e-mail, stating that I am conducting a PhD study on *çapul.tv*.

My first interview (with Co-founder 1) took place at the *çapul.tv* studio, located in Harbiye, İstanbul on 28 March 2015. The first interview was followed by interviews with Reporter 1 and Reporter 2 on 28 April 2015. Due to the intensity of their day-to-day duties we had to give a one-month break in between. The duration of each interview was approximately 70-75 minutes. Interviews with reporters were followed by the interview with co-founder 2, who was located in Ankara at that time, so we had to arrange a video meeting on Skype. The meeting took place on 30 April 2015 and lasted approximately 70 minutes. The last two meetings were held with Supporter 1 and Supporter 2. I received the contact information of supporters directly from themselves by request via e-mail. Meeting with Supporter 1 was held in a café at Beşiktaş district of Istanbul on 1 May 2015, while the meeting with Supporter 2 was held at Galatasaray University on 4 May 2015. The meetings lasted approximately 80 minutes.

I also conducted two additional in-depth interviews with members of online participatory media active during Gezi Park movement in May 2016 in order to enrich the findings of the study. The interviews that I conducted with an editor of *bianet.org* and a regular contributor of T24 provided insights on operations of online participatory media during Gezi Park movement.

First hand participant observations also played an important role in understanding the structural features and capabilities of *çapul.tv*. The reason why

I choose to label my experience as firsthand participant observation, instead of media ethnography is that media ethnographic work requires intensive and long-term participation in the community, typically involving physical relocation. Firsthand observations, on the other hand, are limited to direct experiences that come straight from the original source. My firsthand participant observations complemented in-depth interviews and other primary and secondary sources in the analysis.

6.3.2. Statistical analysis of çapul.tv website visitors and social media followers

During the in-depth interviews, I consulted with the çapul.tv members whether they obtained any statistical data related to the number of visitors to çapul.tv website and their social media accounts. Although they had certain figures from the times of Gezi Park movement (in-depth interview with R2, 2015), the collective did not have any chronological data.

Therefore, in order to reach the number of çapul.tv followers on Facebook, I used Social Bakers program, which is a useful program to reach chronological statistics on social media. I also used a programme called Similar Web in order to obtain data on the visitor traffic to çapul.tv website and çapul.tv Twitter account.

During the course of my fieldwork, I also regularly visited Facebook page, Twitter account and website of çapul.tv, in order to take note of the number of visitors automatically shared by service providers. Taking notes allowed me to double check the statistics I reached on Social Bakers and Similar Web.

6.3.3. Content analysis of news items

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that categorization of a certain media content can provide important insights on the reflection of a society and culture from a particular point of view. Macnamara (2005) explains that content analysis is a useful method to identify how particular media represent certain issues. (Macnamara, 2005). Neuendorf (2002) asserts that quantitative data based content

analysis can be integrated into a qualitative study in order to provide insights regarding the context a particular phenomenon.

In order to explore how *çapul.tv* represented Gezi Park movement during the course of the events, I applied a quantitative content analysis to *çapul.tv* news items. With the purposes of the present study a total of 80 news items that were broadcasted during Gezi Park movement were selected from the *çapul.tv* news archive. The total duration of news items analyzed were 248 minutes and 43 seconds. The average length of news items lasted approximately 3 to 4 minutes.

Each news item was coded according to their format type, actors, theme, subject and tone. The format included two categories: **live footage** and **video package** (mainly compilation of extracts from movement-related activities and scenes). News actors included seven categories: **artists** (individuals who are involved in cultural production, including movie directors, actors, musicians), **protesters** (individuals who are not represented as the member of a particular social group but solely as Gezi Park movement participants), **journalists**, **children**, **blue-collar workers** (individuals who are represented by their social class besides their protester identities) and **students** (individuals who are represented by their educational background besides their protester identities).

Accordingly, news themes included eight categories: **evaluation of Gezi Park movement** (evaluation of nationwide movement mainly journalists and artists), **coverage of Gezi activities** (coverage of day's events such as yoga sessions and concerts organized in the park), **understanding Gezi protesters** (brief interviews with protesters who express their motivations for joining the movement), **scenes from the movement** (compilation of scenes from the field that are accompanied with music content), **movement related violence** (coverage of violence that took place mainly the protesters and the police forces), **support from NGOs to the movement, mainstream media and Gezi** (coverage on Turkish mainstream media failure of Gezi Park movement) and **instructions on rights of protesters** (coverage of instructions on how protesters can defend their rights in times of police custody).

News subjects included three categories: **day's events** (daily happenings in the park), **politics** (political reflections of the movement) and **culture** (broadcasts on Gezi-related messages, songs and performances). News tones comprised four categories: **pro-movement**, **anti-police**, **anti-government** and **anti-mainstream media**.

In order to test the reliability of my coding, I consulted with an MA graduate colleague who is familiar with data coding to Excel. We separately coded 10 news items from a randomly selected group of news items. We used Cohen's kappa and percentage of agreement to test inter-coder reliability. Our Cohen's kappa values indicated perfect (i.e. between 0.91-0.99) agreement.

6.3. 4. Secondary sources

In addition to primary sources, a number of secondary resources such as conference proceedings on Gezi Park movement and capul.tv (e.g. Çatalbaş Ürper and Görgülü, 2015; Özsoy, 2014), books (e.g. Banko and Babaoğlu, 2013; Gökay and Xypolia, 2013; Kongar and Küçükakkaya, 2013; Sancar, 2015; Sözen and Yavuz, 2014; Yüksek, 2014), academic articles (e.g. Aydinli, 2015; Azeri, 2014; Deniz, 2013; Gurel, 2015; İnceoğlu, 2015; Gül, Dee and Cünük, 2014; Hacıyakupoglu and Zhang, 2015; Kokçe, 2015; Oğuzlu, 2013; Örs and Turan, 2015; Özdemir, 2015; Yildirim, 2014), book chapters (e.g. Orhon and Altunay, 2014; Mayo, 2014; Wallerstein, 2013), news pieces (e.g. Backmund, 2013; Eliaçık, 2014; Ergürel, 2013; Fishman, 2013; Gezgin, 2013; Gülcan, 2013; İzci, 2013; Moudoros, 2014; Sarı, 2014; Snyder, 2014; Vela, 2013), and reports (e.g. Ete and Taştan, 2014; KONDA, 2013) informed the analysis in Chapter 6 and 7.

During the interviews at the capul.tv studio, reporters also provided me the copies sendika.org book and a selection from the recorded capul.tv interviews with ordinary citizens during Gezi Park movement. These secondary sources enabled me to get more insights about the work conducted by the core capul.tv team. I also utilized the presentations of capul.tv collective (capul.tv, 2015), sendika.org news archives (sendika10.org, 2015) and information on resistance reporting seminars (sendika10.org, 2015). While primary sources provided me an

insider's view of *çapul.tv*, secondary sources helped me to interpret and evaluate the data gathered from the primary sources.

In addition to the *çapul.tv* website and Facebook and Twitter accounts other online documentation regarding *çapul.tv* was also taken into consideration. These were primarily blog posts and news entries regarding *çapul.tv* as well as media interviews with the *çapul.tv* staff. Information of this type was utilized in the thesis where it was considered to supplement the data gathered through interviews.

During the course of the present study I also regularly attended academic conferences on new media to which staff of alternative media organizations attended to discuss the mainstream/alternative media dichotomy and the situation in Turkey. Among the conferences and meetings I attended, the Internet Un-governance Forum was especially important for a number of reasons. The primary reason was that it was an anti-conference that allowed participatory media outlets to introduce their platforms and to discuss the state of participatory media in Turkey at the same time when global media giants met with academics and government officials in the Internet Governance Forum held in Turkey in September 2014. The Internet Un-governance Forum was a peaceful resistance meeting where staff from platforms such as the *Bianet*, *çapul.tv* and The Others' Post gathered to tell their experiences in the media ecology of Turkey. Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, who addressed the conference online as guest speakers, also attended the forum. The information I gathered about *çapul.tv* during the forum informed my analysis and provided me a valuable perspective on reporters' perception of *çapul.tv*.

Academic meetings I attended especially when I was working on the conceptual and theoretical bases of the present study also convinced me that journalism as a profession is going through an important transformation and this transformation makes the discussions on alternative/mainstream dichotomy less relevant each day.

6.4. Research framework

The epistemological stance of the current research is based on interpretive research tradition since the primary purpose is to reach an understanding of the structures of online participatory media based on the experience of reporters. As underlined by Bryman (2004), interpretivism appreciates diversity and differences among individuals and, thus, demands social scientists to comprehend subjective nature of social action (p. 13). Such a perspective requires a qualitative enquiry since the primary purpose is to access the detailed accounts of individuals. Therefore, the primary method for this study is chosen as face-to-face in-depth interviews with reporters and volunteers working for *çapul.tv*. The political and historical context in Turkey and its contemporary social movements are also taken into consideration when interpreting the data produced by *çapul.tv* reporters.

It is important to note that qualitative research in general and case studies in particular possess certain limitations. Some criticize the integrity of qualitative research in terms of the generalizability of its outcomes. For instance, in case studies a small sample is taken, not based on the probability as is the case with quantitative research but on other criteria such as authenticity, trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba assert that credibility of a qualitative research study refers to the confidence in the truth of findings while transferability refers to showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts. Similarly dependability means demonstrating that the findings are consistent and could be repeated when confirmability refers to a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation or interest. These features compose the basic and essential skeleton of a qualitative research design and ensure its successful operation.

All inquiries in social sciences require ethical sensitivity. In line with the ethical guidelines provided by Schröder, Drotner, Kline and Murray (2003) utmost attention has been paid to treating participants in an equal manner, respecting their values and thoughts and avoiding any potential harm to them as a consequence of the this study.

Throughout the thesis, organizations are referred by their actual name with the permission of the participants. Names of individual participants are coded. Co-founders of *çapul.tv* are referred as CF1 and CF2, *çapul.tv* reporters as R1 and R2, and *çapul.tv* supporters as S1 and S2. Similarly, the interviewed Bianet.org editor is referred as B1 and the regular contributor of T24 is referred as T1. Only information that is important for understanding participants' involvement in *çapul.tv* is provided. Personal information regarding participants' age, status of employment and education are gathered and presented in a summary of interviewee profile.

It is not uncommon in qualitative case studies that participants may be skeptical in relation to the aims and objectives of the research and/or might be concerned on how much time would be needed for participation or whether the research would benefit them. In order to overcome such concerns that may result in the reluctance to participate I tried to be as open and honest as possible on methods and aims of my research and how the data will be analyzed.

My approach when recruiting participants was to be open from the outset on my role as a researcher. When I first contacted the interviewees I stated that I was a PhD candidate in Media and Communication Studies at Galatasaray University in İstanbul, conducting research on online participatory media established during Gezi Park protests and that I was interested in the work of *çapul.tv*

When I met the participants I explained my interest in the topic by underlining my position as a researcher who was interested in learning the dynamics of online participatory media and its organizational context. When the participants asked me my reasons to study participatory journalism I stated my earlier studies on the digital switchover, journalism ethics and alternative media, as well as my personal interest in the field. I also added where relevant that I was not an activist. Thanks to my outsider position, I was able conduct highly productive interview as participants were more honest and detailed in their statements.

6.5. Organizational study of *çapul.tv*

An organizational structure determines and defines how activities such as task allocation, coordination and supervision are directed towards the achievement of organizational aims (Tatum, 1989). It can also be considered as the perspective through which individuals see their organization and its environment (Tatum, 1989).

When designing an organizational structure, managers primarily consider how the authority will be distributed in the hands of employees. Authority, which can be defined as an organizationally sanctioned right to make a decision, can be given solely to high-level managers to form a centralized organizational structure, or it can be distributed throughout an organization to form a decentralized work environment, in which organization member can have the right to make a decision without obtaining approval from a high-level manager (Barling and Cooper, 2008).

The above definition of organizational structure is applicable for various organizational structure types, including pre-bureaucratic, post-bureaucratic, functional, network and/or media structures (Deephouse, 2000). The structure of mainstream news media outlets is formed in a top-down structure in terms of both management and news production processes.

In the 2000s the rise of the Internet and other ICTs has posed challenges to the traditional organizational structures of mainstream media. Organizational studies that focused on media structures (e.g. Deephouse, 2000; Mazza and Pedersen, 2004), put emphasis on the ways in which participatory media brought along new ideas and new language that influence societal and organizational behavior and structure (Fergus and Rowney, 2005). This included bottom up approaches to management, as it has been the case with *çapul.tv*. Therefore organizational study of participatory media has the potential to introduce novel approaches for future organizational structures and thus remain worth for analysis.

6.5.1. Structure

Data gathered through in-depth interviews reveal that *çapul.tv* has a structure of a collective (in-depth interview with CF1 and R1, 2015). The collective is defined as activities “shared or done by a group of people, involving all members of the group” (merriam-webster, 2016). Turner and Kilian (1957) define collective behavior as the behavior whose nature is influenced by the group. In collectives members do not apply procedures to select or identify particular leaders. Therefore, collectives emerge as leaderless formations, which are marked by their group identities and egalitarian natures.

R1 explains that for *çapul.tv*, the spirit of the collective derives from a spontaneous experiential process rather than institutional hierarchy (in-depth interview with R1, 2015). The spontaneous experiential process is defined by the nature of work that needs to be conducted:

“It all depends on the nature of the work. If an event is going on which has news value for *çapul.tv*, reporters go to fields and broadcast the course of events. If a presenter of *çapul.tv* needs assistance, reporters and founders support him/her in every way that they can. These operations take place in a collective manner and process.” (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

The collective structure of *çapul.tv* conforms to the nature of participatory media (Domingo et al., 2008; Sandoval and Fuchs, 2010). Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) assert that the collective structure of participatory media is useful in terms of achieving public visibility. In the case of *çapul.tv*, the collective has gained public visibility with its emergence during the Gezi Park movement. Similarly, Domingo et al. (2008) explain that collective work processes allow individual members to practice journalistic tasks. It can be observed with *çapul.tv* that members of the collective conduct voluntary work and they are not affiliated with any institutional forms of media (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Thus, structurally, *çapul.tv* differs from mainstream media outlets as well as from some of the major alternative media outlets such as Bianet, which is project-based platform (bianet.org, 2015). Anonymous users or users, who request from *çapul.tv* editors to remain anonymous, contribute to content production

mainly with amateur video recordings of, for instance, anti-government protests, labor strikes and environmental movements in Turkey.

As a collective, *çapul.tv* is a civic initiative, established by a group of individuals with technical knowledge to establish and conduct an Internet-based television channel (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). It does not have any direct connection with any non-governmental or political organization. Although some journalists who has had connections with the Taksim Solidarity became guests of *çapul.tv* programs especially during and right after protests, the collective does not have any direct relation with the constituents Taksim Solidarity, which compromised trade unions, political groups, and non-governmental organizations that aimed to represent demands of Gezi Park protesters.

6.5.2. Name and logo

The name and logo of *çapul.tv* has direct references to Gezi Park movement (Özsoy, 2014). Its name “*çapul.tv*” is quoted from the then Prime Minister Erdoğan’s characterization of Gezi protesters (Deniz, 2013). In time, the term was re-appropriated by the protesters to express their civic identities as insurgents. In an interview with Sancar (2015), *çapul.tv* members explained that:

“We had to find a name that was in line with the spirit of the movement, as everything changed after 31 May with police interventions. This is why we named our channel *çapul.tv*” (Sancar, 2015).

By 8 June 2013, the Turkish Patent Institute had already received 16 applications for “*çapulcu*” trademarks for items such as toilet paper, drinks and a newspaper (radikal.com.tr, 2013). As a consequence, *çapul.tv* had to choose “*çapul*” instead of “*çapulcu*” as its official name:

“It was not a preference, we had to choose ‘*çapul*’, because the patent of ‘*çapulcu*’ word was already taken for, probably, commercial purposes. Later on, we also liked the word ‘*çapul*’ more. Its pronunciation is easier and phenotically sounds better” (*çapul.tv* interview with İzci, 2013)

As a non-commercial network, which aims to promote free sharing of information independent from the state control, *çapul.tv* called for support from “all *çapulcu*” volunteer reporters at the height of the Gezi events (*sendika10.org*, 2013). In this sense, it can be asserted that *çapul.tv* collective embraced the common identity formed by participants during Gezi Park movement:

“We are born in Gezi and Gezi has a unifying identity. We are trying to do our best to preserve this identity, even with our name” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Volunteer graphic designers prepared the logo of *çapul.tv* (in-depth interview with R1, 2015). Two important images are positioned in the logo: the woman in black and a penguin (Özsoy, 2014). The woman in black is a symbolic representation of an Australian exchange student, who stood alone in front of a TOMA spraying water at the İstaklal Street of Beyoğlu district at the height of the events (*radikal.com.tr*, 2013). She became one of the main symbolic figures of the Gezi Park movement for fearlessly standing in front of a vehicle driven by police forces (Kaya, no date).

Figure 6.1. The logo of *çapul.tv*



Source: *çapul.tv*, 2013

On the other hand, the penguin in the logo of *çapul.tv* represented the failure of the mainstream media to cover Gezi Park movement (*çapul.tv*, 2013). The penguin logo directly refers to CNN Türk television channel, which was largely criticized during the height of the events for airing a documentary on penguins; while representatives of CNN International were reporting live from the field (Öztürkmen, 2014). Since then, penguins became one of the major symbols

of the Gezi Park movement (Snyder, 2014) and the failure of mainstream media to cover the Gezi protests in:

“We wanted to premunize the penguins. The failing mainstream media coverage was not the fault of penguins or press workers. It was the government and the pro-government media owners that designed such partisan coverage of Gezi related events” (interview with İzci, 2013).

6.5.3. Location and Premises

By the end of the Gezi Park movement, the *çapul.tv* collective immediately started preparations to establish their own studio. In order to support the financial expenditures of the studio, *çapul.tv* team launched an *indiegogo.com* campaign called “Let’s Build the Media of the Resistance Together” (*indiegogo.com*, 2013). In the campaign statement, members explained they would use the collected sum to obtain basic broadcasting equipment and cover rent and bills (*indiegogo.com*, 2013):

“Although we did not like the idea of launching a crowdsourcing campaign, we had to do it for once in order to cover basic expenses of our studio. It was a one-off campaign” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Figure 6.2. *çapul.tv* and *sendika.org* office



Source: *sendika.org*

The apul.tv studio was launched in October 2013 (in-depth interview with R1, 2015). It was located in a block of apartment at Cumhuriyet Street in Harbiye district of ŒiŒli, İstanbul.

Figure 6.3. apul.tv studio section



Source: indiegogo.com

As I conducted in-depth interviews with apul.tv members, I had the opportunity to observe their work environment of apul.tv at the studio. The studio is designed in such a way to create two separate work areas. While one is used as a regular office where the day-to-day operations of apul.tv and sendika.org are conducted on the Internet via desktop computers the second area is designed as a television studio.

Figure 6.4. çapul.tv office section during the time of renovation



Source: capul.tv, 2013

The office section, which includes a small library and a medium-sized table besides desktop computers and chairs, is larger in comparison to the studio section. The collective organize their weekly meetings, cook and have their lunch at the office area.

The studio area is covered with a blue-colored platform. It is equipped with lighting facilities as well as two video cameras and tripods, chairs for guests and a desktop computer to manage recording processes. During our interview, R1 (2015) explained that they rarely use the çapul.tv studio, since they mainly report from fields where resistance movements are taking place.

6.5.4. Technological capacity

The technological capacity of çapul.tv started to take shape by the end of the Gezi Park movement, when the collective members decided to establish a studio in İstanbul. Before the establishment of the studio, the majority of the technological equipment used by çapul.tv collective was borrowed (Köse, 2013). Therefore, the supply of technological facilities remained important for the collective to establish their own studio and to broadcast with their own facilities

(indiegogo.com, 2013).

çapul.tv has basic technological facilities needed for broadcasting (in-depth interview with R2, 2015). The collective has desktop computers at their studio, which are used to manage the daily operation of sendika.org and çapul.tv platforms on the Internet. The desktop computers are also used for news-writing and video-editing purposes. Other equipment includes HD cameras with SDI outputs and cables, in order to actualize the broadcasts at the studio and at fields of protest. The HD cameras are accompanied with tripods and spotlights – that are used in order to increase the visual quality of broadcasts at the studio.

çapul.tv collective has an audio mixer in the studio section of the çapul.tv office. The audio mixer is used in order to manage audio transfers between different contents (such as the transfers between different news items, divided by çapul.tv jingle). The studio also has a vision mixer, which is mainly used to enable transitions between different video sources without giving a break during the broadcasts (interview with R2, 2016).

Other technical equipment include shotgun microphones, which are commonly used during studio and outside broadcasts for their ability in blocking environment noise lavalier microphones, mics with small clips that enable the attachment of the microphone to the guest's cloth; and boom microphones which enable the guests and the hosts to freely move on the set while speaking. The microphone facilities are accompanied with microphone cables and XLR connectors, which are required for the use of microphone sets (in-depth interview with R2, 2016).

6.5.5. Organization of content production

Lundell (2010) asserts that “instead of being blinded by the rhetoric of novelty, changes in the media of our own digital age – blogs, podcasting, video sharing websites – should make us capable of seeing something quite different in history as well” (p. 438). Such a perspective, he further explains, requires going beyond a vague understanding of Habermasian public sphere, which underline

civic engagement and dialogue, to look for real participation. In practice, a participatory media outlet is expected to receive audio, visual or textual content, whether amateur or professional, from various geographies, which has the value to be on the news.

During Gezi Park movement, *capul.tv* collective mainly curated its own content since it has the ability to report directly from the park by establishing a temporary studio in the field (in-depth interview with R1, 2015). However after Gezi protests, the collective called for voluntary participation from supporters. Supporters, willing to share news items with *capul.tv* are expected to record videos with 640x360 pixel resolutions in mono mp4 audio format and upload to <http://muhabir.wetransfer.com> address (*capul.tv* presentation, 2013).

The content is curated and organized through voluntary labor (*capul.tv* presentation, 2013). Since the collective members care about the news distribution processes as much as the news content, full-time reporters of the collective assume a coordinating role in order to achieve timely management of content traffic. Reporters are not expected to apply professional codes of journalism as *capul.tv* publish even amateur contents (such as video recordings made via mobile devices) as long as they have news value (*capul.tv* presentation, 2013).

However, from the very beginning reporters pay attention to verifying news content before publishing it:

“I am talking about a spontaneous verification process. Online social networks are useful for us, however, we must be careful. For instance, during Gezi Park movement, we paid attention to verifying legal issues and health-related information by consulting with lawyers and doctors before publishing. Before sharing the news we verified the information on the death of a protester, Ethem Sarisülük, from five different sources, including his family” (interview with Sancar, 2015).

The verification of stories also continued after the Gezi Park movement:

“We sometimes receive content via social media from anonymous users. However we do not directly publish them on our website. First, we make sure about the reliability of the

content shared. If we are not sure, we don't publish it at all"
(in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

Although *capul.tv* was born in Gezi Park movement, during a time when the mainstream media was widely criticized for neglecting the events (Orhon and Altunay, 2014), it continued covering resistance movements after the end of Gezi protests. The coverage included LGBT Pride Walk 2015³⁰, Validebağ resistance³¹, Kobani resistance³², Labor Day protests of 2014³³, environmental act in Hopa³⁴ and protests of Mersin anti-nuclear platform³⁵ (*capul.tv*, 2015). In the aftermath of Gezi Park protests, co-founders and reporters of *capul.tv* continued following the agenda of non-governmental organizations, civic initiatives and activists who

³⁰ Although the gay parade is being organized in İstanbul since 2003, the 2015 parade was interrupted by police forces, which fired pepper spray and rubber bullets at thousands of participants, as they joined the march. Following the police intervention, organizers of the march released a press briefing, which explained that the İstanbul governorship did not allow the procession of the parade, citing the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (Caliskan and Dikmen, 2015). The police intervention drew criticism at national and international levels especially among human rights activists.

³¹ Validebağ resistance lasted for more than thirty five days in Uskudar district of İstanbul, where individuals reflected their concerns and dedication to the green area that was threatened with being demolished to build a mosque in October 2014. Hundreds of riot police resided at the site with tear gas and shields at the ready against peaceful protesters and local residents.

³² The Kobani resistance took place as a consequence of the siege of Kobani, which was launched by the Islamic State of Iraq and the ISIS militants on 13 September 2014 to capture the Kobanî Canton and its main city of Kobanî in northern Syria, in the de facto autonomous region of Rojava. After 134 days of resistance, the Kurdish forces of the YPG/YPJ have finally pushed ISIS out of Kobani in June 2015, despite the struggle has continued afterwards (Leverink, 2015).

³³ The Turkish Police fired tear gas, water cannon and rubber pellets to stop the Labor Day protesters, who aimed to reach İstanbul's central Taksim square for celebrations. With the police intervention, the İstanbul governor's office stated that 90 individuals were injured and 19 of them were police officers. 142 participants also detained (Jean Yackley and Ergin, 2014).

³⁴ Hundreds of protesters met in Taksim square on August 26, 2015 to criticize the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in Hopa, which has caused the flash flood after 220mm of rain in 24 hours in the district that has killed 8 individuals. Participants of protests marched through İstiklal Street chanting slogans stating that the incident is not a natural disaster, but a manmade incident. In their press statement, protesters also argued that the flooding was a consequence of the redirected rivers of the construction.

³⁵ Protests of Mersin anti-nuclear platform are organized by the Human chain against nuclear plant in Turkey, a peaceful protest group mainly operating in Mersin. The protest is a consequence of the government's plan to build the first nuclear plant in Akkuyu location of Mersin, approximately in the 140 kilometers west of the city. As the contract for the start of the construction was signed, the residents of Mersin immediately opposed the decision, which for being a recent instance, referred to the Fukushima I nuclear accidents in Japan as justification. As a consequence, a human chain was formed on April 17, 2011 to protest the decision and the participation to the chain was higher than expected. Facebook groups and pages such as the Mersin-Akkuyu Anti-Nuclear Collective served for the merging of other chains with the Human chain against nuclear plant. The chain is still active since the plan to build a nuclear power plant in Akkuyu is still active. The controversies also re-arose by the beginning of 2015, when a report by *BirGün Daily* explained that the engineers responsible for preparing the Akkuyu plant resigned from their posts six months before the environmental impact report (ÇED) for the Akkuyu nuclear power plant were due to be turned in, increasing suspicions that the assessments had been carried out for the ÇED report were unsupervised by professionals (*Zaman Daily*, 2015)

resisted against unfair neo-liberal policies as well as the political authoritarianism that has been increasingly affecting daily lives of individuals in Turkey.

In 2014, *capul.tv* collaborated with Ronahi TV for the first time for Kobani broadcasts. During Kobani conflict, *capul.tv* sometimes integrated broadcasts of Ronahi TV into its content in order to provide up to date information to their audience from the region (e.g. “İŞİD’in, sınırın Türkiye tarafından yaptığı saldırılar YPG tarafından püskürtülüyor” – Ronahi TV, 29/11/2014, capul.tv/category/capul-tv-suruc-ve-kobanede/).

Political organizations such as Socialist Party of the Oppressed also served as alternative sources of news for *capul.tv* (e.g. “SGDF’lilerin Kobanê için yola çıkmadan önce Kadıköy’deki basın açıklaması”, July 20, 2015, <http://capul.tv/category/capul-tv-suruc-ve-kobanede/>). Thus, although *capul.tv* do not have any direct association with any other political organization, political party or solidarity, it, at times, gets in touch with relevant organizations around intersecting causes. Kobani can be seen such an exceptional incident about which many non-governmental organizations and political groups tried to raise awareness.

Since 2015 other projects that the members of the collective are involved are also sometimes integrated into *capul.tv* content. For instance, movies archived for *sinematek.tv* are also broadcasted by *capul.tv* on a regular basis (*capul.tv*, 2015). This cooperation between the two projects can be perceived as an enriching experience. However, it can also be read as the decline of *capul.tv* in the sense that it is in need of authentic content from newer projects to sustain its existence.

6.5.6. Financial resources

The expenditures of *capul.tv* are financed through donations made to the Alternative Media Association. CF2, who is also in the Board of Directors of Alternative Media Association, explains that the association paved the way for those who did not have time to contribute content to *capul.tv* to contribute it financially. She adds that despite the collective refrained from accepting financial

contributions especially at the peak of protests they needed financial assistance after a certain point.

Alternative Media Association was established at such a critical point, where *çapul.tv* could no longer finance itself and sustain its broadcasts from the fields where post-Gezi movements took place. The Association, which was established to organize and coordinate various social and cultural events, also enabled *çapul.tv* collective to launch a funding campaign via *indiegogo.com*, which ended on September 15, 2013. Within the campaign statement, the collective listed studio installation, rent, computers, smartphones and tablet PCs, broadcasting tools among the expense items. A total of 228 funders supported the campaign and \$13,123 USD was raised in one month. Although the campaign did not reach its goal of \$50,000 USD, the *çapul.tv* collective succeeded in collecting the basic financial resources to install their studios in Ankara and İstanbul (*indiegogo.com*, 2013).

CF2 explains that the Alternative Media Association increased the transparency and accountability of *çapul.tv* in the eyes of funders, as their support was not gratuitous. The collective promised to send informative emails on a regular basis to those who donate \$10 USD, *çapul.tv* postcards to \$25 USD funders, *çapul.tv* magnets to \$50 USD funders, a book and a DVD on Gezi Park movement to \$100 USD funders and a plate to thank to \$500 USD funders (*indiegogo.com*, 2013). Thus, the financial supporters of *çapul.tv* were informed by the activities of the collective and Alternative Media Association played a regulatory role in the management of this process.

Figure 6.5. A screen shot from indiegogo.com campaign launched by capul.tv



In 2014, capul.tv launched a second campaign to ensure its sustainability and to cover its rent and expenditures, which exceeded 40.000 TL. However, in comparison to the 2013 campaign the support remained negligible. Despite the campaign had a \$20,000 USD funding goal; only 59 people raised \$1,791 USD in one month by the end of July 21, 2014 (indiegogo.com, 2013). When I asked R2 the reasons for the decrease in the financial donations to capul.tv, he said it came as no surprise to him: “If you want to receive support from people for your project, you need to make a commitment” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Although 2013 was a busy year for the collective, thanks to the massive amount of content provided by anonymous volunteers that contacted the team mainly via social media, 2014 was less intense as result of the declining influence of the Gezi spirit. The collective did not launch a third campaign in 2015 to raise funding for financial expenditures of capul.tv. However, it accepted volunteer donations via Alternative Media Association (capul.tv, 2015). Moreover, when needed, transferring income received via other projects such as sinematek.tv memberships funded capul.tv.

6.5.7. Human resources

The daily operation of *çapul.tv* is based on volunteer work by a network of volunteer contributors open to all citizens. Although *çapul.tv* collective relies on the contributions of volunteers, the core team is composed of a very small number of individuals. Though volunteers such as program presenters have also an important mission to moderate TV discussions and/or share information in their area of specialty, the co-founders and reporters mostly handle the routine managerial tasks. These full time contributors ensure the daily operation of *çapul.tv* through daily editorial, reporting and managerial practices. The scantiness of the core managerial staff at times slows down the daily operation of the television network. R1 explains that Facebook page and the Twitter account of *çapul.tv* are considered as separate pages that need to be handled managerially to ensure the regular news flow in online social networks (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

Though the members of the collective do not state it as a disadvantage the smallness of the team actually points out to one of the limitations of participatory media as an alternative means of communication. The non-commercial nature of participatory media restricts their operations for many alternative networks are primarily based on voluntary work and do not offer their volunteers any financial returns. All members of the *çapul.tv* collective also have other occupations to support their life and may, at times, have to spare more time for their own professional responsibilities rather than *çapul.tv* (in-depth interviews with *çapul.tv* members, 2015).

Despite the low number of volunteers that compose *çapul.tv* collective and functional disruptions in its daily operation, interviewees did not state any concerns regarding the sustainability of the participatory television network (in-depth interviews with CF1 and R1, 2015). They also had no complaints regarding the time they spared for *çapul.tv* (in-depth interviews with R1 and R2, 2015). Interviewees perceived *çapul.tv* as a spontaneous move, which may be replaced by a new action depending on the emergence of a new social context like the Gezi Park protests. CF1 explains that *sendika.tv*, which paved the way for the

emergence of *capul.tv*, was also a spontaneous move to broadcast TEKEL workers' resistance during a time when mainstream media coverage was absent (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). Despite limitations in terms of human resources, *capul.tv* remains as a long-lasting experience in comparison to *sendika.tv*, which lasted for less than three months.

6.5.8. User base

Data gathered through in-depth interviews reveal that *capul.tv* embodies the characteristics of participatory media. The collective was formed at the end of the first week of Gezi Park protests on June 6, 2013 and launched their Twitter account on the same day to report live from the park. When Turkey's mainstream news networks failed to cover the first days of protests and the police crackdown that swept the nation, *capul.tv* emerged as one of the alternative news sources about the protests. During the police intervention at Osmanbey in Berkin Elvan's funeral, a volunteer reporter recorded for *capul.tv* how thousands of participants were attacked with plastic bullets and tear gas (*capul.tv*, 2014).

capul.tv has attracted attention on social media since the day it was founded. The network, which mainly operates via its website, <http://www.capul.tv>, has also been active on Facebook and Twitter. Followers of the @capul_tv, the official account of *capul.tv* on Twitter, reached 12.089 in ten days right after the beginning of protests and reached 95.514 in the following three months. Approximately 750.000 viewers viewed broadcasts of *capul.tv* by the tenth day of its establishment (T24.com.tr, 2013).

Table 6.2. Online engagement statistics of *capul.tv*

Facebook	Follower (#)	26.502
	Monthly growth in page likes (%)	2.08%
	Monthly engagement rate (%)	3.47%
Twitter	Follower (#)	169.000 (approximately)
	Monthly growth in followers (%)	0.7%
<i>capul.tv</i> website	Monthly visitor (#)	5.000 (approximately)
	Average time spent on site	2:45 (minutes)

Source: similarweb.com (for *capul tv* website statistics); socialbakers.com and likealyzer.com (for Facebook and Twitter statistics); data retrieved on April 2016.

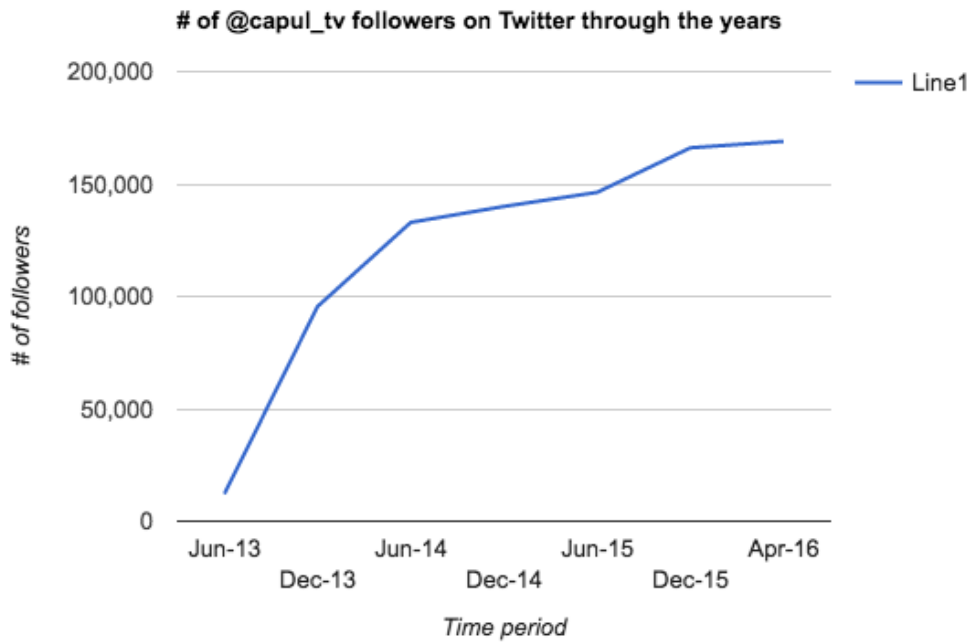
By April 2016, the followers of *çapul.tv* on Facebook reached 26.502. The channel keeps its monthly growth on a 2.08% rate. The monthly engagement rate of the *çapul.tv* Facebook page is at a stable rate of 3.47% (*çapul.tv* Facebook page, 2016; *socialbakers.com*, 2016).

The Twitter followers of *çapul.tv* are at a much higher rate than its Facebook followers. This situation can be explained by the fact that Twitter is used more as a news site than a social network (Jackson, 2010). The total number of *çapul.tv* followers on Twitter is 169.000 and the monthly growth rate in followers is 0.7% (*çapul.tv* Twitter page, 2016; *likealyzer.com*, 2016).

Statistics on *çapul.tv* website reveals that *çapul.tv* succeeds in drawing a relatively stable number of visitors each month. By April 2016, the website draws approximately 5.000 visitors each month and the visitors spent 2 minutes and 45 seconds on average on the website. Although the number of *çapul.tv* visitors is lower than that of the time when Gezi Park movement was taking place, the television network still succeed in attracting attention of especially those who specifically seek social movement-related news.

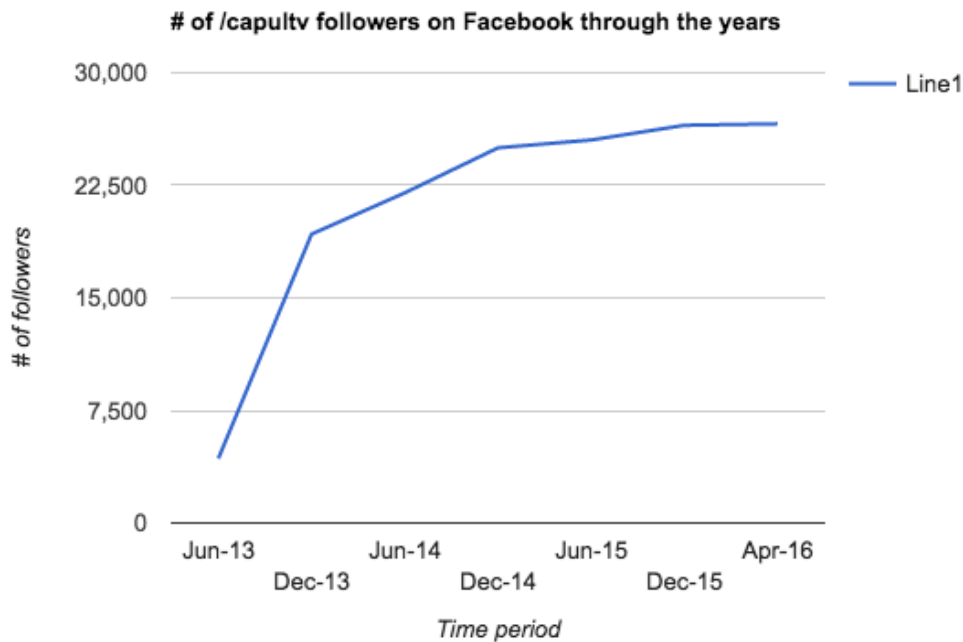
6.5.8.1. Followers of *çapul.tv* on Twitter and Facebook

By April 2016, the number of followers rose to approximately to 169.000 and the channel succeeded in gaining approximately 1153 new followers each month. As Graph 6.1 shows, there had been a gradual increase in the number of followers, despite the limitedness of the exclusive content on *çapul.tv* due to financial or time-related restrictions.

Graph 6.1. Statistics for number of çapul.tv followers on Twitter

Source: socialbakers.com, data for June 2013-April 2016.

The increase in the number of followers between June and December 2015 remained outstanding, as there were approximately more than 2.000 individuals who started following çapul.tv. October 2015 was marked by Ankara bombings in which two bombs were detonated outside Ankara Central railway station and the death toll stood at 102, while more than 400 people were injured. Incidents were largely and intensely covered by çapul.tv with amateur shootings (e.g. <http://capul.tv/category/10-ekim-ankara-katliami/>). Ankara bombings was one of the brutal incidents in Turkey in 2015 along with the Suruç bombing that once again revealed the need for alternative and online participatory media when mainstream news resources remain inadequate.

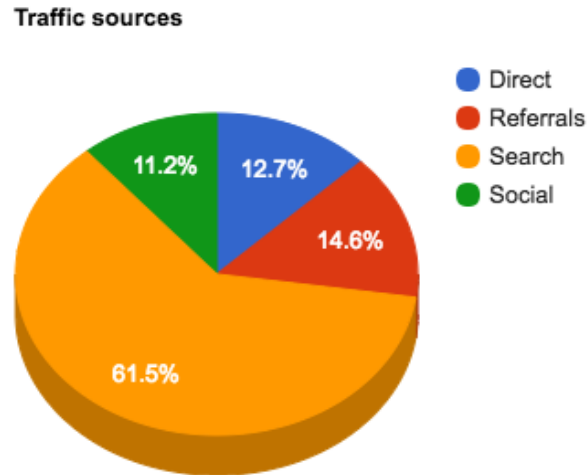
Graph 6.2. Statistics for number of çapul.tv Facebook followers

Source: socialbakers.com, data for June 2013-April 2016.

The number of çapul.tv followers on Facebook is comparably less than its followers on Twitter (26.502 by April 2016). This situation can be explained by the fact that Facebook is used for mainly entertainment purposes while Twitter is one of the major sources of news of Internet users. The channel's presence on Facebook, however, is significant as the monthly growth of its follower accounts for 2.08% of its overall followers while the engagement rate is 3.47% (socialbakers.com, 2016).

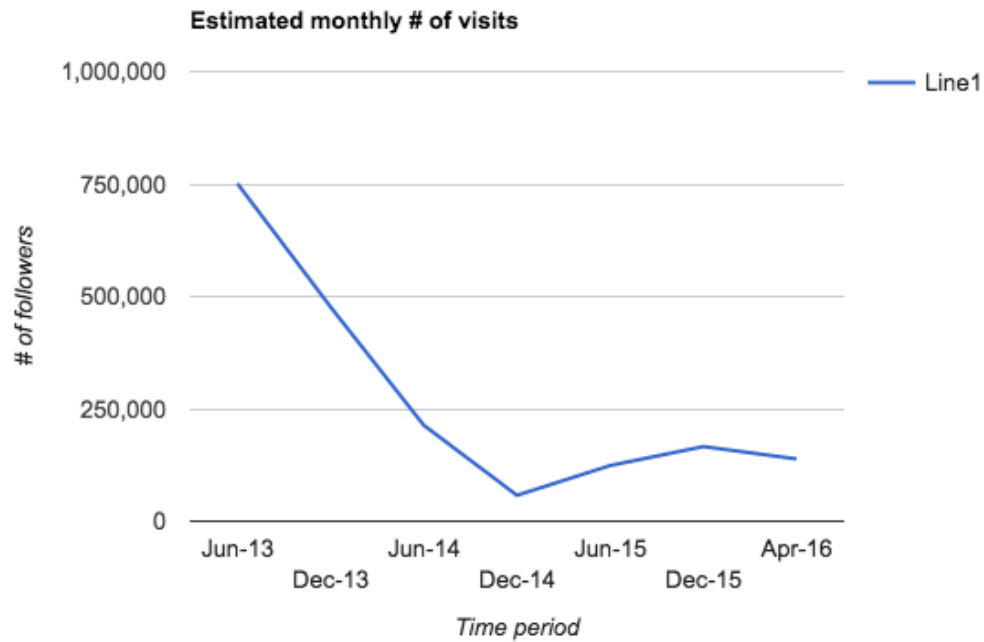
6.5.8.2. Visitors of çapul.tv website

When looking at the traffic sources of çapul.tv, it can be seen that the majority is drawn from search engines (61.49%) while 14.59% is derived from referrals (link shares from other websites). 12.71% of traffic comes from direct visits to capul.tv website and only 11.2% is diverted from social networks. Despite the presence of çapul.tv on social media, it is interesting to observe that the network fails to derive visits from its social media accounts to the çapul.tv website.

Graph 6.3. Traffic sources to çapul.tv website

Source: similarweb.com, data for June 2013-April 2016.

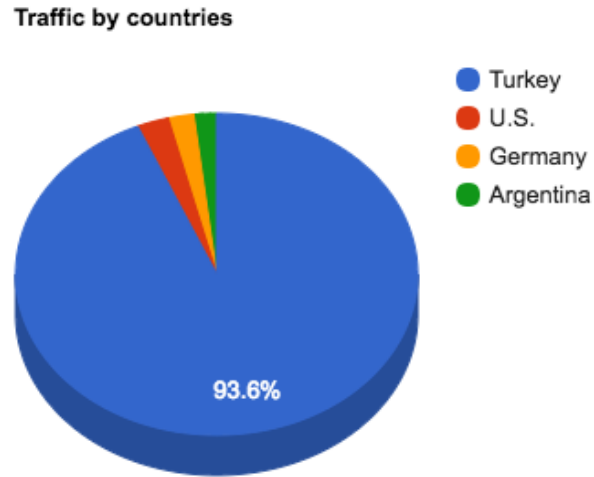
The monthly visitor number of çapul.tv website varies. Similar to its Twitter account, çapul.tv website draws more visitors especially at times of political crisis and resistance. Although the number of visitors reached its peak during Gezi Park protests (as high as 750.000 approximately), the figures started to gradually decrease later on, as the influence of Gezi movement started to wane and was replaced by micro-level movements focusing on a variety of issues.

Graph 6.4. Estimated monthly number of visits to çapul.tv website

Source: similarweb.com, data for June 2013-April 2016.

In 2015, the average monthly visitors of çapul.tv ranged between approximately 57.000 and 165.000, which remains a low number while considering the density of country population and the high levels of the Internet penetration. Seven out of ten households in Turkey had access to Internet by 2015 (TUIK, 2015).

Despite its limited reach, çapul.tv remains an important actor in Turkey's alternative media scene, when considering the fact that it still regularly draws an audience to its website. By looking at the visitor statistics revealed in Graph 6.3. it can be seen that the television network emerges as an important source of news at times of political crisis such as the bombings in Suruç and Ankara that took place at the second half of 2015.

Graph 6.5. Visitor traffic to *capul.tv* website by countries

Source: similarweb.com, data for June 2013-April 2016.

The majority of the website traffic of *capul.tv* is derived from Turkey's Internet users (93.56%). Though in small numbers the website succeeds in deriving traffic from other countries as well. For instance, 2.55% of the traffic is derived from the United States, while 2.06% is derived from Germany and 1.83% is derived from Argentina. The visitors are most likely to be Turkish speaking Internet users, since *capul.tv* mainly broadcasts in the Turkish language.

6.5.9. History

Although *capul.tv* was founded during Gezi Park movement, it is based upon the previous experiences of its founders. The first event organized by the members of the collective was the first International Labor Film Festival in 2006 (*capul.tv* presentation, 2013). The festival, which was launched on 1st May Labor Day and continued throughout the week between 1-8 May 2006, enabled the screening in Ankara and İstanbul of movies and documentaries that raise awareness about labor rights (*iff.org.tr*, 2015). The festival was also extended to İzmir and Diyarbakır in the following years (*iff.org.tr*, 2015).

In 2009 the collective launched sendika.tv in order to report live from the TEKEL resistance that started in Ankara on 15 December 2009 and lasted for 78 days (Coşkun and Şentürk, 2012). In the aftermath of the purchase of TEKEL, the privatized Turkish tobacco and alcoholic beverages company, in 2008 (hurriyet.com.tr, 2008) by British American Tobacco Company approximately 12.000 of its workers began to resist against the termination of their contracts (Sakallı and Şıralı, 2010). Since the mainstream media coverage of the resistance fell short of giving a voice to protesters (Doğu, 2015), the çapul.tv members founded sendika.tv (Başaran, 2010). During the TEKEL workers' resistance sendika.org provided the most extensive news coverage of the protests with 111 stories on its home page (Doğu, 2015), which was almost ten times more than that of the stories on mainstream news media. Although the operation of sendika.tv lasted approximately three months (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015), it stood out as an important experience for the collective's future projects such as çapul.tv.

The çapul.tv is established at the tenth day of protests at Gezi Park on 7 June 2013 (capul.tv, 2015). It was, as one çapul.tv reporter stated, a reflection of movement spirit in the park:

“We wanted to tell people what was happening in Gezi Park, when the coverage of mainstream media was missing (...) To fulfill this aim, we established our studio at Gezi Café in the park” (mudahildergi.com, no date).

In the first week following its establishment, The Gezi Park movement broadcasts of çapul.tv were watched by over 1.5 million Internet users. çapul.tv immediately became a trending topic worldwide on Twitter (en-trendingtopic.com, 2013) Thus, the platform became one of the major news sources of Gezi Park movement. Volunteer reporters of çapul.tv remained at the park until 15 June 2013 and continued reporting until the last days of the movement (çapul.tv, 2015).

During its early days, çapul.tv broadcasted mainly via ustream.com, an online video broadcasting platform. Despite the low resolution of its live broadcasts carried out via ustream.com, eight satellite television channels, namely

Halk TV, Hayat TV, İMC, TV 10, Ulusal Kanal, Kanal artı 1, Besta Nuçe covered live *capul.tv* broadcasts from the park (*capul.tv*, 2013).

Despite the intensity of protests started to diminish by June 2013, *capul.tv* continued its operation. In order to sustain its existence, *capul.tv* launched a crowdsourcing campaign via *indiegogo.com* to set up its studio with basic technical infrastructure. On 24 October 2013, the collective succeeded in establishing its own studio, located in Harbiye, Şişli district of İstanbul.

Besides Gezi Park movement the coverage of two events emerged as the most important broadcasts of *capul.tv* during its first year in operation. First was the funeral of Berkin Elvan, a 15 year old boy who was killed by a tear-gas canister fired by police forces in İstanbul (Rethink Institute, 2014). Several thousands gathered in İstanbul on March 13, 2014, to attend the funeral of Berkin Elvan who died after being in a long coma. The funeral turned into a protest that attendees chanted anti-government slogans, holding bread and the picture of Berkin's mother in their hands. Some broadcasts of *capul.tv* on attacks on protestors during the funeral ceremony of Berkin Elvan were utilized as evidence to support relevant court files (*capul.tv*, 2015).

The second important broadcast of *capul.tv* in its first year was the protests following the Soma mine disaster (*odativ.com*, 2014). The protests were a nationwide reaction to an explosion at a coalmine in Soma, Manisa, on May 13, 2014, which burned until May 15 and resulted in the killing of 301 miners. The incident is marked for being the deadliest mining accident in the history of Turkey (Peker, 2014). During a visit to Soma, then Prime Minister Erdoğan claimed that the mining accidents were inevitable, citing the 19th century incidents in Britain as examples. Shortly following the statement of the PM, hostility towards government officials increased as relatives of killed miners chanted anti-government slogans in Soma. Protests quickly spread to other cities of Turkey, including Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Zonguldak (Sherwood, 2014). *capul.tv* reached hundreds of thousands with its live broadcasts from Soma protests (*capul.tv*, 2015) and their coverage brought along journalistic recognition.

çapul.tv team received their first journalism award in 2014. Progressive Journalists Association awarded çapul.tv with Solidarity Award on 10 March 2014 (sendika10.org, 2014). The jury of Progressive Journalists Association explained that they awarded çapul.tv for their outstanding contribution to the Gezi Park movement with their own means (sendika10.org, 2014). The second award to çapul.tv came three months later, when Green Thought Association of Turkey awarded and named çapul.tv as one of the primary Inter-activists of 2014 (imctv.com.tr, 2014).

Another important development of 2014 for çapul.tv had been the establishment of Alternative Media Association (capul.tv, 2015). The association, which was founded by co-founders of the çapul.tv (in-depth interview with CF1 and CF2, 2015), provided an institutional basis for çapul.tv. The association also allowed financial support of çapul.tv via donations made by volunteers. Alternative Media Association played a key role in coordinating resistance-reporting seminars in fifteen cities to more than 200 participants (çapul.tv, 2015).

By the end of its first year in operation, çapul.tv succeeded in drawing 145.000 followers on Twitter and 20.000 “likers” on Facebook (çapul.tv, 2015). The popularity of çapul.tv attracted the attention of mainstream media outlets. Several media outlets either cited çapul.tv as one of the major news sources of Gezi Park movement (e.g. 2013; Futtu, 2014; İnce, 2013) or directly conducted interviews with their members (e.g. cumhuriyet.com.tr; 2013; İzci, 2013; mudahildergi.com, no date; Sarı, 2014).

Several mainstream international media outlets also referred to çapul.tv while reporting about Gezi Park movement (e.g. Konrad, 2013; Krajeski, 2014). For instance, in her *The New Yorker* essay Krajeski (2014) explained that çapul.tv insisted on resisting governmental censorship practices against their web pages. Similarly, Konrad (2013) referred to çapul.tv as one of “the most useful tools” to receive news about Gezi Park movement.

The operation of çapul.tv slowed down in 2015. However, the collective continued reporting from fields where protests demanding for social justice were

taking place. In 2015 capul.tv covered 1st May Labor Day Protests and LGBT Pride Walk in İstanbul. The television network also included movies in its broadcast stream, as certain members of capul.tv co-founded sinematek.tv, a movie archiving project. (sinematek.tv, 2015).

International Labor Film Festival, co-organized by members of capul.tv, was also integrated into the broadcasting stream of capul.tv in 2015 and 2016. Not only the movies screened in the festival were broadcasted by capul.tv, but also the reporters of the television network reported live from fields, where festival-related activities were taking place (such as the concert of Female Chorus of Community Centers; <http://capul.tv/9-isci-filmleri-festivali-antalya-acilisi/>; and interview with Turkish actor Mert Firat, <http://capul.tv/iffde-kelebegin-ruyasi-filmi-ardindan-mert-firatla-soylesi/>).

Despite capul.tv considerably lost its first year performance by 2016, it has continued its operation and drawn audience to its social media pages and website. The 2016 agenda of capul.tv included the rights of women-as a result of the increasing violent attacks on women in Turkey-, reflections of terrorist attacks in Ankara (e.g. “Yalan Bunlar, Ahmed Ölmedi”, <http://capul.tv/gazzeden-ankaraya-feryat-yalan-bunlar-ahmed-olmedi/>), labor rights (e.g., “Üzgünüz, Öfkeliyiz, Yastayız”, <http://capul.tv/uzgunuz-ofkeliyiz-yastayiz-isyandayiz-hayatidurduruyoruz/>) and student riots (“Anadolu Üniversitesi’nde Boykot Var: Korkmakta Haklısınız, O Saray’ı Başınıza Yıkacağız”, <http://capul.tv/anadolu-universitesinde-boykot-var-korkmakta-haklisiniz-o-sarayi-basiniza-yikacagiz/>).

6.6. Organizational strengths and weaknesses of capul.tv

Organizational features of capul.tv reflect the characteristics of online participatory media in a number of ways. It is a collective of citizens who gathered around a bottom-up structure that do not seek for profit. As a non-commercial media initiative it tries to be economically self-managing through contributions and donations by supporters. It is a flexible organization where the division of labor is sublated as co-founders may sometimes play the lead role in

live broadcasting and reporters may sometimes work as editors. Such flexibility can be counted among the collective's structural advantages.

It must be noted, however, that this flexibility is also a consequence of *çapul.tv*'s structural inability to draw a larger number of individuals to contribute to its daily operation as reporters, editors or broadcasters. The small core team of the platform serves as the editors of the content sent from anonymous users, and thus, works as if they are hired as Internet editors of a mainstream daily. This situation of *çapul.tv* actually points out to one of the deficits of participatory media, as its continuity and sustainability is based on philanthropic support and on the arbitrariness of voluntarism.

Despite *çapul.tv* regularly receives content support from its network, the editorial contribution is inadequate and, at times, disorganized as they are based on voluntary work. On both commercial social networks, such as Facebook and online participatory media such as *çapul.tv* users take part in content creation. While in online social networks, the audience engages in social activities, communication, community building and content-production, in participatory media outlets they are limited to sharing content that is in need for editorial touch and approval. Such awaiting process may be discouraging for content providers of *çapul.tv*, who can alternatively share their audio, visual or textual content through their personal pages on social networks or through their own websites. The sharing-based social environment of online social networks may come up as more appealing for audiences, who can actively produce content without editorial approval, as prosumers.

Participatory media outlets such as *çapul.tv*, which are based on voluntary labor of proponents, are thus subjected to the arbitrariness of volunteerism, which can be considered within the context of human condition in modern societies. For Arendt (1958) labor is the dominating mode of human condition. In modern societies, the entire activity of the human is laboring and society is dependent on the immediate consumption of labor.

It should be marked here that Arendt (1958) draws a distinction between labor and work. Labor relates to the natural and biologically required dimension of human existence while work refers to the activity that fabricates an artificial world of things, creating a world distinct from nature. Work can be distinguished from labor in the sense that labor is dependent on the requirements of biology and nature, while work interferes in the sphere of nature by transforming it in line with its own plans. This situation makes work a distinctly human activity, as it is also managed by human intentions that provide a certain quality of freedom, while labor is subject to nature and necessity. Being concerned with individual's life-needs labor is also related to the private affairs while work is public that aims to create a common sphere that unites human (Arendt, 1958).

For Arendt (1958), the modernity is being threatened by the rise of the social, which cannot create a unified world in which individuals can pursue their higher ends. She asserted that the labor activity and consumption of its outputs that dominated public sphere could not assist individuals pursuing their higher ends.

Within this perspective, volunteering for non governmental organizations or civic initiatives can be classified as work that enriches democratic practice and contributes to the wider public by going beyond the private sphere of that particular NGO or civic association. However, a lot of individuals would work for or contribute to participatory media if they feel their output would make a difference, which is a hard-to-achieve goal for outlets such as [çapul.tv](#).

Unless individuals do not labor for common or public purposes, they might look for a social or financial income for their contributions to a news platform. While evaluating the work of [çapul.tv](#), T1 also implicitly points out to this situation and further explains:

“I don’t have any connection with them, but I appreciate their work. I think they were the only group who continuously reported from the park (...) I was following [çapul.tv](#) on Twitter during protests. However, I was also following many other individual and collective accounts, which provided news about

Gezi. Sure, they contributed to the information pool.”
(interview with T1, 2016).

When I asked her if she would contribute to the work of *çapul.tv* during Gezi Park movement her answer became: “Sure I would, if it would make a difference, then why not?” (interview with T1, 2016). The response of T1 to my question, by itself, supports the differentiation made by Arendt (1958) between work and labor that individuals are more eager to work on a voluntarily basis (either for civic initiatives or organizations) if they feel their contribution would make a difference. In addition to its reliance of the arbitrariness of volunteerism other important weaknesses of *çapul.tv* were its limited economic and human resources that limited its reach in the society at large. Due to the collective’s ideological stance and managerial preference, *çapul.tv* does not utilize complementary online or offline advertisements that can assist the collective to reach larger audiences and increase its visibility. It remains a low-cost non-commercial outlet with limited public visibility and recognition.

Another factor that limited the reach of *çapul.tv* was the growing political polarization in Turkish society between pro and anti JDP social segments (Keyman, 2014).

Although it succeeded in exceeding the limits of the Gezi Park movement by serving as the voice of various post-Gezi movements, *çapul.tv* in terms of its name and public perception remained specific to the Gezi experience. Therefore, we can argue that the legacy of Gezi movement, which proved to be a highly divisive political issue between the supporters and opponents of the JDP, may prevent the recognition of *çapul.tv* by a broader community. Besides political polarization, the inadequacy of participatory culture in Turkey both at audience and media levels makes it hard for online media such as *çapul.tv* to achieve a long lasting difference.

Table 6.3. Organizational strengths and weaknesses of *çapul.tv*

Advantages	Technical	Allows and encourages active participation of its users and followers
		Have interactive audio, visual and textual capabilities that capture attention
		Reflexivity to report during social movements from various geographies (for instance reportings from Kobani in 2014) via mobile technologies
	Social/ Freedom of expression	Offers privacy for its users and activists by allowing them to remain anonymous
		Exposed to less editorial and governmental censorship and surveillance for managing its own editorial control and establishing its own broadcasting network
	Economic	Remains distant from the political and commercial interest groups for being non-profit and non-commercial
		A low-cost organization which mainly rely on contributions of its users
	Public interest	Serves as a resistance network that broadcasts from social movements from around the country, which are often neglected by mainstream media outlets
		Stands as an important civic initiative in a developing country such as Turkey to potentially contribute for the democratization of the communication environment
		Remains a novel experience for being an Internet-based participatory and civic initiative that could potentially pave the way for the emergence of future participatory outlets
Disadvantages	Technical	Inability to track contributors and the lack of data collection from its users, which challenges the reliability of content provided
		Ineffectiveness of the broadcast network at times that makes it harder to upload certain content with large amount of data
	Social/ Freedom of expression	Challenging journalistic broadcasting norms and ethics through sharing inappropriate content by relying on the comfort of anonymity
		Remains specific to the Gezi Park movement, thus, is limited in terms of creating impact for minor post-Gezi social movements around Turkey
		Not strong enough to make a difference both as a consequence of its structural limitations and the lack of participatory culture in Turkey both at audience and management levels
	Economic	Lacks visibility for not utilizing complementary online or offline advertisements that can assist the collective reaching larger audiences
		Economically based on donations and gift economy
		Based on arbitrariness of volunteerism in terms of content contribution from its users
		Insufficiency of essential resources such as time, money and workforce to ensure platform's sustainability

Technically, *çapul.tv* can be considered successful for it was able to establish its own broadcasting platform. In this way it was not reliant upon services that are mainly financed via online ads and can be at times subjected to censorship through government interventions. During the interview with CF1, he explained this in a humorous manner:

“It is not nice to expose recipients to video ads on residence projects while encouraging them to watch *çapul.tv*. This is why we established our own website” (In-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

However, this success also brought along a limitation that at times when the number of visitors were high made it harder for the viewers to load certain content and broadcasts. Moreover, the channel has not succeeded in drawing active participation of users, although they technically installed the required infrastructure. Another technical limitation was that they lacked information about the anonymous contributors and website visitors, which challenges the reliability of content provided.

In line with the spirit of online participatory journalism (Braman, 2002), *çapul.tv* provides privacy for its users and contributors. The channel also exerts less editorial control over shared content in comparison to institutionalized media. Therefore, amateur content are also shared via *çapul.tv* website. This situation, however, brings about a problem, which can be generalized for other online participatory media: reliability. Although the collective members state that they pay attention to accuracy and truthfulness of the content (e.g. in-depth interview with R1, 2015), there is always the risk of inaccuracy that may result in the dissemination of disinformation.

Due to the collective's ideological stance and managerial preference, *çapul.tv* does not utilize complementary online or offline advertisements that can assist the collective to reach larger audiences and increase its visibility. It remains a low-cost non-commercial outlet with limited public visibility and recognition.

6.7. Conclusion

The current chapter aimed to present an organizational study on *çapul.tv*, by focusing on structural features of the collective, such as its name and logo, location and premises, technological facilities, organization of content production, financial resources, human resources and history.

Findings of this study revealed that organizationally, *çapul.tv* has a number of drawbacks that determine its contribution to the democratization of media scene in particular and public sphere in general. Its major drawbacks are its limited financial and human resources. The collective mainly rely on

crowdsourcing campaigns, donations and income obtained through side projects. Due to limited human resources co-founders and reporters mainly run daily operation of the network. At times delays occur due to the low number of team members. Still, online presence of *çapul.tv* is prominent despite restrictions and limitations in terms of financial and human resources.

Based on the findings of the present study I would argue that *çapul.tv* is an important experiment in Turkey's online participatory media scene with its unique organizational characteristics. The importance of *çapul.tv* derives from two main reasons: First, despite all its drawbacks *çapul.tv* has succeeded in surpassing the limits of the Gezi Park movement and sustained its presence after the end of the protests. One of the most important contributions of *çapul.tv* to online media scene in Turkish was its persistent reporting of social movement-related news after Gezi movement. *çapul.tv* owes this success to its unique organizational structure and in-house social relations (Durdağ, 2015).

Second, *çapul.tv*'s importance derives from members' previous media experiences, such as *sendika.org* and *sendika.tv*, which make it a participatory media initiative relying on a civic culture. Despite its limitations, the collective stands as an important participatory media initiative based on a civic culture that potentially contributes to the democratization of media and public sphere in Turkey. The *çapul.tv* collective also provides lessons for future participatory media projects at technical, social and economic levels.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF ÇAPUL.TV FROM A CIVIC CULTURE PERSPECTIVE

7.1. Introduction

The concept of civic culture has evolved considerably since the time it was first defined by Almond and Verba (1962) in the early 1960s. The researchers (1962) studied the behaviors and practices such as voting and attending political party campaigns of individuals in traditional political processes in order to explore their participation into political life. Therefore, at the outset the domain of civic culture was limited to the ways in which individuals relate to traditional politics. In this traditional formulation civic culture was characterized by the acceptance of the authority of the state and a belief in participation in civic duties. Thus, it had a limited relationship with civil society.

With the increasing transparency of bureaucratic institutional structures and traditional politics civic cultures have also been transforming especially starting from the 1990s. Contemporary interpretation of the civic culture embraces the existence of a variety of non-bureaucratic and non-institutional political and civic formations. Civic culture is no longer characterized by its relationship with the authority of the state but composed of communications, practices and meanings.

The development of new ICTs and the Internet played a key role in the loosening of civic cultures' relationship with the state. The transformation in democratic and political participation patterns can also be observed in the transforming media-audience relationships (Rheingold, 2008). Mass media have long been key actors that serve to facilitate communicative links among citizens and power holders of the society. Today, new interactive and participatory media platforms and social networks that fostered democratic participation (Bennett, 2008) are considered within the framework of civic culture (Dahlgren, 2009).

The current chapter aims to explore the ways in which *çapul.tv* can be considered as civic culture. By drawing from Dahlgren's (2009) civic culture framework, the chapter explores the civic identities of *çapul.tv* members as well as their loyalty to democratic values and procedures, their practices, routines and traditions and their relevant knowledge and competencies. The analysis is mainly informed with in-depth interviews conducted with the members of the collective, as well as the content analysis of news items broadcast by *çapul.tv* during the Gezi Park movement.

7.2. *çapul.tv* as an online participatory media based on civic culture

During Gezi Park movement, protesters used social networks not only to share information on police raids and availability of legal and medical help but also to create visual or textual frames to “advance a specific representations of their identities and goals, in response to Erdoğan's insults and insinuations” (Perin, 2015, p.9). Many individuals incorporated the insults such as *çapulcu* (looters in English) and *ayyaş* (drunkard) into their online identities on social networks as well as into their projects, as it has been the case with *çapul.tv*.

The temporary and thematic natures of contemporary social movements pose a serious challenge to the relevance and sustainability of participatory media once the movements begin to lose their initial strength and popularity. The majority of participatory civic media initiatives established during Gezi protests did not last long. Participatory media including RevoltIstanbul, Müstereklerimiz and Occupy Gezi lasted less than two years (videoccupy.org, 2015; mustereklerimiz.org, 2015; revoltistanbul.com; 2015). *çapul.tv* emerged as one of the most notable examples of online participatory media established in the context of Gezi Park movement for remaining active after the demise Gezi movement. In addition its longevity, *çapul.tv* is also important in terms of its success in representing voices of marginalized groups and fostering horizontal linkages among communities of interest (capul.tv, 2015).

The longevity of *capul.tv* can be explained with the ten-year experience of its volunteers with not-for-profit alternative media experiments, which includes *sendika.org*, *sendika.tv* and the International Labor Film Festival (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). The main aim behind the previous experiences of was to produce and distribute information of and for the people that are ignored by the mainstream media in Turkey (*capul.tv*, 2015). *capul.tv* was also established with a similar aim but it also aimed to serve as the voice of the resistance by reporting live from public arenas where individuals defend their rights (in-depth interview with R2, 2015). Gezi movement made it clear that the media are not just a realm of symbolic power but also material and symbolic spaces where structures and contradictions of economic, political, coercive, and symbolic power manifest themselves (Doğu, 2015; Fuchs, 2013).

capul.tv is actively engaged in the civil and political society of Turkey and presents a model of online participatory media that challenge the symbolic power of mainstream media. The collective has its own mission and agenda with an emphasis on civil rights and civic movements of the minority and/or activist groups that hardly get covered by the mainstream media. Moreover, *capul.v* focuses on new media technologies that allow civic participation and interactivity and, thus, resides at the forefront of new developments in civic culture (*capul.tv*, 2015). By strengthening its social media presence and establishing its own television-broadcasting network (in-depth interview with R2, 2015) *capul.tv* tries to facilitate civic engagement, democratic participation and collective action. The above-mentioned characteristics of *capul.tv* bring it to the framework of contemporary formulation of civic culture, which emphasizes the essentiality of democracy and democratic participation in civil life (Dahlgren, no date).

7.2.1. Civic identities as citizens

Traditionally citizen is defined as a member of a political community who are entitled or assumed basic duties of membership such as voting. As a consequence of the need to recognize the diversity of populations in contemporary democracies and the changes in new media and communication technologies the concept of citizenship is also being transformed:

“There are, from the standpoint of identity, many ways of ‘doing’ citizenship. Indeed, even the word ‘citizen’ per se may not resonate with meaning for people; they may have other vocabularies” (Dahlgren, no date, p.4).

Today identities of citizens are not characterized by their political rights but by their being potentially empowered political agents (Dahlgren, 2000). By virtue of their democratic character and availability the new ICTs, mainly the web technology, stand as a suitable arena for a new kind of political engagement and contestation (Rheingold, 2008). The important point to recognize here is the potential impact of the media on creating we-ness among individuals, despite increasing individualism over collectivity especially with the widespread use and availability of new technologies (Dahlgren, no date). It is the civic identity resulting from the “we-ness” created by or via the media that gather individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds together around certain beliefs, actions and/or movements (Dahlgren, 2009).

The widespread use of the Internet as a global system of interconnected computer networks, which surpasses the territorial borders of sovereign states with its invisible links led to articulations of new concepts such as “digital citizenship”. Individuals use the Internet services to engage in societal activities both at national and global levels. In that sense, civic engagement, the encouragement of the citizens to get involved in political issues that influence their life also take place at digital spaces, to which individuals transfer characteristics of their civic selves as citizens.

While civic cultures are composed of communications, practices and meanings civic identity is defined as “a deliberately chosen and repeatedly enacted aspect of the self” (Knefelkamp, 2008). Locating self in a community is essential when considering civic identity. Like any other identity status, civic identity asks for active reflection, experimentation, and what Dewey called “moral rehearsal” (Fesmire, 2003). These factors shape the social capital, the collective value of social networks and the norms of reciprocity.

In this section the socio-demographic, educational, occupational profiles and civic identities of the members of *çapul.tv* collective will be explored in order to understand the dynamics of *çapul tv* network as a civic culture.

7.2.1.1. Profile and civic identities of *çapul.tv* members

As I started contacting with reporters and co-founders of *çapul.tv*, it was easy for me to identify core members and reporters of the *çapul.tv*, since they also publish articles and news reports in several other outlets with their real names. I found out that the core team of the television network is comprised of a small number of individuals, and they ensure the daily operation of the website and the social network accounts.

In total, I identified six members (two co-founders, two reporters and two presenters) who were and are still active since the foundation of the *çapul.tv*. When I asked the co-founders and reporters about whom I should contact for in-depth interviews, they primarily counted the names of co-founders and reporters. Additionally, I identified two presenters, who for a while, regularly worked for *çapul.tv* as volunteers to present television shows.

Table 6.3. Socio demographic & occupational profile of interviewees

	CF1	CF2	R1	R2	P1	P2
Association with çapul.tv	Co-founder	Co-founder	Reporter	Reporter	Presenter	Presenter
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	40+	40+	30+	20+	30+	40+
Educational level	M.A. level	Ph.D. level	B.S. level	B.S. level	B.S. level	Ph.D. level
Educational background on journalism	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Journalism experience	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Occupation	Electrical engineer & Broadcaster	Academic	Electrical engineer	Social scientist	Musician	Academic
Occupational connection other than çapul.tv	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political view	Not expressed	Not expressed	Socialist	Socialist	Socialist	Not expressed
NGO / Union membership	Alternative media association	Alternative media association	Community centers	Community centers	Cultural association	Community centers

Among the six interviewees, I found out some differences and similarities in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds and activist profiles. Co-founders interviewed are 40+ individuals who have expertise in the field of communications both theoretically and technically. CF1 who is the coordinator of an online professional television network is an electrical engineer and holds an MA degree in communications and journalism. CF2, who holds a Ph.D. degree is a professor in communication and also the writer of several books on communication technologies and social change and political economy of social networks.

Although they do not differentiate themselves from other members and volunteers of çapul.tv, both co-founders stated that they are the originators of the idea to broadcast live from the park throughout the protests (in-depth interviews with CF1 and CF2, 2015). CF1 (2015) said that before launching çapul.tv he “technically assessed the pros and cons of establishing a studio at Gezi Park and reporting live from the park”. His technical knowledge helped the collective to broadcast successfully in times of crisis when the majority of mainstream media

were unable to report from the field (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). Although several claimed or questioned whether the telecommunications companies prevented access to the Internet throughout protests (shiftdelete.net, 2013) TTNET and the Turkish Information and Communication Technologies Authority refuted these claims. CF1 (2015) asserted that the disconnections were the consequence of intense use of 3G technologies in the park that at times caused connection losses.

Both CF1 (2015) and CF2 (2015) are in the Board of Directors of Alternative Media Association (<http://alternatifmedya.org.tr>), in which they are also co-founders. Alternative Media Association is established to support citizens' "right to freely communicate" against commercialization of information by fostering the establishment of independent communication channels free from the pressure of commercial actors and the state (alternatifmedyadernegi.org, 2015). The association also publishes press releases to support independent media mainly during political conflicts. For instance, in one of its press releases the association criticized the banning of independent and mainly Kurdish news websites including Sendika.Org, Etha, DİHA, ANF, ANHA, BestaNuçe, Özgür Gündem, Yüksekova Haber, Rojnews, Jinha ve Azadiya Welat on July 25, 2015 "as a precaution" because of the way they covered Turkey's operation against ISIS (alternatifmedya.org.tr, 2015). The press release condemned the increasing pressure over parties and journalists in opposition and the censorship practices against alternative media in Turkey.

Reporters whom I interviewed are younger than co-founders (in-depth interviews with R1 and R2, 2015). While R1 is 30+ years old R2 is 20+ years old. Both have B.S. degree and journalism experience before *çapul.tv*. Similar to co-founders, both reporters have other occupational connections. R1 is a freelance electrical engineer while R2 is a freelance journalist working for other projects of the collective like *sendika.org*. Ideologically both reporters associate themselves with left-wing politics and have connections with community centers (*halk evleri* in Turkish).

Community centers, founded in 1932 and centered in Ankara, are non-

governmental organizations defending citizens' right to accommodation, health services, education and environment (halkevleri.org.tr, 2015). Historically, community centers were founded by the state in the early days of the Turkish Republic with the aim of widening public support to Republican reforms of modernization. In the following year they were closed down two times. First in 1951, by the Democratic Party, which was the first party other than Republican People's Party to come to power since the foundation of the Republic (halkevleri.org.tr, 2015). In 1963, community centers, were re-established (Güneş, 2012) not by the government but by the civic initiatives to serve as an umbrella platform of leftist groups in Turkey. However, this experience was also short-lived and the military authorities again closed down community centers after the 1980 coup d'état (halkevleri.org.tr, 2015). The third period of the community centers started in 1987 when civil society aimed to continue its operations in, for instance, the fields of education, environment and labor rights. By 2015 73 community centers were established in 25 cities of Turkey (halkevleri.org.tr, 2015). R2 explained that although *çapul.tv* was not directly related to the community centers, it shared their point of view in the sense that it rejected social inequalities caused by ne-liberal policies.

P2 is too a member and supporter of the community centers (in-depth interview with P2, 2015). P2 explained that the secular spirit of community centers attracted him to support them. P1 is associated with Pirlar ve Dedeler Kültür Derneği, a cultural organization that aims to offer lectures on playing folk instruments, folk dances and Turkey's cultural history. Both presenters are male, 30+years old and holders of B.S. degree. Unlike reporters they do not have any journalism experience prior to *çapul.tv*. They both have other occupational connections. While P1 is a musician who makes his own music and plays at various bars in Ankara with his band P2 is a professor of physics (in-depth interviews with P1 and P2, 2015).

P1, the presenter of the television program called Mahzen (*Storehouse* in English) started his program right after Gezi Park movement came to an end in the summer of 2013 (in-depth interview with P1, 2015). The program, mainly broadcasted from the Ankara studios of *çapul.tv*, hosted several folk musicians

who answered questions of P1 and performed their songs and folk classics live. He explains that the offer to make a music program came from *çapul.tv*'s founding members:

“One of my friends, who used to work for *çapul.tv* offered me to broadcast my own music program on a weekly basis. It took us ten minutes to decide. I designed the concept of the program, however the idea to broadcast a music program on *çapul.tv* is theirs” (in-depth interview with P1, 2015).

P2 presented a program on physics, titled “Hadi Ateistler Bunu da Açıklayın!” (Come on Atheists, Explain This As Well! in English). The name of the program is sarcastic in the sense that it makes a reference to the increasing role of the religion and the disappearance of secular values in the society due to the political atmosphere in Turkey in 2000s (*capul.tv*, 2015).

“In one of the television programs where we discussed whether science and religion are clashing phenomena, I insisted that these two matters must be treated as separate from each other. On the other hand, a theologian, who was one of the guests of the television program, claimed that both could go well hand in hand if treated right. After the show, he confessed me that he was actually thinking just like me. He was not an atheist, but he was against organized religion. However, he was not feeling free to express his opinion on TV due to the increasing role of organized religion in Turkey's public sphere” (in-depth interview with P2, 2015).

P2 (2015) also argues that some theologians are also against the JDP's interpretation of Islam but they remain silent not to lose their jobs. He (2015) argues that his television program served to discuss scientific phenomenon free from the influence of religion, which is hard to find in mainstream media. Starting from November 21st, 2013, P2 hosted several scientific discussions including the great explosion and Darwin's theory of evolution theory, which are rarely given any space in mainstream television programs and often discussed from the point of religious values (in-depth interview with P2, 2015).

When I asked P2 why he chose *çapul.tv* to broadcast his lectures, he responded: “It's for the sake of secularism” (in-depth interview with P2, 2015).

Although *çapul.tv* has a strong political stance P2 (2015) says that he does not know much about the ideological stance and political orientations of founding members:

“For me, it is important that they defend secularism. If Muslims would support secularism, then I wouldn’t mind presenting a program in their television channels. We are in a very dangerous position, without secularism, we cannot survive” (in-depth interview with P2, 2015).

In relation to his political orientation, P2 (2015) seems to differ from *çapul.tv* reporters. While reporters interviewed (2015), put emphasis on social inequalities that derive from the implementation of neo-liberal policies in Turkey P2 (2015) prioritizes the defense of secularist traditions and values of the society. P2 (2015) believes secularist traditions are threatened by the increasing role of the religion over politics and, on the daily life of Turkish citizens thanks to JDP’s conservative Islamist policies.

When they were asked about their civic identities all interviewees seemed more comfortable with explaining their relations with organizations such as Alternative Media Association, directly related to *çapul.tv* (in-depth interview with *çapul.tv* members, 2015). All *çapul.tv* associates underlined the fact that *çapul.tv* is an independent participatory media network without any direct connection with any political organization (in-depth interview with *çapul.tv* members, 2015). R2 explains:

“We interviewed journalists, representatives of non-governmental organizations and solidarity associations. Some of them became our guests at the *çapul.tv* studio. These guests also included members of the Taksim Solidarity. However, we do not associate ourself directly with neither Taksim Solidarity nor any other organization” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Especially co-founders and reporters insistently repeated that *çapul.tv* does not have any connections with neither political nor economic actors, and it does not seek for profit, even at times when I did not ask anything on this topic. Thus, they prefer to be referred as media activists (in-depth interview with *çapul.tv* members, 2015), who take journalistic practice serious (in-depth interview with

CF1 and R1, 2015). Especially the co-founders and reporters referred to their sendika.tv experience, which they defined as a preparatory experience for çapul.tv.

7.2.1.2. Media consumption patterns and attitudes towards mainstream media

Among co-founders, reporters and presenters there were some similarities in relation to their media consumption habits and attitudes towards mainstream media. First, all çapul.tv associates interviewed claimed they did not watch television. I insistently asked for the names of mainstream television channels or programs that they watch, however, I got no answer.

Although he did not mention any specific name, R2 explained that he regularly followed mainly print mainstream media including papers with religious orientation such as *Yeni Akit* and *Zaman Daily* to assess their stance on certain issues that result in political crises (in-depth interview with R2, 2015). *Yeni Akit* is mainly known for its conservative and Islamist extremist stance (Diker, 2015) especially on Jews, atheists and homosexuals. It is among the Turkish dailies that frequently resort to hate speech in an extremist manner. *Zaman Daily* is associated with the Fethullah Gülen community, which took an anti-government stance following the collapse of the alliance between Fethullah Gülen and JDP in 2014 (t24.com.tr, 2016).

R2, a regular contributor to sendika.org, said he compiled news related to certain political issues such as “solution process”, which is also known as the Kurdish-Turkish peace process that aims to resolve the armed conflict that has been going on since 1984 (in-depth interview with R2, 2015). It can be stated that although reporters followed mainly the print media to catch up with the national and international political agenda they, like co-founders and presenters, stayed away from television.

The founders of çapul.tv claimed that the Gezi Park movement revealed the declining legitimacy of mainstream media in the eyes of the public among all

segments of the society due to their political bias and partisanship and that the partisan mainstream media of Turkey seized citizens' right to access to information that would assist them in understanding and making sense of their everyday lives (capul.tv, 2015).

7.2.2. Loyalty to democratic values and practices

Democracy can hardly function if values such as willingness to follow democratic principles and procedures are not well established in daily life. Even the legal system is a reflection of these virtues. The media also tend to reinforce the commitment to democratic values (Dahlgren, no date). It can be argued that support for the democratic rights of individuals is something that is spreading globally via media representations. However, one should also recognize the implications of "media power" or "the power of the media" for democracy:

"From one direction "media power" is a term we use to point to how *other* powerful forces use the intermediate mechanism of media to wage *their* battles (...) From the second perspective, (...) those who benefit from it do not generally make media power explicit: the media. No wonder it is rarely the direct subject of public debate (Couldry and Curran, 2003, pp. 3-4).

Couldry and Curran (2003) assert that all forms of alternative media remain forgotten in these two points of view. Despite the increasing political significance of Internet, the power of mass and/or mainstream media remains important in terms of imposing or reinforcing loyalty to democratic values.

These values can also be found in the manifesto of capul.tv.

7.2.2.1. Manifesto of capul.tv

All forms of alternative media, as counter-acts, to the dominant means of production challenge concentration of media power. These forms of media, center on autonomy, solidarity and the development of reflexivity in the creative processes of democratic media production (Atton, 2002, p. 156). These values can also be found in the manifesto of capul.tv.

Opposing the commercialization of the communication spheres, founders of *capul.tv* aimed to create communication channels independent from both the state and capital. They called for channels of communication, which are equally accessible for all citizens and free from sexist, reactionary and racist discourses. Their belief is that such a communication environment would also support citizens' right to communicate by establishing their own alternative means of communication in their own languages and through their own values and practices, which would also help them become active subjects in their own struggles (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

The collective stated that they aim to build up their news stories with the least editorial interventions possible (in-depth interview with R1, 2015). In doing so, *capul.tv* paid special attention to preserving the authenticity of the language of stories that they received from social solidarity groups that participated in resistance. Other principles of the collective included:

- “Support social resistances and movements to foster the emergence of a more democratic social structure,
- Enable circulation of news stories from all spheres of everyday life through establishing a suitable communication platform and broadcast stories ignored by information monopolies,
- Oppose hierarchical structures in news production processes and abstain from categorizations such as professional/amateur,
- Establish a self-financing mechanism and abstain from commercial activities and partnerships,
- Stand against commercialization of communication processes and information” (*capul.tv*, 2015).

These principles define essential characteristics of *capul.tv*. The collective does not claim that the platform is the *magnum opus* of alternative communication channels and/or processes (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). *capul.tv* is the consequence of search for a more democratic communication environment, in which it is aimed to witness Gezi Park protests by sharing experiences, emotions

and thoughts of active subjects of resistance through live broadcasts in a semi-amateur manner with voluntary labor (in-depth interview with CF2, 2015).

During Gezi Park movement, participants organized and coordinated various activities such as free yoga sessions to food services. Individuals from various occupations including, doctors, lawyers and businessmen volunteered when support related to their occupations were needed (Patrut and Patrut, 2014). Three years after the movement, a doctor explained his motivation for protest participation as follows:

“As the police attacks started, I took care of the wounded protesters at the first day of the movement. I also attended the protests following days in order to revolt against the (protest related) violence (...) the attendance of young protesters was important since it showed that they cared about the causes of Gezi. Their support was also important to show (government) that it was not that easy to establish a fascist regime” (interview with doctor A.Ş., Köse and Açar, 2016)

The main strategy was both resist and to maintain the movement in various ways. *capul.tv* can be perceived as a similar attempt in which electrical engineers, journalists and those who has the technical and intellectual capabilities share their knowledge and expertise to build up a participatory channel of communication.

Civic cultures born in resistance movements are critical of socio-economic and cultural inequalities caused by the neo-liberal world economy and seize the opportunity provided by these movements to practice a more democratic experience. For instance, in protests at Taksim Square, there was an anti-hierarchical and consensus-based structure that criticized the militarization and commercialization of public spaces (Göle, 2013). Gezi was perceived as a democratic experience that challenged the existing political order. It embraced various traditions, languages, religions, cultures and histories. Within such atmosphere, *capul.tv* was formed to foster resistance movements that aim to contribute to the ideal of a more democratic communication environment, free from the pressure and influence of information monopolies (*capul.tv*, 2015). As R1 explains:

“One of our primary aims has been to contribute to the democratization of the communication environment in the movement. We wanted to give a voice to protesters, who were not being represented by mainstream media institutions. Most of the time, we did not even ask questions to protesters. We let them speak” (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

Therefore, the collective encouraged citizens to curate and share their own content. For instance, CF1 argues that spreading the means and ways of production is one of the major practices of loyalty to democratic values:

“In terms of increasing participation among ordinary citizens, our main objective has also been to encourage them to learn how to record and share content. I think this is an important principle for the democratization of the media” (In-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

Thus, it can be stated that one of the important consequences of the Gezi experience has been the creation of alternative and participatory communication platforms such as *capul.tv*, which prioritize democratic values as well as participation and interactivity.

The manifesto of *capul.tv* reiterates the loyalty of the founding members to democratic values by paying special attention to them. It also reveals the belief that media can potentially foster the commitment to democratic values, which is an essential characteristic of all forms of alternative media (Atton, 2001) These values can cultivate a culture of respect and an environment of civic inclusivity, which ordinary citizens can assist by shaping the agenda of their societies through expressing their solidarity (*capul.tv*, 2015).

7.2.2.2. Egalitarian work environment

Reflecting this characteristic of Gezi, co-founders and reporters as well as presenters emphasize the egalitarian and independent work environment in *capul.tv*.

“*capul.tv* does not have a hierarchical structure (...) There are no titles such as “chief editor” or “manager” in *capul.tv*. We could have created such titles. (...) Even some people did. They declared themselves as heroes of Gezi. We think this is

against the spirit of the movement” (mudahildergi.com, no date)

Similarly, P1 explains he did not witness any hierarchy among members of the collective:

“We contribute to each other’s work. There’s no hierarchy. As a presenter, I don’t have the opportunity to spend long times with the reporters or founders of *çapul.tv*. My contribution to *çapul.tv* is my program. I have other things to do to linger on. However, I do my best whenever someone from *çapul.tv* calls me and ask for support. This support does not have to be necessarily about my program. It can be technical support as well – such as video editing” (in-depth interview with P1, 2015).

One of the major strengths of *çapul.tv* was its independence from commercial interests and government relations (Günerhan, 2014). Its independence also motivates regular contributors such as presenters, including P2 (2015), who explains:

“We don’t agree at all issues in our discussions. We are different people. However, we treat each other with respect. (...) I think the power of *çapul.tv* derives from its dependency. This is one of the main reasons that persuaded me to make a program on *çapul.tv*” (in-depth interview with P2, 2015).

Although the collective had some connections with the members of the Taksim Solidarity, the solidarity and *çapul.tv* were not organically linked (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). Nor *çapul.tv* was managed or directed by the Taksim Solidarity. However, as CF1 (2015) asserts Mucella Yapıcı, the General Secretary of the Istanbul branch of the Turkish Association of Architects and a Taksim Solidarity Association member, who got arrested along with eleven other members of the association on charges of violating the public order and founding a criminal organization (Söylemez, 2013), was a regular guest of live broadcasts of *çapul.tv* during and after the protests. This example also reveals that the collective established anti-hierarchical and horizontal links both inside and outside the organization in line with Castell’s argument that in Internet era, one can hardly hold positions of power in the communicative circuits (Castells, 2009).

7.2.3. Practices, routines and traditions

In relation to practices, routines and traditions dimensions of the civic culture approach, editorial and managerial practices of online participatory media must be taken into consideration (Dahlgren, 2009). A different editorial approach can be expected from online participatory media outlets which are horizontally structured and whose major news sources are citizens.

7.2.3.1. Editorial policies

Data gathered from interviewees suggest that the structure and characteristics of *capul.tv* reflect the features of both participatory media and alternative media (in-depth interview with *capul.tv* members, 2015). In this sense, *capul.tv* is one of Turkey's unique participatory media networks (Durdağ, 2015), that is open to contribution and voluntary labor from various geographies to give unheard segments of the society a voice and assist them to become digitally literate citizens (*capul.tv*, 2015).

“We mostly broadcast video pieces sent by volunteers if they have a news value. We, of course, care about the quality and the reliability of the content. We value critical news pieces. Editors of *sendika.org* also embrace a similar perspective. However, we do not broadcast, sexist, chauvinist, aggressive contents, which target certain religious, sexual or ethnic minority groups” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

R1 explains that practices and the routines of *capul.tv* aim to reflect the soul of Gezi movement though he accepts that the editorial freedom also has its limits:

“One guy wanted to read a piece from Ergenekon manifesto during a live broadcast at the park. Not that much (laughs). Even YouTube applies a filter to the user-generated contents, right? Okay, we do not have a tough editorial policy, however, we also do not want to be abused. We do not want to support the propaganda of any party by accident. What we aim is to create a more hybrid news environment. What we want to create with *capul.tv* is something that reflects the soul of Gezi. If we cannot keep our routine in line with the soul of Gezi then... you know... we already have other on-going projects...

We can transfer our energy to those projects instead of *çapul.tv*” (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

As can be inferred from the statements of R1 (2015) and R2 (2015) on editorial practices and routines of *çapul.tv*, a large amount of energy of reporters are spent for the editorial processes to separate the useful content sent to them mainly via electronic communication channels. *çapul.tv* is available online to anyone who wants to report/document an injustice he/she witnesses with online publics. Thus, the reporting practices are geographically dispersed. Citizens around Turkey and even around the world share mainly the visual contents with the editorial team and co-founders of *çapul.tv* when they experience or observe any crisis situation that relate to social inequality. Although established reporters of *çapul.tv* also produce news and technically assist television programs their main duties remain editorial (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

7.2.3.2. Guerrilla media practices

Before I started conducting my field study, my preliminary assumption was that *çapul.tv* team collective was a loose network composed of core members and volunteers who share content with the core members on a regular basis. However, as I started conducting firsthand observations and in-depth interviews, I found out that the majority of volunteer news broadcasts were one-off and the core members did not even know the majority of volunteers who reach them primarily through online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Reporters/citizens/volunteers broadcast content related to daily life and most of them are one-time contributors who remain or are kept anonymous.

In that sense, CF2 (2015) argues that as much as being an online participatory media *çapul.tv* is also a guerilla media by nature, which refers to intervention in communication processes through provoking subversive effects (Blissett and Brünzel, 1997). She (2015) also states that the anonymity of volunteer reporters, who report about everyday life, is important since *çapul.tv* should preserve its distance from the daily life:

“çapul.tv should preserve its distance from everyday life since it is a reflexive outlet which quickly organizes, produces its actions and withdraws back at the right time. In that sense çapul.tv is guerilla as much as it is participatory. Our main motivation is the love and respect we feel for the grassroots movements (in-depth interview with CF2, 2015)”.

Participatory media provide various representations of the political life, its symbols and rituals. Depending on their financial and organizational, certain media make use of new interactive technologies and incorporate these into their civic culture practices. Jenkins (2006), who coined the term “participatory culture” and defined it as the antithesis of the consumer culture, objects to the passivity of the consumer in the capitalist system. For him (2006), participatory culture invites individuals to take an active role in the production, dissemination and interpretation of cultural goods, which has the potential to foster greater civic engagement and challenge the mechanisms of control in the capitalist mode of media production.

çapul.tv transfers its energy of civic engagement into the context of contemporary social movements through new interactive technologies. The collective’s main motivation is to make voices of movements centered around issues of social inequalities heard on any potential network accessible (capul.tv, 2015). For çapul.tv, these interactive technologies include diverse methods of broadcasting such as HD video streaming services, pages and accounts established via online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and çapul.tv website itself as well as the mounted camera footages received from volunteers (in-depth interview with R1, 2015).

7.2.3.3. Representation of Gezi Park movement on çapul.tv

Gezi Park movement stands as the key moment in the history of çapul.tv. The television network, established in Gezi Park at the height of the movement, claim to share and reflect the spirit of the resistance throughout and after the protests (mudahildergi.com, no date). Similarly, during the in-depth interview, R2 explained çapul.tv was one of the major news sources of the movement for both

representing actors missing in the coverage of Turkish mainstream media and giving a voice to movement actors in opposition:

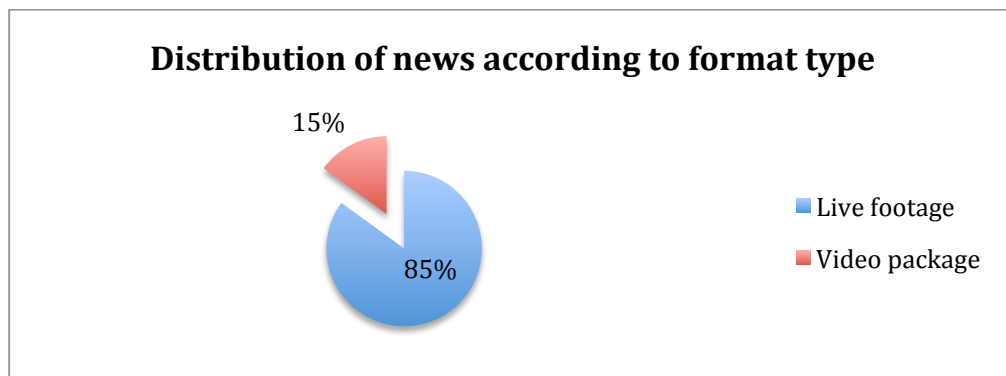
“Giving a voice to the underrepresented groups has become one of the main aims of *çapul.tv* from the very beginning. These groups included Kemalists, ethnic minorities, feminists, LGBT activists, labor and students” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Therefore, actors, themes, subjects and the tones of the news stories stand as important features to understand the way *çapul.tv* covered Gezi-related events. These characteristics are also important to take into consideration, how *çapul.tv* represented various social groups during Gezi Park movement.

7.2.3.3.1. General characteristics of news items and format types

In terms of news coverage, *çapul.tv* embraces an amateur manner. Items are mainly curated via mobile devices. Display of the majority of news items is shaky. The voice over is not used. Reporters rarely talk and rather hand the microphone to individuals. In the certain news items - e.g. “İstiklal”, “Protestocular” (Protesters), “Polis Terörü” (Police Terror) and “Gezide İş Makineleri” (Heavy Equipments in Gezi), there are no dialogues at all.

Graph 7.1. Distribution of *çapul.tv* news items according the format type



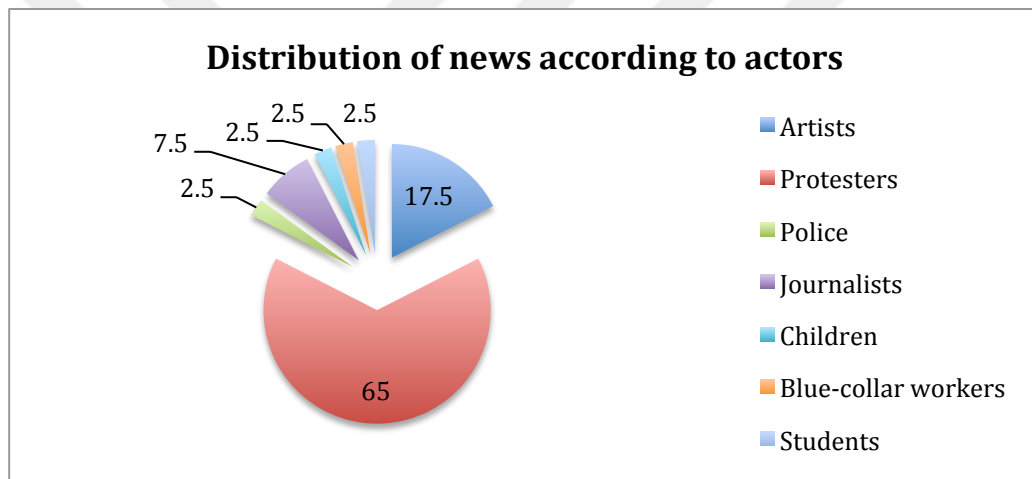
Findings reveal that Gezi coverage of *çapul.tv* mainly comprised the live footage format (85%). The video package (15%) format is mainly applied when scenes from the movement were broadcasted along with a cultural content such as songs about Gezi Park movement. The video package contents are mainly

composed of scenes from protests. This can be understood for packaging video content could have been time consuming for *çapul.tv* at the height of the events. *çapul.tv* mainly preferred broadcasting live from the field, at a time period when individuals were hardly receiving any news from mainstream media outlets.

7.2.3.3.2. Main actors in news items

In terms of the actors represented, it can be observed that *çapul.tv* mainly served as the voice of protesters. Findings revealed that main actors of news items broadcasted by *çapul.tv* during Gezi Park movement were protesters (65%).

Graph 7.2. Distribution of *çapul.tv* news items according to actors



Interestingly, protesters were hardly represented by their social identity or group association. Even on one-to-one interviews, in which protesters' motivation for movement participation were asked they were represented as only protesters. This finding confirms statements of *çapul.tv* members, who viewed Gezi as a diverse but unifying experience for them:

“Gezi was both a diverse and a unifying experience, where many social groups encountered each other first time. It was diverse since there were a lot of groups from different social and cultural backgrounds. It was also unifying because we all were there to defend the park, to speak up for our demands (...) Our identities hardly mattered (...) Gezi also allowed us to break down our prejudices towards certain social groups. The spirit of the movement was unifying and we were glad to be a part of it” (in-depth interview with R2, 2015).

Similarly protesters expressed the unifying nature of Gezi Park movement during interviews:

“We probably embrace different ideologies, but it is not important. We are in solidarity in here. Our ideological stance should not matter right now” (capul.tv, Time for chapullers to talk, 2013).

In one-on-one interviews, protesters were mainly asked about their feelings regarding the Gezi Park movement - e.g. “Gezi Parkı İnsanları” (Humans of Gezi), “Çapulcular Konuşuyor” (Chapullers are Speaking) and “Söz Çapulcularda” (Time for Chapullers to Talk). Interviews were kept short and reporters did not intervene while the interviewees were talking.

Artists who attend the protests composed 17.5 % of news actors in capul.tv’s Gezi coverage. Although artists such as film directors, actors and musicians were present in the park with their protester identities, the news coverage of capul.tv mainly focus on their press statements calling for peace. In one of the news items where artists are the main actors, a well-known Turkish actor explains:

“We demand all sorts of violent activities to stop immediately. It is time for everyone to understand each other. From now on, we ask everyone to think about the ways for the creation of a peaceful environment in the country” (capul.tv, “Actors”, 2013).

Similar to the coverage of protesters, reporters of capul.tv did not talk and basically reflected the scenes from press statements of artists at the park.

News items in which journalists remain main actors (7.5%) included short interviews. Journalists were either asked to evaluate the Gezi Park movement or share their feelings about it:

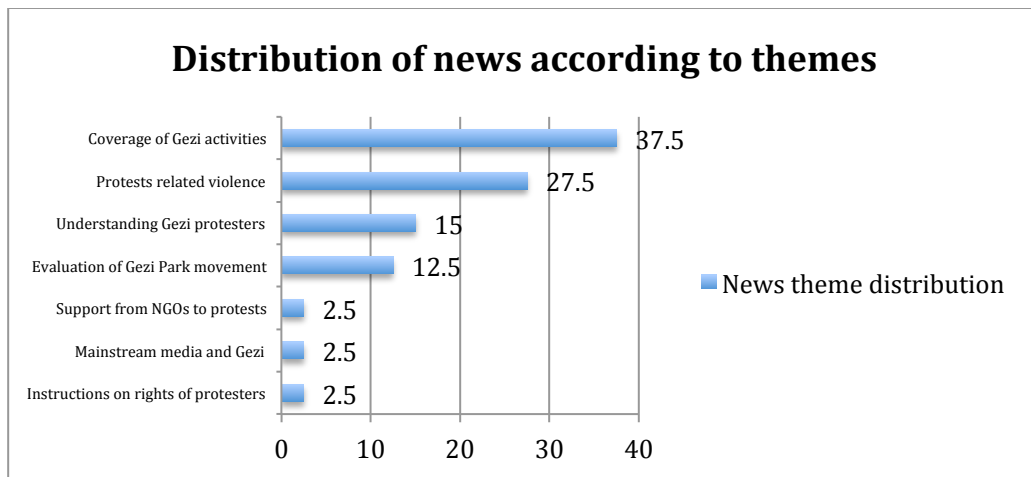
“I think there are many important lessons to draw from Gezi Park movement. That’s how I see it. I see this movement as a sociological lab. I try to remain as an outsider. Everything

happens so fast. The movement indicates the potential for a social change” (capul.tv, interview with A.H., 2013).

Other actors represented in news coverage of capul.tv included police forces (2.5%), children (2.5%), blue-collar workers (2.5%) and students (2.5%). The police forces were represented during a nervous breakdown, when verbally attacking journalists not to broadcast. Children, who were accompanied by their parents, were represented during a musical play organized at the park. Blue-collar workers and students- also protesters- were mainly represented by their social identity, as they mainly talked about the difficulties of their occupations and their economic conditions.

7.2.3.3.3. Main themes in news items

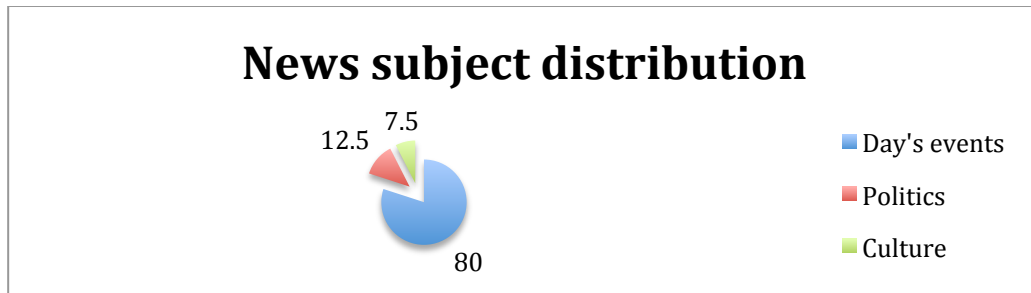
In terms of news themes, “coverage of Gezi activities” (37.5%) in which activities organized at the park by protesters, such as concerts, yoga sessions, library installations, workshops and dance performances were represented in a festive environment – e.g. “Parkta Şarkı ve Dans” (Songs and Dance in the Park), “Boğaziçi” (Bosphorus) and “Parkta Kütüphane” (Library in the Park) was the most recurring theme. The second dominant theme was “protests related violence” (27.5%), which mainly portrayed attacks of police forces against protesters and included headlines such as “Protestoculara Saldırı” (Attack on Protesters) and “Polis Terörü” (Police Forces). The third dominant theme in capul.tv’s Gezi reports was “understanding Gezi protesters” (15%), in which protesters were asked about their motivations and opinions regarding the movement.

Graph 7.3. Distribution of *çapul.tv* news items according to themes

çapul.tv reporters rarely intervened as protesters shared their feelings. The fourth most recurring theme, “Evaluation of Gezi Park movement”(12.5%), mainly focused on perceptions and opinion of journalists on the course of events.. Other themes that emerged in news reports included the support of NGOs to Gezi movement (2.5%), lack of mainstream media coverage of events (2.5%) and instructions for protesters on what to do when taken into police custody (2.5%).

7.2.3.3.4. Main subjects in news items

In terms of news subjects, day’s events dominated *çapul.tv*’s representation of Gezi Park movement (80%). Scenes from the park and interviews conducted with protesters mainly focused on the daily happenings both in terms of the encounters with the police and the activities organized in the park. The coverage rarely focused on politics (12.5%), only when journalists briefly joined the broadcasts and evaluated the course of events. Politicians were not interviewed and party-politics were rarely discussed, although protesters sometimes criticized the government while speaking about their demands:

Graph 7.4. Distribution of *capul.tv* news items according to subjects

“People learn how not to be afraid of the government with Gezi Park movement. When we take the streets, their economic and political power will diminish. This can be an opportunity for political change” (*capul.tv*, Chapullers are speaking, 2013).

The Gezi related cultural content included music from Turkish rock band Duman and Natalie Cardone’s interpretation of “Hasta Siempre”, a song written as a response to the farewell letter of Che Guevara. The music content were accompanied with symbolic scenes from Gezi Park movement, portraying a guitarist playing in the middle of İstiklal street and a protester, reading a book in the face of police forces.

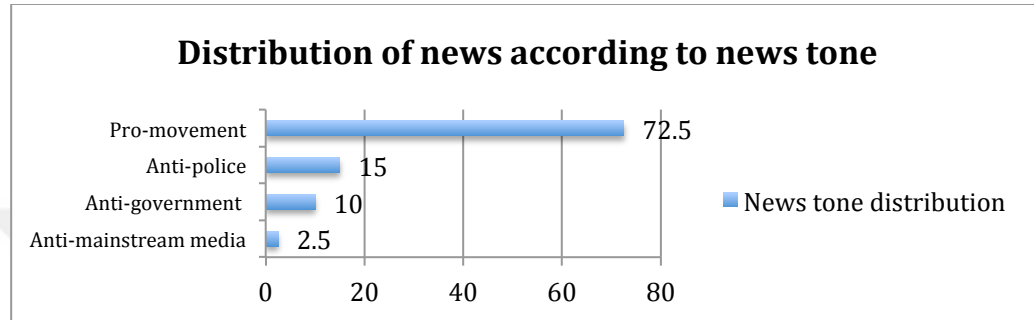
7.2.3.3.5. Main tones in news items

The news tone in *capul.tv* broadcasts were mainly shaped by the interviewees and scenes broadcasted from the movement. The news items analyzed mainly had a pro-movement and festive tone (72.5%). News items with pro-movement tone included scenes from protests in which protesters chanted pro-movement slogans, organized daily cultural activities and reflected their perspectives on the movement. These news items also included video package news items, which, for instance, compiled funny moments and slogans in the park such as “Sinirlenince çok güzel oluyorsun Türkiye!” (You are very beautiful when you get angry, Turkey!) and “Hükümet yıkılsın, yerine AVM yapılsın!” (Let the government be destroyed and build a shopping mall instead!) (*capul.tv*, Funny moments, 2013). News items with anti-police tone (15%) mainly represented police violence against protesters and the press with rare dialogues, while items

with an anti-government tone (10%) reflected negative opinions of protesters and journalists about the government:

“What are we going to do if they destroy the park? How are we going to be able to breathe? Enough! We need more green spaces and fewer buildings! What more should I say to the PM?” (capul.tv, Protester, 2013).

Graph 7.5. Distribution of capul.tv news items according to news tones



The anti-mainstream media tone is rarely encountered (2.5%) in capul.tv’s representation of Gezi Park movement. This can be explained with the situation that in a fast-paced social environment such as Gezi Park movement, capul.tv reporters preferred focusing on day’s events, which were largely missing in the mainstream media outlets.

7.2.3.3.6. Evaluation of the findings of content analysis

capul.tv’s representation of Gezi Park movement remains important in the sense that it serves as a visual memory of protests with a dispersed collection of mainly live footages. Despite the variety of demands and actors active in the field, capul.tv experience indicates that Gezi was a unifying experience in terms of gathering individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds over shared demands.

The unified atmosphere of the movement is also represented in the coverage of capul.tv, as reporters of the television network treat interviewees not members of particular social groups, but simply as protesters. There are few

instances in which protesters talk about problems related with social status. Even in these news items, *capul.tv* reporters rarely intervene in protester's talks.

While protesters emerge as the main actors in *capul.tv* coverage, Gezi related activities remain as the most dominant theme. The coverage reflects the cheerful atmosphere in the park and represents cultural activities organized by protesters in the field. These activities include recreational activities in the park organized by protesters.

The dominant theme also inevitably influences the main subjects of news items. The coverage mainly focuses on day's events and happenings – which also include tensions between the police forces and protesters, as well as recreational activities in the park- rather than reflections of Gezi Park movement at the macro-political level. Politicians are not present in *capul.tv* coverage of Gezi Park movement. Rather, discussions on party politics and governmental policies are mainly represented from the eyes of the protesters.

The news items about Gezi Park movement mainly reflect a pro-movement tone, representing the course of events as they happen. The voice over technique is not used and reporters rarely evaluate the broadcasted scenes. In news items with no dialogue, events are mainly represented as they are. In brief interviews with protesters and journalists, interviewees are mainly asked about their feelings about the movement and whether they consider Gezi Park movement as an important move.

In an interview, members of the collective explain that they want to contribute to street politics of the movement by giving a voice to protesters who are underrepresented by the mainstream media (*mudahildergi.com*, no date). Data drawn in the content analysis confirms that the perspectives of protesters dominate the representation of Gezi Park movement on *capul.tv*, in terms of main actors, themes, subjects and tones of news items.

7.2.4. Relevant knowledge and competencies

Relevant knowledge and competencies compose another essential dimension of civic culture (Dahlgren, 2009). Activist movements, groups and/or parties need to sustainably generate relevant knowledge and competencies. Dahlgren (no date) asserts that certain degree of online literacy is important since individuals must be able to make sense of the knowledge that circulates in the public sphere and to understand the world they live in. Individuals should have access to reliable reports, portrayals, analyses, discussions and debates in contemporary issues Dahlgren (no date).

The evolution of media landscape is from the result of the transformation of the knowledge itself, which is in turn a consequence of the cultural changes in modern democracies. New media technologies also take part in this process with their promotion of new modalities of thought and expression. On the Internet, there are seemingly infinite available resources. Therefore, online information processing has come into prominence especially for collectives rooted in civic cultures. As argued by Jenkins et al. (2009), new media technologies require certain digital literacy skills, such as performance, simulation, multitasking, collective intelligence and networking.

7.2.4.1. Technical knowledge

çapul.tv is a recent country-specific example of civic initiatives that are rooted in new media technologies, which require certain theoretical and practical knowledge and competencies. Although they did not have all the necessary technological equipment for broadcasting, the members of the çapul.tv knew how to substitute the lacking tools with the relevant available ones (cumhuriyet.com.tr, 2013; toplumsal.com.tr, 2013). This accumulated knowledge and competencies are mainly the result of co-founders' willingness to keep up with new information and communication technologies. Both co-founders and reporters underlined that they followed news especially on information and communication technologies (in-depth interviews with CF1 and R1, 2015).

The technical knowledge *çapul.tv* collective also brought along success in terms of being one of the few broadcasters reporting live from the field during Gezi Park movement while the majority of mainstream media outlets of Turkey ignored the events or failed to report live due to technical difficulties:

“We were very interested in reporting live on-field during Gezi Park movement. However, we were not sure how long it would last. I guess it was on 3rd of June when the crowds in the park started to get larger. This made us consider broadcasting live from the field. I knew that it was not possible to utilize 3G technologies to broadcast, as the 3G-technology use on field was intense. Many protesters claimed the Internet was banned at the park, however it was actually the heavy use of the Internet via 3G technologies that prevented individuals from connecting” (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

CF1 (2015) also explains that he is familiar with the satellite technologies, which were more suitable to broadcast, live from the park via the Internet. Despite the financial restrictions, *çapul.tv* did not give up its live coverage from the park via satellite, which cost around 300-400 TL (approximately 125 U.S. dollars) per day. Eight satellite television channels, namely, Halk TV, Hayat TV, İMC, TV 10, Ulusal Kanal, Kanal artı 1, Besta Nüçe which were unable to report from the field due to technical restrictions also gave live coverage of *çapul.tv* broadcasts from the park. Although mainstream media television channels of Turkey including the 24-hour news channels such as NTV and CNNTürk, which were criticized by protesters for ignoring events, had technical potentials, it was almost impossible to transfer their mobile broadcasting vans into the field due to the crowds in the park and the intense pepper gas use by the police forces (in-depth interview with CF2, 2015).

Thanks to its technological competence, *çapul.tv* collective launched its own streaming service in a very short period of time. Although *çapul.tv* utilized video streaming services such as ustream during Gezi Park protests, members felt uncomfortable with advertisements displayed within the broadcasts:

“Although there was nothing we can do about it, commercial display ads such as the ones on new housing projects based in historical sight of Istanbul, were disrespectful for our audience,

who were pro-Gezi Park protests, critical of the resident projects that harm the historical nature of the city as well” (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

Despite financial limitations, *çapul.tv* established its own online video streaming service by utilizing up-to-date satellite technologies. It costed 11.000 Turkish Liras (approximately 3.500 US Dollars) to install the online video streaming service designed for *çapul.tv* (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015). An out-of-pocket expenditure, the cost of the network was later, compensated with the volunteer donations made to the television network via Alternative Media Association. In line with the definition of Downing (2001), *çapul.tv*, as an online participatory media network, has continued its operation as a low budget, self-managing, independently owned outlet during and after Gezi Park movement.

7.2.4.2. Training seminars

In terms of exchange of knowledge and skills, *çapul.tv* has also undertaken an important mission. Starting from 2013, the collective began to organize training seminars in various cities of Turkey for those who are interested in learning theoretical knowledge and practical applications of resistance reporting. With these seminars, the collective aimed to train potential resistance reporters from various geographies of the country, who would contribute to the television network by creating their own content (BİA Haber Merkezi, 2013) (though the collective did not compel seminar participants to contribute content to the network). Seminars, titled Resistance Reporting, were organized in fifteen cities to more than two hundred participants throughout the second half of 2013 (indiegogo.com, 2013; Yerdeniz, 2014).

Resistance reporting seminars was structured at two levels: basic and advanced (sendika.org, 2013). Seminars on basic level included instructions on Internet video broadcasting technologies, Internet connection technologies, video format conversion services, video channel services, video recording software, video subtitle programs, audio systems and technologies and live broadcasting technologies. The advanced level included courses on basics of Adobe Premiere, Photoshop, animation and 3D Blender and basics of shooting with Greenbox. The

seminars included theoretical lectures as well as hands-on training with relevant technologies and tools that are essential for resistance reporting. Participants attended courses and received hands-on training for free, which provided them technological literacy of relevant broadcasting tools (sendika.org, 2013).

Another important point regarding the seminars was that the registration was free for all participants. Though organization of seminars required certain level of financial resources the collective preferred to finance it with donations made to Alternative Media Association rather than with an agreement with a sponsor (sendika.org, 2013).

As Koulikov asserts (2011), the exchange of knowledge constitutes the basis of all organizational activity and fosters the capacity to act. In that sense, Resistance Reporting seminars made *çapul.tv* a unique organization in Turkey's online participatory media scene as the collective aimed to spread its organizational aims and goals among ordinary citizens by offering them hands-on training. Previously, Turkey branch of Indy media collective had organized a symposium, which proposed a radical perspective in education in opposition to the mass schooling system. The education had introduced alternative schools such as Free Schools, Democratic Schools, Open Schools, Montessori Schools, Waldorf Schools, Krishnamurti Schools and education movements such as Home Education and Peoples' Education which drew inspiration from the works of theorists such as Rousseau, Godwin, Ferrer, Stirner, Neill, Holt and Parker. The symposium team had targeted scholars of pedagogy, teachers, students of education faculties and decision-makers on education as well as people receiving education services and people interested in the topic (indymedia.org, 2005).

The alternative education symposium organized by Indy media was an important experience in the sense that it sought to plant the seeds for a deep societal transformation by introducing ordinary citizens the basics of alternative education systems. Media-oriented *Resistance Reporting* seminars aimed to introduce basics of resistance reporting even with basic technological tools and services such as the mobile phones and/or tablet pcs. Although the interviewees

stated that they hoped the participants of the seminars to contribute to the television content, the primary aim was different:

“Our first aim with Resistance Reporting seminars has been to introduce citizens basics of broadcasting via mobile technologies and to remind them that they have the opportunity to report injustice situations they encounter anytime they wish to do so. Our second aim-and hope-is that participants of the seminars will pass this information they learnt to others and create awareness that every individual is actually a volunteer reporter (in-depth interview with CF1, 2015).

Although modes of knowledge are constantly evolving, basic knowledge is essential for especially the young to keep up with and make sense of cultural changes and new media technologies that can potentially foster the emergence of new modes of expressions and modalities of thought, as well as new forms of communicative competencies (Dahlgren, 2005). The Resistance Reporting seminars that covered key strategic and tactical lessons of successful social movements and their relation with resistance reporting demonstrated the willingness of *çapul.tv* to share their knowledge and skills with anyone interested in the field of broadcasting. Theoretical courses focused on the role of participatory media in civil resistance, by analyzing recent cases, digital resistance and international actors while practical courses aimed at offering practical guidance to participants in developing news stories, conducting investigative field reporting, initiating video report, and other relevant characteristics of citizen journalism. Seminars on resistance journalism also reflected the critical stance of *çapul.tv* collective towards current journalism practices and their commercial nature, as they perceive reporting for online participatory media as a not-for-profit and public benefit oriented activity.

The instructive meetings did not simply target those who want to volunteer for *çapul.tv*, but also anyone else who are interested in the subject and who aim to engage in the political and communicative spheres of resistance. In that sense, seminars reflected the collective’s democratic ideal to share their knowledge and experience with ordinary citizens.

The spirit of knowledge and experience sharing that guided Resistance Reporting seminars are also in line with the pluralist spirit of Gezi movement. The pluralism on field was not only apparent in terms of the diversity of participants' ethnic, religious and ideological backgrounds but also in terms of the collective works carried out by protesters, such as free yoga sessions, a pop-up library and educational games played to entertain children. As stated by Foley (1999) and underlined by Turan and Örs (2015), the most important learning in social action takes place informally and that marks the significant moment for creating an alternative imagination that can provide activists the opportunity to make a difference. Gezi experience was an important experience in learning and knowledge exchange in social action (in-depth interview with P1, 2015) that revealed how activist knowledge can contribute to the formation of alternative communicative spheres that derives from the spirit of resistance. *çapul.tv* represents the participatory media track of this communicative sphere, which serves as one of the primary and participatory sources of information on resistance in a partisan media environment such as that of Turkey.

7.3. Conclusion

The previous chapter revealed the importance of *çapul.tv* by analyzing its unique organizational characteristics. The current chapter complementarily explored the ways in which *çapul.tv* can be considered as a civic culture and found out that *çapul.tv* collective carries the main characteristics of civic cultures that are defined by Dahlgren (2009).

In terms of identity, the *çapul.tv* members individuals and collectively embrace the spirit of the Gezi Park movement. Gezi Park movement, as a unifying experience, influenced the collective and encouraged them to get involved in media production during the movement. The unifying atmosphere also eroded the barriers between different ideological points of views and opened the way for participation to *çapul.tv*. This situation opened the way for content production on a variety of fields such as science and music (in-depth interview with P1 and P2, 2015) with supporters from diverse backgrounds.

The loyalty of *çapul.tv* collective to democratic values and procedures is observed both in its manifesto and in its the egalitarian work environment. The manifesto of *çapul.tv* theoretically emphasizes the importance of a non-hierarchical structure and a non-commercial mode of media production. The collective also apply these values into practice through establishing a democratic work environment in which managerial roles and hierarchical relations do not exist. The accounts of interviewees in this study confirm this situation.

Practices, routines and traditions of *çapul.tv* differ from those of mainstream media institutions. While the reporters of *çapul.tv* mostly have a coordinating role in terms of managing information traffic deriving from social media, they rarely apply editorial intervention into amateur contents curated by volunteer participants. By looking at the *çapul.tv* representation of Gezi Park movement, it can be observed that the collective embraces an amateur broadcasting fashion and prioritizes the voice of protesters over other actors. Therefore, it can be stated that professionalization is not in the agenda of *çapul.tv*. Rather the collective, aims to preserve its amateur spirit and report from underrepresented resistance movements in the mainstream media to give a voice to protesters.

Findings of the current chapter also reveal that *çapul.tv* has an important mission in terms of exchanging knowledge and competencies. Thanks to their technological competence, members know how to replace lacking technological tools with the available ones in order to sustain their operation. In-depth interview accounts of members also reveal that the collective keeps up with the new developments in ICTs and integrate relevant technological tools into their operation as long as they obtain required financial resources.

The collective also takes an important mission by organizing resistance-reporting seminars in fifteen cities of Turkey. Members do not only aim to extend their reporter network, but also aim to share their technical knowledge with willing individuals to make them learn the techniques of reporting with basic broadcasting tools such as mobile devices. By taking findings of the current chapter into consideration, it can be stated that *çapul.tv* operates as a civic culture,

which aims to extend its influence with its diverse member profile, resistance broadcasts, loyalty to democratic values and willingness to exchange knowledge.



CONCLUSION

The modern societies experienced various social movements throughout 1900s. Social movements can be defined as an organized set of actions that aim to create and disseminate an agenda for social change. Throughout history, social movements preserved their importance as they emerge as collective actions aiming to find solutions to particular social and political problems. Due to their importance, various scholars developed theoretical explanations on the nature, causes and consequences of social movements, which are analyzed in detail in Chapter 1.

Although these approaches provided an essential foundation for social movement studies, majority of them lost their relevance. For instance, relative deprivation, rational choice, political opportunity and framing theories were criticized for embracing a liberal perspective on interpreting social movements and accepting vulnerabilities of capitalist systems as given. On the other hand, resource mobilization and new social movement approaches have kept their relevance for a longer period of time. Especially throughout 1960s and 1970s, they remained as useful starting points for understanding new social movements with unified demands.

Contemporary social movements, on the other hand, require a different understanding. In this study, I referred post-Seattle social movements as contemporary social movements, because they are geographically more dispersed and the demands raised in them are not unified. My perspective, thus, mainly benefited from the public sphere approach of Habermas (1981), who emphasized the importance of democratic communication for social movements. His approach also served as the basis of civic culture approach developed by Dahlgren (2009), which underlines shared commitments to the vision and procedures of democracy. Dahlgren's approach, inspired by the public sphere theory of Habermas (1981),

emerged as useful framework for understanding civic formations such as participatory media outlets.

Contemporary social movements have two common features: they were marked by the intense uses of new information and communication technologies and services and they primarily emerged as a response to the crisis of neoliberalism in the early 2000s.

The first feature can be observed in almost all the contemporary social movements including the Iranian election protests, student riots in the United Kingdom and the Gezi Park movement in Turkey. In these protests, new ICTs emerged as useful tools before and during movements in order to keep in touch with protesters, receive up-to-date information about districts where the police interventions were intense, information about healthcare services, etc.

Several participatory media and movement networks were established or operated during contemporary movements. These media differed from conventional alternative media in that they mainly relied on Internet technologies and received support from various geographies as discussed in Chapter 2. Inevitably, several theoretical perspectives have been developed in order to understand and interpret these formations, which included participatory journalism (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Rheingold, 2008); participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2006), active audience (e.g. Fiske, 1987; Morley, 1992), media activism (e.g. Lievrouw, 2011) and civic culture (Dahlgren, 2000, 2009).

The second feature of contemporary social movements is that they emerged as a critical response against neoliberal policies. As discussed in Chapter 3, neoliberalism emerged as the dominant ideology in the 1980s with an agenda to transform modes of production with a new type of cultural logic and ethics. The economic elites that dominated the economy defined political and social apparatus in line with their own interests. Some scholars (e.g. Duménil and Levy, 2009; Harvey, 2009) who analyzed the neo-liberal world order from a political economy perspective, perceived neo-liberalism as a project that aimed to succeed the restoration of the class power and to preserve the characteristics needed for capital

accumulation and power of societal elites. These elites transformed not only institutional structures but also divisions of labor, social relations, attachment to the land and ways of life and thought.

The impact of the neo-liberal ideology surpassed the boundaries of developed countries whose low tax regimes and limited state interference policies influenced developing countries as well. Thanks to the business alliances and political networks, the Middle East region, for instance, has been a field of interference and operation, where the political instabilities such as the alliance between the United States and Israel, military challenges in Iran and Pakistan, and never-ending threats of the Taliban and al-Qaida dominated the region. Such instabilities started to increase in 1980s and reached at higher levels throughout 1990s and 2000s, as a consequence of civic tensions such as the Syrian Civil War, and the emergence of new political actors such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The United States, which has been the major political actor in the region since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, established a political rationality in the region that is self-disciplining and self-governing.

The response to the increasing instability caused by neo-liberal policies has been the emergence of contemporary social movements. Following the tradition of 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization protests, individuals took to the streets in various geographies. Governments faced counter-movements in Iceland, Iran, Tunisia (which then spread to Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara and Yemen), United Kingdom, Spain, the United States, Brazil and Ukraine throughout 2000s.

In Turkey, opposition to the neo-liberal policies emerged with the Gezi Park movement. Protesters opposed the urban transformation of Istanbul for commercial purposes. Also they criticized the increasing social pressure over different lifestyles and the rising political influence of neo-Islamist conservatism.

Since current study aimed providing an exploration on online participatory media in contemporary social movements, Chapter 4 focused on understanding

the Gezi experience as a contemporary social movement. Gezi Park movement was a mass resistance to urban raid, social inequality and the manipulated communication environment in the country. It was also a consequence of the neo-liberal policies of the JDP government, harmonized with an Islamic worldview.

With its geographically dispersed nature and the variety of the demands Gezi Park movement differed from previous social movements in Turkey. While especially the new social movements in Turkey had a more unified nature in terms of the participant profile and demands raised, Gezi Park movement had a more complex nature, which makes it hard to define. Participants varied from blue-collar and white-collar workers, public officers, small retailers, self-employed, retired, housewives and students to the unemployed (KONDA, 2013). Gezi Park movement also provided a novel experience for its participants in the sense that largely incompatible groups such as anti-capitalist Muslims and LGBT collectives recognized each other at Gezi Park for the first time. Therefore, the movement was important for recognition of various social groups by each other. The experience planted the seeds for deliberative communication patterns among Turkish civil society active in the movement.

As discussed in Chapter 5, Gezi Park movement also had important consequences for the Turkish media. Firstly, the movement revealed how the mainstream media institutions cover news in a partisan and sided manner, as the majority of mainstream television channels and newspapers neglected the Gezi-related events in the early days of the protests. This situation resulted in massive criticism especially against especially the 24-hour news channels such as CNN Turk and NTV.

Gezi Park movement increased public interest in online participatory media. The majority of pro-Gezi newsreaders turned into the online participatory media outlets such as bianet.org and T24 to keep up with the protest-related news. Social media usage also boomed. Moreover, various online participatory media were established during the movement, which aimed to provide news from the field. These outlets included capul.tv, which was established at the park at the height of the movement in order to broadcast live from the scene of protests.

While the majority of online participatory media including Revolt Istanbul and Gezi Radio ended their activity in a short period of time, *çapul.tv* succeeded in sustaining its operation even after the movement.

This study aimed at exploring the relationship between online participatory media and contemporary social movements around three main research questions, by taking *çapul.tv* as the case study. *çapul.tv* is an important case for both its relationship with the Gezi Park movement and for emerging as an independent online participatory media outlet that struggles to exist in a competitive media environment.

In line, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 are devoted to *çapul.tv*. After explaining the methodological procedures, Chapter 6 presented an organizational study of *çapul.tv* and explored collective's structural features, name and logo, location and premises, technological facilities, organization of content production, financial resources, human resources and history.

Findings gathered mainly through in-depth interviews with *çapul.tv* members showed that *çapul.tv* has the structure of a collective, which borrowed many characteristics from the Gezi experience, including its name and logo.

Financially, *çapul.tv* is mainly dependent on donations made to Alternative Media Association, which was also co-founded by the core *çapul.tv* members. The collective rejects commercial income deriving from advertisements. In its early years *çapul.tv* mainly relied on crowdsourcing campaigns conducted via platforms such as *indiegogo.com*. The income obtained from the *indiegogo.com* campaign was important for the collective to obtain its broadcasting equipment and to rent a studio.

Human resources mark one of the major limitations of *çapul.tv*. The core team is composed of a very small group of individuals. Although interviewees do not seem to complain from the scarcity of volunteers, they also confess that the operation of *çapul.tv* sometimes slows down due to limited number of participants.

In terms of followers, capul.tv has a relatively strong presence especially on Twitter and Facebook. However, the same presence cannot be claimed for the capul.tv website visitors. Since the height of the Gezi Park movement, the capul.tv website visitors gradually started to decrease. Findings reveal that visitor base is strictly limited with Turkey since the majority of content on capul.tv website is in Turkish. Moreover, majority of Internet users visit capul.tv website via search engines, which indicates that they visit capul.tv website by chance when they search for particular information on search engines such as Google.

Findings of the current study also revealed that capul.tv carries characteristics of a civic culture, as discussed in detail in Chapter 7. During interviews, interviewees underlined that the team is also involved in other side projects such as a cinema archiving project (sinematek.tv) and a film festival (Turkey's Labor Film Festival). The members of the collective also previously got involved in other television projects such sendika.tv. The accumulated experience of the team in these civic initiatives ensured the online television network's sustainability and its successful operation.

The members of capul.tv come from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Members include academicians, electrical engineers and singers. As a mainly well-educated group, capul.tv members are associated with certain organizations such as Community Houses and cultural institutions on individual bases. They are also involved in occupations other than capul.tv to maintain their lives. Although members do not necessarily define themselves activists, they explain projects-including capul.tv- are actualized with activist purposes.

The members are also experienced with media operation in certain ways. While co-founders are both interested in the media at theoretical and practical levels, one of them is also professionally involved in online television broadcasting. Reporters also work for sendika.org and ensure its daily operation. One of the presenters is a regular guest of discussion programs on television, while the other presented several other television programs before capul.tv.

Therefore, members have the relevant knowledge and competencies to sustain the operation of a television channel.

In terms of loyalty to democratic values, *çapul.tv* can be interpreted as an attempt to serve for the interest of the civil society. Especially the co-founder and reporter members of *çapul.tv* state their appreciation with the values of democratic societies. Members also state their loyalty with the values of democratic societies with a statement published on *çapul.tv* website. Therefore, *çapul.tv* can be perceived as an important attempt that not only contributes to the democratization of the communication environment in Turkey, but also aims to serve for the interest of the civil society to fulfill their demand for the right to information.

In terms of news coverage, *çapul.tv* served as the voice of the protests throughout the Gezi Park movement, by broadcasting live from the park and interviewing participants on field. After Gezi movement, *çapul.tv* sustained its movement-specific coverage fashion, and continued its operation with broadcasts from post-Gezi movements and protests; including Validebağ resistance, annual gay parade, 1 May labor days, anti-nuclear protests and the Kobani resistance. Therefore, co-founders and reporters of *çapul.tv* continued following the agenda of non-governmental organizations, civic initiatives and activists who resisted against neo-liberalism as well as political authoritarianism that has been increasingly affecting daily lives of individuals in Turkey.

In line with the theoretical arguments on online participatory media (e.g. Bowman and Willis, 2003), the members of *çapul.tv* do not follow traditions of mainstream media in terms of their routines and practices. The editorial control is less strict on *çapul.tv* in comparison to mainstream media and institutionalized participatory media such as *bianet.org*, despite reporters check the accuracy of information provided by anonymous contributors. The reporter interviewees state they mainly accept and broadcast content from contributors as long as they do not insult certain social groups. The *çapul.tv* team also accepts amateur contributions (such as short clips recorded via mobile phones), thus the content does not have to be produced in a professional manner.

Overall, despite its limits, *çapul.tv* is an important actor of Turkey's participatory media environment. It serves as a thematic and social-movement specific non-commercial news actor in a media environment where mainstream media institutions, which have close ties with the government mainly, set the rules. Although there are certain concerns over the future of *çapul.tv* especially due to the limited financial and human resources, the online television network stands as an important experience for both media practitioners and users.

There are also several lessons to draw from the *çapul.tv* experience for online participatory media. First, *çapul.tv* indicates that online participatory media initiatives can survive without financial relations or expectations; but that its sustainability can sometimes be fluctuating. With its crowdsourcing campaigns and email newsletters, *çapul.tv* collective aimed to encourage individuals to make volunteer donations through gifting (sending donators small gifts that has little financial value but has cultural connection with Gezi Park movement and the *çapul.tv* in general). However, the crowdsourcing campaigns fell short of providing sufficient financial resources that would ensure the sustainability of the television network. The collective sometimes had to integrate contents of several other side projects into the coverage of *çapul.tv* to ensure its daily operation. This situation indicates that online participatory media should go beyond barriers of volunteerism and look for alternative ways to encourage individuals to become active citizen content providers, reporters and/or television program presenters.

An alternative way for fostering active participation can, for instance, be gamifying which is the application of typical elements of game playing to other areas of activity such as participatory journalism to encourage engagement with a particular service or platform. The nature of the Internet and its services are very suitable for rewarding mechanisms (as similar to gift exchange). And these rewarding mechanisms do not necessarily have to be financial. Therefore, gamifying the contribution process can be succeeded with small technical interventions on the interface of *çapul.tv* website. This may result in higher volunteer participation into content production processes.

A second suggestion regarding increasing the visibility and ensuring the sustainability of *çapul.tv* can be on its discourse. Alternative media in general are often perceived as practicing more serious journalism due to their oppositional stance. Founders and volunteers of such civic initiatives achieve an extremely difficult objective, as they work for the public interest with limited financial and social resources, by aiming to create an alternative communication environment. Managing a hard work can sometimes make it appear serious. This situation may result in problems related to reaching larger audiences.

Initiatives such as *çapul.tv* can put more effort on re-launching themselves as accessible formations, by remaining within and as part of the civil society, with amateur and professional contributors. For instance, a shift in the discourse can increase audience participation. As during the interviews, some of the interviewees stated that Gezi has been a liberalizing experience and allowed them to meet and collaborate with individuals from various social groups. For instance, rather than the criticisms on the deficits of the mainstream media institutions the benefits of online participatory media production for civil society can be brought to the forefront. The humorous verbal and visual discourse created by protesters during the Gezi Park movement can pave the way for online participatory media initiatives such as *çapul.tv*, to for encouraging higher participation and audience reach. Although initiatives such as *çapul.tv* do not necessarily offer audience-pleasing entertaining content to reach wider audiences they can draw lessons from certain experiences such as the Gezi Park movement to make their discourses more appealing to larger audiences.

A final suggestion can be that online participatory media can abstain from identity politics while curating its discourse. Identity politics have been a widely embraced since 1980s by activists and organizations. Identity politics have included ways that individual's politics may be shaped or affected by characteristics of their identities through loosely correlated social organizations. Despite identity politics at times have been necessary for recognition of unrepresented or marginalized groups, other times it can be separatist. Especially with Gezi Park movement, individuals started to recognize and appreciate each other's differences and diversity, by coming across face to face on field. Thus, in

an environment marked by participation, engagement, interactivity, sharing, membership and social connection integrated with new information and communication technologies, the emphasis should be put on overcoming technical limitations and looking for alternative ways of creating new journalistic practices and models.

Contemporary social movements have also revealed the essentiality and impact of alternative forms of communication, as activists successfully established their own online communication channels. *çapul.tv* is an important example of this situation, which has become successful by embracing post-Gezi social movements, creating an alternative path of communication and leaving permanent traces in the both online and offline public sphere. With these characteristics *çapul.tv* sets an important example for future participatory media to draw lessons from.

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